The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 20 (Ecclesiastical 4)

John Nelson Darby

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Narrative Of The Facts,

Connected With The Separation Of The Writer From The Congregation Meeting In Ebrington Street

Introduction

The following narrative, though constantly demanded by brethren, would have never seen the light, had the work which occasioned the separation been confined to Plymouth, or its activity ceased. No desire of clearing up one's own grounds of conduct has influenced me, nor would such have induced me to publish any account of what passed. The best proof is that in a lapse of a year it had not. But convinced as I am that it is a work of Satan which has developed itself here, and finding that, as Mr. N. announced that he would seek to produce everywhere "united hostility" to the brethren who differed from him, the same system at present is carrying on elsewhere to propagate the work, and believing that many true-hearted saints become unconsciously instruments of this, I have thought well that they should be apprised of what passed. The argument alleged against such an account would be the scandal of it. But that exists in the division already. The knowing the grounds of it will rather take it away. For it is a very serious thing indeed to separate from Christians, and indeed the saints have, in some sort, a right to know why it has been done. It may be very humbling to the saints concerned; but I do not think this is an evil. The strongest motive by far—the one which weighed with me—was the dislike of publishing evil. I never should have done it, but left it to the Lord, had the trouble occasioned by it stopped the activity of the evil. What overcame this motive with me

was, that there was just as much activity as before in the evil, and the same unblushing unscrupulousness as to truth. It may perhaps be thought that I have exaggerated in this account. Far from it. None of the facts which did not enter into the public course of events are mentioned, though as numerous and in my judgment as grave or graver than what is here stated; and not only so, but were not similar facts now going on, which are not alluded to here, I should never have published these. Another motive might act, that is, the general discredit thrown on the brethren. But this must yield before duty to souls. I have never seen one who got into the active influence of the system, whose moral integrity was not ruined. Besides, I believe that this system had so puffed up the brethren, and worldliness had so crept in, that under such discipline as God has sent us, it is only our part to bow. Indeed the present influence of the spirit of the world is such in the system which has driven me out, that, unless the Lord corrected it, I should be thankful to be entirely free from it. Lastly, I do not expect to escape what Sir A.C., Mr. W., and others have been subjected to, that is, to have all my statements denied. I expect it. But this is no reason with me for not informing brethren if this latter be a duty. It cannot last long this.

It is possible that in a narrative extending over a year and a half, embracing many people, and even places, some inaccuracy of detail which may occasion cavil may have escaped me. I have given too many names not to give the fullest opportunity of confirmation or correction, indeed always, save where charity demanded their suppression, or in the case of females. Engaged in such a business I had no need to conceal those of brethren. They must take their share when they acted in

public. There is nothing here of which I am not assured of my own knowledge, or which were public facts before all, or facts stated already in print by others, or with the authors' names with some exceptions; in a word, nothing of the truth of which I am not thoroughly satisfied. At all events, what is here related is with other facts that which has led me into the position I am in; and I give them as substantially a thoroughly authentic and true narrative of what has passed. I have only to add, that the ground of evil doctrine or teaching, and the unsettling the souls of saints on every thing precious and even vital, is acquiring every day very greatly increased weight in my mind. This from its subtle and fleeting character, though conclusive with me, is more difficult to give. Some specimens however are here. The "Examination" of the "Thoughts" gives many though on less important points.

I may add one here from a tract sold in the tract shop. It is there taught that the wicked will rise with their diseased bodies; as that a man that had the palsy would keep it for ever, they would receive again their corrupt and sin-worn bodies, in all their wretchedness. This is addressed in a gospel tract to the careless. The tract is printed in London, but it was sold at Plymouth in the depot, nor have I any doubt of its origin.

I have communicated this narrative to others, to take all the care I can, that it should be perfectly true; I give no names, as I feel in such a case it is the juster way to let it rest on my own responsibility. I add here one or two corrections resulting therefrom.1 This is all that I can find to correct in what follows. It is, of course, possible that something may have escaped me.

I add another mark of the enemy's work. It is this: where there is the sudden reception of a whole system, and the authority of the author of it set up at once over the mind. When truth is received into the soul by the Spirit, it is received and engrafted by God, so that, though a blessed door may be opened by any given truth, we are built up truth by truth, each being wrought into the soul so that there is truth in it, and the consciousness of God's teaching us that, and the instrument of it, if any, is not between us and God as to it, though inspired teachers were of course an authority. In the case stated the mind is at once shut up into the system, and real progress in divine truth is entirely arrested. The consequences of having thus taken a system of error for truth is often most deplorable for the whole life, even if the person be delivered from it.

The reader will find another example of the unsettling the soul as to fundamental truths in the confusion between the life communicated to the saint and the divine nature in Christ. Thus, "But did Jesus think that the life which was in Him, and which He communicated to others, was not heavenly?" Did He not Himself say, "The Son of man which is in heaven? Were they (the angels) ignorant of the existence of a life in earth, which they had known in the excellence of its own uncreated glory, above? … Were they ignorant that this life had, through the Son been communicated to persons chosen from among sinful men?" (See pp. 28, 29, of "Answer to Second Letter.")

I have felt unable, having re-read this narrative after the corrections, to detect any inaccuracy. As to the expression "He will catch it" (p. 58), my memory is so vague that I could not pretend to give it as the word

used. But this perusal has made me feel that such a publication of evil would be entirely unjustifiable, and evil in itself, had I not the conviction, the solemn settled conviction (not, I believe, led to it of man) that there is an active positive work of the enemy going on. That conviction I have. I do not publish it to justify myself, for in my own judgment it does the contrary. I feel, as I have stated in the body of the narrative, that I failed in spiritual energy, through human feeling, in letting the matter drop in April at the instance of others. I hesitated as to my own being spiritual enough to do it in public then, though I had acquiesced in doing it in private. If it be asked why I do it in a worse way now, I answer that it became a public duty to the saints, cost me what it would. And I do not expect to meddle with such evil without its costing me something.

I have had, in journeys I have made since I wrote this account, abundant confirmation as to the doctrine taught and other points.

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No one who was present at the meeting lately held in London can doubt that the brethren were brought (may I not in a certain measure say, brought back?) into the presence of the Lord—that the Lord has dealt with them in the manifestation of His presence, of His presence and dealings with them. This is a serious and solemn thought, and (I have felt) ought to take the lead and be as the source and spring of our other thoughts. I have myself been laid by, unable to read and write, so that, for my own part, I have been necessarily more particularly thrown into His hands, so that things should be more immediately judged as in His presence, viewed

as they are seen there, and that what does not become His presence should alarm the conscience, man becoming little, but the saints exceeding precious.

After the meeting my conscience somewhat smote me for not declaring there in the plainest way what I believe to be the Lord's judgment of the work which has resulted in Ebrington Street at Plymouth: and it has been yet more pressed upon my conscience since I have been laid by. What prevented my doing so will be evident to every one who was there. The Lord took the meeting so entirely into His own hand, and so gave to it the character, and that of blessing, which He pleased, that I felt my part was to leave it exclusively with the character He had given to it. If it was a want of faith, my motives will be understood by every one who was there. But then this return into the presence of the Lord leads to dealing with brethren as in His presence. It is due to them. I feel I owe it to them to communicate to them as seen there, so to speak, what may press on my own spirit before the Lord. Now I believe fully that the work which has resulted in, what I may call in its present state, Ebrington Street, is a direct and positive work of Satan. And here I entreat brethren not to turn away as if these were mere hard words or a bad spirit. I mean simply and solemnly what I say. If such be the case, it is charity, unfeigned charity, to say so, and warn the saints of it. I so much believe it to be so, that I do not believe any one who meddles with or is within its reach will be safe from its influence till they treat it as such.

This may be always remarked, that where there is a work of the enemy even saints always fall into it if they do not treat it as such. It has power over the human heart, and where there is not in the soul the power of

the Spirit to judge it as the positive mischief of the enemy (and so it will be judged where that power is), there the soul will fall into it, as if it were more perfect truth than what the Spirit teaches. See the early judaizing of the church, traced and detected in the Epistles to the Galatians and Colossians, and elsewhere. And see in the Galatian churches how the saints fell into it. See the same thing in Popery.

And here I would explain a little further. It does not follow by any means that there are no truths held by those who fall into such a snare. Many important truths may be held by them. Nor is it to be thought for a moment that true saints of God are not liable to fall into these snares. On the contrary, what makes it important to consider them, is that they affect the saints of God. Did they not, it might be sorrowful instruction, but no more: just as the awful darkness of heathenism, or the sorrowful condition of a poor unbelieving child of Israel. Nor does it follow (though it will generally have a legal tinge, because the flesh will in such case more or less resume its power) that many good works will not be done by those under it. They may abound. So that in saying that there has been a work of Satan I am not saying there are not many very dear children of God; I am not saying that they do not hold many all-important fundamental truths, as truths, nor that they may not be doing a great many good works. All this will be fully found in the system of Popery, for example, as it was in the Galatians, the earliest form perhaps of that amazing and deluding system.

But there is a further point which it is right to notice. Truly godly people may be the instruments of helping on a system which is truly Satan’s. No one can doubt that

Cyprian, who laid down his life for Christ's name, that Augustine, that Bernard, were godly men. Yet, though one opposed Rome episcopally, and the last declared Antichrist was risen there, no one can doubt that they helped on most eminently Satan's work in Popery. They did not perceive the bearing of certain points on the meaning and testimony of the Spirit of God.

Further, I do not call every evil I find a direct and positive work of Satan. Of course his hand is there. A saint I call a work of God, though Satan may mar it. Thus I believe there are serious defects and faults in the Establishment; but I believe it to have been a work of God, marred and spoiled by human considerations, which led those who framed it, to adapt it to circumstances and to the then state of the population, and to introduce principles which lay it now open perhaps to that work of Satan which is commonly called Puseyism. In that too itself, I dare say, several good men are labouring, because they do not by spiritual power discern Satan's craft who has a lovely religion for the flesh, a religion fairer to men's judgment and loveliest natural feelings than God's, which acts entirely on the conscience and gives all glory to Christ. So with Dissenters: I believe that was a work of God; with many defects, I judge, but still a work of God. And so of others. But Popery and Puseyism are the work of the enemy, though you may, and doubtless would, find many dear persons among them. Of course the degrees of evil or power may vary. I speak of its character and source merely.

Satan originates nothing. This is God's prerogative. The work of Satan is to mar and break down what God has wrought, when this is left, as an effect produced, to the

responsibility of man. God created Adam. Satan spoiled the work through man's folly. There was but One whom he could not touch down here; in whom, having laid his defiling hand on all else as prince of this world, he could find nothing. He can originate nothing, but he can build up with vast sagacity an immense system, out of the corruption, suited to the evil which is in us; yea, and stamped with the character of the evil that is in us to which it is so suited. What would money be without avarice? or worldly power without ambition? or superstition without a natural principle of reUgiousness in the heart of man? Such a system may be a vast fact in the economy of divine government considered as a judgment, as Mohammedanism; or a subtler corruption, as Popery, pregnant with greater mischiefs, but where the enemy of souls has not been permitted to blot out in the same way the great facts of Christianity, as to the manner of the Divine existence and incarnation, nor the historical truths of the gospel; or it may be a marring where, in the main, truth abides; or it may be the ruin of some special testimony of God as far as it goes.

A testimony of some special truth may decay, or be lost, or lose its power by becoming mere established orthodoxy; but I do not call this directly or properly a work of Satan. I call it a work of Satan, when, blessing and testimony having been brought in by the blessed Spirit of God, a systematic effort is made, producing a regular system; an effort which takes up the truth whose power has decayed as to faith really carrying the soul out of the influence of present things, or some neglected truth generally, and, while it seems to adopt it as it stands in its basis as a fact, subverts and sets it aside; throwing the soul back on ground which is no longer a

test of faith, though it be truth (for there Satan can adopt truth for a time), and bringing in apparent additional instruction, but really subversive of the power of what the Spirit taught, and making the authority of this teaching sectarian, or superstitious, or both, though they will not last together. I am not speaking here of Satan's work in open infidelity.

Now many may be quite unable to detect Satan working in this way, but there will be always enough, through the faithfulness of God, to guard souls really waiting on Him from falling in; or if listened to, through grace to bring them out. But then it will be and must be judged as evil, not dealt with as a mere measure of better and worse.

There is a distinction which may yet be made.

There are two distinct characters of work which Satan does, which may nevertheless merge one in the other. Of these however one, if alone, will be ephemeral, the other lasting. First, where power is not the true power of the Spirit, so as to detect and judge Satan's imitation, there he can easily set up the imitation of power, and that even where there is a measure of true faith and owning of God, but subjection, intelligent subjection by the Spirit to the word as of the Spirit, is not found. Where this is connected with the establishment of arranged human authority, this latter may subsist, but the work itself is ephemeral. Such a work as this will probably be connected with some of the most right-feeling, if not right-judging, persons among Christians, who have the strongest feelings of the decay which occasions it, but there will be generally shipwreck of the faith in some point or other. Yet it will afford exceeding difficulty to those who cannot discern the work of the enemy in the

midst of this right feeling. I would instance as examples of this kind of evil work of the enemy, the Montanists, the Irvingites, and, in some respects, the Quakers or Friends. As to these last it is well known that what I now refer to has passed away, and that they remain amongst men a most quiet and, in many respects, most estimable body of persons. I speak of their early history. What remains is the authority that was settled among them, though with the old Friends very much defect in doctrine.

I have no doubt that this work began in a right feeling about the want of spiritual power. This may be easily seen in Dell's works. But no one who has read the remarkable history of George Fox, Naylor, and many of Penn's writings, or known much of the doctrines of Friends, can doubt the inroad of the enemy. I have added a few words on this because it was a more mixed and ambiguous case. I would not pass it over because it is one instructive to the church.

But there is another form of Satan's working.

In this orthodox truth is in general maintained. Any pretension to the possession of spiritual power is based on church position, not on any particular manifestation of power, and thus seems to honour the institution of the church and Christ in it. God is alleged to have set there, in that institution, the seat of blessing, and this also is an acknowledged truth, and the unity of the body of Christ is thereon connected with the institution. But the sovereign operation of the Spirit of God is set aside, and that which acts outside the actually formed institution is condemned as denying the authority of God's institution and schismatical sin. Thus the actual possessors of the

power of the institution, in its then state, really take the place of God. His power is vested in them as far as it acts on earth. Divine condemnation attaches to all who act independently of them. Direct dependence upon God is unallowable. And thus whatever puts individual faith to the test (for going with the crowd under authority does not) is condemned as self-will and presumption.

The system which so judges is alleged to maintain the unity of the church. This may exist in different degrees, and in different circumstances; but it always attaches divine authority more or less to official position, and thus puts man in the place of God by attaching His name to man. It is not spiritual energy in man putting souls through Christ in direct relation with God, with the Father. There spiritual affections are happy and blessed. It is man eclipsing God, getting between Him and the soul. Not man revealing God, but the authority of God attached to man. Hence full love and grace will never be known. The Spirit of adoption and blessed assurance of salvation in the knowledge of Him will never be. It may survive such a system for a time, but it cannot be identified with such a system when matured. To be with God, while always rendering the soul submissive, must render it independent of man; that is, it asserts no rights, but when the need is, it says, “we ought to obey God rather than man.” The first of these works of Satan then is the pretence to the extraordinary operation of the Spirit. That is ephemeral. It is suited to the ill-directed but righteous cravings after that manifestation of spiritual power which was and is the only true source of living blessing on the earth, when that power has faded away. The other is the orderly establishment of men in the place of that power. This lasts. It is suited to

unbelief, and in its full development it always generates it. Montanism is passed. The spiritual pretensions of Irvingism are in fact passed; the system of men and ordinances set up by it abides. So practically among the Friends. This is common to both, as far as they go, that the manifestation of Christ in living power for the peace of souls, and the truth as to Him, is weakened and set aside more or less. Orthodox truths may, as we have seen in one of the cases I have supposed, be maintained; but (as it is the work of the Holy Ghost alone to present Christ to the soul, so that it should be in the power of that living faith which sets the soul in blessed fellowship with the Father in true joy, leaving the impress of its own everlasting nature upon it, which the Holy Ghost can alone give, and the Holy Ghost alone maintain) the consequence is that such communion with Christ is lost, and the conscience ceases to be before God.

In the former of the cases I have supposed Christian truth is generally lost, that is, saving truths connected with the person of Christ, and error substituted on these points. The Spirit’s alleged presence eclipses, instead of revealing, them. In the latter they are plausibly subverted in their effect on the soul rather than set aside. As justification by faith in the Popish system, where, while every orthodox truth is maintained, the love and work of God in Christ is as to its efficacy denied by it as a system, as effectually as it could be by Socinianism itself. We are enabled in this case to speak of the full and awful maturity of this abiding corruption of the enemy; but those most conversant with history, and most spiritual, know how much spirituality it requires to detect its commencement and early growth: and that it sprang really from the best persons and most

apparently godly principles that appear after the record of scripture; so that, though there were counteracting principles which Protestants can justly cite, yet full-grown Popery can quote the earliest fathers to establish in principle her claims, and support her pretensions. The blessed and perfect word of God reveals in one word this history: they began in the Spirit, and ended in the flesh. If you inquire who were the persons who laid the basis of this amazing evil, it will be found that it was those who insisted on good order and unity; yet it was not in the power of the Holy Ghost (God is not the author of confusion, but of order in the churches), but in arrangements which attached to office the authority necessary to maintain it. There may have been fleshly workings which gave occasion to it; but the remedy was not spiritual acting on the conscience and affections of those astray, for this is what we see in the epistles, but the authoritative arrangement of order, because power was so much gone, and spiritual discernment to know it. Hence the effect produced by the power, the institution itself, the church as an ordered system (not the church as redeemed by Christ), became the object presented, and was made the guard as an institution, instead of being guarded by spiritual care. Hence when the outward institution became the positive enemy of Christ and of His people, it retained its claims, and used its power as His.

Now, however subtilly at first, so that none scarce perceived it, if any, we now know what a work of Satan this was. It has, so to speak, usurped the world.

I fell satisfied that, as to the principle of it, a similar work has been going on at Plymouth. It will be ever founded on practically setting aside the power of that

truth which has been, in any given case, the gathering principle, and the testimony of God to the world.

I do not exactly expect that in itself every one could see through such a work; but, as I have already said, there are sufficient proofs always afforded of God to the single eye: there will not, and cannot be, to others. I shall add here some of the points which seem to me to mark the presence and influence of the enemy in general.

The first sign of weakness is the gathering itself becoming the object of attention, instead of their being a people enjoying the blessedness of their position by the relationship and fellowship it gave them with Christ, who had become and was their abiding object, revealing withal God the Father. But I would speak with more detail, for this is rather the occasion of Satan's power than the fruit of it as a positive word. Where this last is, you will find holy spiritual affections broken and set aside to give place to the claim of the institution. And so are even natural affections, whilst the latter are given all their natural force and weight in practice to hold persons in the institution, and even largely used for this purpose. In the same manner people are won and brought under the influence that arts there by them. The activity and zeal will be for the system. It will be to make proselytes, and establish them in what will keep them there, not to save souls or lead them on in Christ. There will generally be a good deal of acting against or depreciation of others who even hold the faith of Christ.

Paramount importance will be attached to the views which distinguish that institution, not to what saves or to what brings faith to the test by the revelation of Christ.

Good works will be found generally much pressed, and that in a systematic way in which it works for and into the system. Truth, I mean truthfulness, will ever be wanting. This I have always found where the work of the enemy is.

Connected with this is the pressing much certain doctrines, when it is safe, which form the bond of the institution, and denying them in the alleged meaning, or explaining them away, when they are pressed on them by those who detect the evil. This any one conversant with the subject cannot but have noticed. The denial of the doctrine positively stated where the influence exists, as held in any such sense or its explanation, is the very thing that marks the power of evil. With this will be found the attributing to those who hold the truth, every kind of doctrine they abhor, where there is influence enough to have their statements believed. Popery is the plain example of this.

Another mark, whatever the apparent devotedness, yea, and real devotedness sometimes, is that the spirit of the world is acquiesced in. The poor will be nursed as instruments, and the rich (and so the clever) flattered for support. Another mark is the extreme difficulty of fixing them to any definite statement, save as they have power to enforce it; and then it is bound on others; and there is the sternest rejection of all who do not bow. Calumny of the saints, and of their doctrines has been known from the testimony of the blessed Lord Himself onward. The influence of females and of money will be found also largely employed.

In cases of the second character of evil I have noticed, the combinations of a party will always be found.

There is another mark, often incomprehensible to one not under the influence, and that is an incapacity of conscience to discern right and wrong, an incapacity to see evil where even the mere natural conscience would discern and an upright conscience reject it at once. I speak of this incapacity in true saints. The truth is, the soul is not, where under this influence (for it may be upright in other things), at all in the presence of God, and sees everything in the light of the object which governs it; and, as to these things, the influence of the enemy has supplanted and taken the place of conscience. The moral marks will be found to attach to every case of evil power.

I am satisfied that I have seen these principles distinctly at work in what has produced the system established at Plymouth. Some may think I have copied it for the picture. I have not. Let them, if they have ever been conversant with it, recall what the ways of Popery are, and they will easily find the same there. It is not because there are no saints among them, but because there are many and very dear ones, that I speak of it.

But having stated these general principles, a statement which I leave to work its own effect, I shall briefly narrate what I may call the public facts which have come under my knowledge; for much never has. I have never done so hitherto. I did not feel led to do it, and certainly had no inclination. I do not think a mind for which holiness has any charm at all will ever love the detailing or publishing evil: and, if one has any heart, most surely not what has passed among those he loves: but God’s truth and His church are sacred things. I shall still endeavour to pass over in silence the private facts which seem to me to be evil. They might be called for in

a case of discipline; but here they would only aggravate, without increasing, intelligent apprehension of the evil.

I will not detail the origin of the “brethren,” but certainly that which characterized their testimony at the outset was the coming of the Lord as the present hope of the church, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as that which brought into unity, and animated and directed, the children of God; and they avowed their dependence upon it. The distinct condition of the saints of the present dispensation, as filled with the Spirit abiding with them and risen with Christ, marked their teaching, while the great truths of the gospel were held in common with other true Christians, only with the clearer light which God Himself directly, and these other truths, afforded. The distinct heavenly character of the church was much insisted on. Though the “brethren” insisted on a spiritual ministry, and the recurrence to the original principles of ministry were urged, they did not, for the same reason, pretend to appoint ministers, nor organize any church or special membership; for they held the unity of all saints. Themselves outside the camp, whatever saints had faith to follow them were companions in their position, and they were not separated in life, love, or essential unity, from those who could not, though blamed by them. In this spirit they walked for a good while. I now turn to details.

From an early period Mr. Newton isolated himself much from the other brethren. He held reading meetings, and would not allow the labouring brethren to attend them; saying it was bad for the taught to hear the authority of the teachers called in question, as it shook confidence in them. At the later prophetic meetings in Ireland he did not attend.2 At one of them, instead of going, he held a

meeting for himself at Plymouth on the questions proposed and discussed among the brethren in Ireland, and published his views on them under the title of “Answers to Plymouth Questions.” Particular meetings of his own for inculcating his peculiar views were multiplied without end, and sisters instructed in them, and provided with notes, employed to hold smaller meetings among the poor, and to write letters elsewhere to propagate them. Every visitor was at once brought under the most stringent process for imbuing him with them, and instruments sought wherever possible.3 Indeed I have known a meeting closed the moment any remark was made on a statement of Mr. Newton’s. “The Christian Witness “was denounced as the most mischievous book that ever was written. This process of course grew up gradually. This, with a train of similar conduct, I sorrowed over as an unhappy trait of isolation, and love of acting alone, and having his followers for himself; but I had no suspicion whatever of any purpose of any kind, bore with it as a failing of which we all had some, and left perfect individual liberty complete and entire untrenched on. I should not have so acted without my brethren. I should have rejoiced to have my views corrected by them when I needed it, and learn theirs; but there it was, and there for my part I left it.4 At the Clifton meeting Mr. Newton, speaking of ministry and the points connected with it, told me that his principles were changed. I replied that mine were not, that I felt I had received them from the Lord’s teaching, and with His grace I should hold them fast to the end.5 This, however, subsequently went farther. Mr. N. got rid of Capt. H. at Plymouth. I do not enter into any details here, but I use advisedly the expression ‘got rid of.’6 This also was let pass. My own mind acquiesced

in it, though grieved, because I felt it possible that there was a tendency to accumulate labourers on one spot; and that, in the want of spiritual energy which led them, God might use this as a means of sending the testimony farther. In fact, the gathering at Hereford soon followed on this. Thus I consoled myself with what I felt the unhappy disposition of Mr. N. I was not indeed acquainted with all the facts which I have learned since. I saw what was public before all. I knew what had happened to myself. I suspected nothing; and from beginning to end of this history the truth is that grace has kept smothered up what pained individuals in the character of Air. N. For my own part, much as I mourned many things, I was the last to suspect any plan or purpose. I sought for years to soothe and make peace, to maintain union and link all together.

After the departure of Capt. H,, two other brethren became the objects of attack, R—e and S—s; and in the first instance the latter. I myself interfered at that time to soothe and tranquillize matters, and soften the effect of the evident assumption and conduct of Mr. N. Subsequently to this I was, as is known, much abroad, and do not pretend to give the detail of what passed.

There is only one circumstance to which I may allude in passing, as it has been often referred to. At a time when Capt. H. and myself were leaving Plymouth, there was some anxiety as to pastoral care, the value of which I fully recognize. Some minds were restless as to the nomination of elders, or recognized authorities; some fearful of it. The question had been slightly mooted in a private meeting, after one of the Irish prophetic meetings. I had been there, I may say, accused of swamping the question. I stated what is my present

conviction, that the right-minded saint would surely own and “know “those who laboured, admonished, and took by the Holy Ghost a pastoral interest in them; but that still it could only be, in the present state of the church of God, by spiritual power, wisdom, love, and faithfulness, that such a place could be acquired and maintained. To attempt to authorize them would unsettle every right principle. There was no competency for it. The moment an authorized position is assumed—a title to it, I raise the inquiry, what is this title? and I defy any one to allege any which is not at once the formal recognition of a sect; or otherwise the Popish ground of being the church, and then you must recognize succession and apostolic authority in the clergy.

Under these circumstances, on the departure of Capt. H. and myself, this question having been raised, I stated to the assembly that Messrs. H., N., and Sir. A.C., who were already labouring and visiting, as is well known, would still remain, and be under the responsibility of continuing the visiting. I refer to this only because it has been frequently referred to lately. It was really avoiding the question, which none could have solved, calming the minds of others who were uneasy at those who had first laboured going away. And this I desired. I remember being blamed by some who desired something definite; and there were those who had difficulty as to Mr. N.’s being so named from distrust of his ambition. I have been told lately that some brethren were dissatisfied at my having done too much. It is of course possible, though I never heard it till lately, nor have I the smallest ground for thinking so. I merely relate the fact without comment. Mr. N. indeed has stated that Mr. R.H. advised me to leave Plymouth on account of the feeling it

produced; but this is without a shadow of truth in it. Of this Mr. R.H. is equally certain with myself. It has no sort of foundation whatever. Mr. R.H. had nothing to say to the matter, good or bad.

On my returning from abroad, about six years ago, I was spoken to by brethren well known amongst all as to certain letters written by Mr. Newton, and circulated in MS. far and wide,7 begging me to read them, as it had excited the feelings of many brethren, and made them very uneasy. I replied that I did not want to enter into these questions, that I had hitherto acted as a peacemaker, and sought to link and unite by going with all, and I had rather now keep out of the question. It was urged upon me that I must take a part in it, as the letters were making brethren uneasy everywhere. Thus urged, I read the letters. They were an elaborate argument on Mr. N.'s prophetic views, denouncing all who held the views of the rapture of the church before the end, and insisting on the evils of applying any part of the New Testament to any but the church, or of supposing that there were saints on earth, subsequent to the church's rapture, who could be spoken of in it prophetically. In these (besides accusing the brethren of rejecting "all8 the Gospels," if they held principles contrary to his interpretation of Matthew 24, for this was the only and avowed ground, as may be seen in the passage in the note) he declared that, if they were listened to, "the foundations of Christianity were gone." And will the reader believe the reason which so many have swallowed down? for this is the grand cry at Plymouth still. It is this, "for the foundations of the city are the twelve apostles of the Lamb." He presses the duty on all, that a categorical reply should be received

as to this from all that professed to teach, because ambiguities were to be avoided in the church.9 “With respect to such passages, we have a right to expect a clear unhesitating answer from all who teach in the church.” Meanwhile brethren who took the opposite view were carefully kept away from Plymouth,10 and letters in one unceasing stream went out from the sisters against the brethren who did not receive these views, and everything was said to discredit them to those who visited Plymouth. The whole teaching there was to settle people in them. In this no pains were spared, as to either strangers arriving or those who had leisure at Plymouth. The sisters in particular were carefully taught, and held meetings in their respective districts to retail what they had heard at the principal meetings held for that purpose. The poor were in general starved as to feeding them with Christ.

This had come to such a point before my last return from abroad, that the gospel had been formally sent away from Ebrington Street, and teaching substituted for it, the gospel being banished to Raleigh Street, where some thirty or forty went. It was said in so many words they did not want the gospel—it was a bad sign to wish for it; they ought to be going on to more complete knowledge. It is not astonishing if a great body of the Christian poor were thoroughly miserable: they understood Mr. H. only. He was their visitor and friend.

But to return to the letters: I spoke to Mr. Newton about them (I refer to about five or six years ago), though I had no idea then of the assiduity with which they were circulated, and the views pressed. It was done by letter out of Plymouth, and I had been abroad. I read the letters, and I told Mr. Newton that I could not see that

the Spirit of God had led to or guided in them. He told me thereupon, that all friendship between us was at an end, and that he should have nothing more to say to me in the way he previously had. I replied that this would not change me towards him or others, and I walked up and down the street with him till I got him to give me his hand; and, save writing to him to soothe him, buried it all. I wrote, at his request, some of my objections to the views in the letters; and this, furnished subsequently to a sister, formed together with his answers the famous appendix, of which so much has been said. But I speak of an interview, six years ago or thereabouts. Since then the letters were constantly copied and circulated. From that time I was a good deal abroad, though I visited Plymouth. I saw clericalism creeping in, but at first thought it was merely from circumstances. The deaf people were placed round the table, and consequently the speakers were to stand at it. This soon evidently defined them. I saw the tendency, and sat in the body of the congregation, and spoke thence when I spoke. I was remonstrated with, but retained my position. On the last visit before the present one, finding the teachers always breaking bread, I urged some other doing it, or this union of the two things would soon be a regular clergy. Mr. H., to whom I spoke (but as to all), made no difficulty, and something was done.

At this time, about three years ago, I suppose, I was thoroughly unhappy in the meetings. I felt the Spirit utterly quenched, and, if I went to the meetings happy, returned miserable. It was only at the last I was at I found it in my heart to pray. I had communication on the subject with Mr. H., who remonstrated with me. I returned abroad. While abroad (I cannot here give the

date) Mr. Newton wrote to me that I was an apostle.11 This did not, I confess, inspire me with confidence. About three or four months before my return to England I had a correspondence with Mr. H., one of whose letters, from the great change in its tone, convinced me that every barrier was gone at Plymouth; for he had long sought to keep himself free from the influence that ruled most things there. From that moment I felt that conflict and trial awaited me, though I knew not what: but I was satisfied before God that nothing which could be ventured on would be spared. I passed through much more conflict of soul then than after I came to England. Nor was I mistaken in my judgment.12 Mr. H. invited me, however, to come to Plymouth. I was greatly exercised as to leaving Switzerland, having the conviction that troubles, which nobody else then believed, would certainly break out, and I lingered there till violence and revolution took place, and all the brethren judged me better away than there. Ministry was impossible, and I should have rather occasioned trouble to them, as well as been particularly obnoxious myself, as having been the active person there.

I returned to England, and came directly down to Plymouth.

I may now relate what took place then, and what had been going on with others before my arrival.

About four years ago Mr. Newton and Mr. B. held meetings at Devonport on ministry, where the following statements were made: that there had been, indeed, the fisherman system, and that Christ had previous to His resurrection chosen poor men to be His instruments: but that after His resurrection this was all changed, the Paul

system was then set up, and the Lord chose educated gentlemen,13 as Paul was. This had been the case at the Reformation, as Luther and Calvin proved; at the modern revival as Wesley and Whitfield shewed; and now recently, as Mr. Darby, and I know not who else, proved. The result of this was that one poor man who had preached among the Methodists, and still did at times, went out of his mind, and was in that state for a couple of years from the conflict of feeling, pressed to declare the Lord's love for sinners, and harassed by the thought, as he had been now instructed, that it was wrong for poor men to put themselves forward. The application of the word of God to his soul, in the hands of one who then knew nothing of the circumstances, but who entered into his then state, has happily restored this poor brother.14 To finish with Devonport, which was a place exclusively under the care of the Ebrington Street leaders. Since my return those who assumed the lead there arranged an assembly of those they judged elders, that they might recognize and own one another among themselves. Two however of the persons they included declined. A number of the brethren then met to know what was to be done, and this was broken up by authority. A good many left, and the rest, I apprehend, are tolerably peaceful and at liberty. Those who sought to govern all in connection with Ebrington Street having been stated by all who left as the persons whose assumption drove them away, they were withdrawn for the time, and now, I apprehend, go on pretty quietly.15 As to Plymouth, there was a constant labour to reduce the meeting to a clerical form, and to invest certain leaders with the sole direction.

This went on in a thousand minute and many private circumstances which it is impossible to detail, which made gracious brethren uneasy, but afforded little or no ground for any specific interference; if it did, there were few or none that dared. For indeed one of the scarcely intelligible phenomena of the case to me was, the way people were cowed, and heart and conscience disposed of, I know not where; save that the quiet and gracious were oppressed and unhappy. I have remarked that it is the art and skill of some men to turn every conscientious man, every one who cannot or will not become an instrument, into a radical or a schismatic. But it is a sad state of things. I could name persons here that were denounced to us as radicals and busybodies, that I have found when not tortured and harassed in conscience, as quiet, unassuming, happy Christians as possible. Indeed in these cases, it is generally the truest-hearted and the least of a party spirit, who are thus miserable; if they stir, it has that uneasy unhappy character which is thus characterized by those who rule. With such it is only as in a famous Latin passage, when “solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.” When they make a solitude around them, they call it peace.

Mr. R.H. has mentioned in his tract some of these circumstances; little by themselves, but together gradually changing the whole character of the meeting. But he has wisely passed over many, many, private ones, which helped largely to alienate him from Ebrington Street.

I may add here, as it was a public one, that he himself was stopped praying in public. How many a gracious person, esteeming himself and his doings of little importance, has yielded in this way, till power was

gained to change principles!16 But thus things went on. A poor brother gave out a hymn. Nobody would raise it. He felt it, spoke of it in private. The simple were disheartened. They feared to give one out. Whose fault was it? Nobody's, and the point was gained. When tolerably disheartened it went farther: for Mr. Newton himself, at a prayer meeting, got up and went and sat down by the side of a young brother who gave out a hymn, and laid hold of his book. The hymn was, I believe, at last raised, but he was asked if he meant to pray too. The young man left, and goes to a free church, where the gospel is preached. Brethren have been hindered speaking; and not only so, but there is not a person resident at Plymouth who frequented Ebrington Street but (as Mr. R.H. has remarked) knew when it was Mr. Newton's and when Mr. H.'s day: and it became the common language to speak of it so by all, rich and poor; and people took their measures for going accordingly. I speak of Sunday mornings at breaking of bread. Now it may happen that there may be only one habitually able to edify in a body; though it is a sad thing if there be no diversity of gift in a large body. But a regular alternation of two, and if absent a sort of manager left, for so it really was, and the speaking prepared as previously considering the state of the congregation and preparing a discourse (and such was the ground avowedly taken with me as the right thing, when I arrived), is certainly not that dependence on the Spirit which characterized the profession of the brethren. I do not like the expression "going to meet the Spirit," but the devoted brother who used it expresses in it (badly, I think,17) the substance of an all-important truth, which those who cavil at it have been assiduously undermining: and, I may add, in such language as I am bold to say no one

under the guidance of that Spirit could use, and which expresses real unbelief as to the substance of the matter. The church is the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is by the Holy Ghost God dwells in the church, though He cannot be separated from the Father and the Son. It has been formally, and expressly, denied that the presence of the Holy Ghost should be looked for in the assembly. It has been perhaps affirmed too. And this is one of the sad circumstances, as it strikes me, in Ebrington Street—not exactly unorthodox teaching, but important truths dealt with in so rash and daring a manner, and the authority of the teacher leant upon for them, and his wildest notions put upon the level of certainty with justification by faith; so that were his authority once shaken there would be danger that no one would know what was certain. It would be scepticism as to everything. So I have seen it with Roman Catholics.

I have myself heard it taught from Hebrews 9:27, that Christ had to be judged after His death as another man! as it was appointed to men to die, and He was a man. It has been taught that Christ was born under death, being a constituted sinner, and worked His way up to life by His obedience. So on Leviticus 1, that covering sin was not merely by sacrificial atonement making satisfaction for it, but that Christ's devoting Himself, as typified by the burnt-offering, made up by a thing of the like kind for our imperfect devotedness, and what a blessing it was that it should be of the like kind, and so filled up and completed, its defects covered. The statement as to the Holy Ghost was, that they did not look for His presence in the assembly, but for God to be over it to bless it.

I admit that since the question has been raised, it has been stated otherwise. But the explanation recently given, to which I have alluded elsewhere, was, that they went to meet God, not the Holy Ghost; we the Holy Ghost, not God. I leave any sober and intelligent Christian to judge what the state of those must be, as to steady certainty on fundamental truths, who were habitually under this kind of teaching. I have given but specimens; I may add from my own experience that most decided legalism took the place of Christ and grace. I could not have recommended a person about whose soul I was anxious to go there, nor was I singular in this feeling. And these things are urged with all solemnity of the most important fundamental truths. The godliest of the poor happily never understood Mr. Newton at all.

But I return to the history of the circumstances.

When speaking was really impossible for unallowed brethren, some of these read a chapter in the Bible sometimes. This was stopped as hindering the ministry. This happened to three different brethren; to one of them it was one of the ruling sisters who went. The brother, a reserved and blameless brother, was told that he could read his Bible at home, and that he hindered the ministry. He read no more. In another of those cases Mr. Newton himself interfered, and when asked whose ministry had been hindered, and having stated, the brother went to that person, who replied that it had only been hindered by Mr. Newton.

As to the teaching I heard in Ebrington Street from Mr. Newton, the one undeviating object seemed to be to teach differently from what brethren had taught, no matter what, so that it set their teaching aside. This was

so marked in many cases as to draw the attention of others besides myself.

And now as to the circumstances connected with rule and authority. It is alleged that we are radicals, and look for democracy. I trust brethren will seek nothing but the guidance of God's blessed Spirit. But what are the facts? There was a meeting from the earliest period called the Friday meeting, where those who laboured habitually among the saints and were occupied with their concerns met to consult together, instead of acting apart or isolatedly; and where many little things, such as arise everywhere, were settled in the fear of God, while what became matters of public discipline were presented to the assembly at large. There may be trouble between brethren happily terminated without the need of shewing them up in public before a whole assembly. If public discipline be needed, then it is clear from scripture the assembly must judge, and act to clear the consciences of all, their own consciences. But then this is a very painful case. However such a meeting there was, and, with the difficulties and trials incident to all things, went on with the confidence of the saints. Latterly, but after the lapse of a good many years, when Capt. H., Sir A.C. and myself were no longer at Plymouth, Mr. Newton absented himself: only, when any case arose on which he had formed an opinion, and wished to interfere, he came down at the close of the meeting, inquired how it was settled, and insisted on its being judged his own way, setting aside what had been done where it did not accord with his mind. Mr. R.H. remonstrated once or twice against this procedure. This was received with great anger by Mr. Newton, and the practice being still followed, Mr. R.H. told Mr. H. that it

was idle their meeting if things went on thus, and left. It lingered on awhile and finally closed about two years ago, it being impossible to bring them together again. Mr. H. however laboured at its restoration, but in vain, the following circumstance having occurred. On the occasion of the burial of a poor person on Sunday (which the poor always desire as their attendance is more easy, and which had been disallowed at Ebrington Street), the son of the deceased insisted on it. He came from a distance. Mr. S—s, who was habitually the resort of the poor in similar cases, sent him to Mr. H. He was away. Mr. S—s then told him to go and get the grave dug, and on Sunday morning he mentioned it to the assembly at the close of the meeting. Mr. Newton went over to him in great anger and told him it was impossible to go on with him any longer, etc.

On a week-day Mr. Newton sent down Mr. H. to summon Mr. S—s to the back room of the tract-shop where he remained himself.18 Mr. S—s asked what for, and was told to come up to be instructed in the principles on which the meeting was conducted if he did not know them. He declined going. Mr. H. declined going again, and Mr. Newton was obliged to go down himself; and there he told Mr. S—s that there were those whom God had raised up and given authority to, and his business was to obey. Mr. S—s asked who they were, and Mr. Newton replied, himself, H., S., and B., and that neither did he recognize Mr. S—s at all. Mr. S—s replied, that neither did he recognize Mr. Newton. This closed the attempt to re-establish the Friday meeting. The two brethren S—s and R—e were now the objects of every annoyance and dishonour. I found stories against the latter, which were totally false, circulated far and wide,

which I knew to have been spread by sisters. These two brethren took care of the money, and paid the expenses, and distributed any allowances to the poor. Mr. Newton insisted on an arrangement, against their remonstrance, which separated the expenses from the poor; and soon after I arrived at Plymouth, it had to be announced that there had been no means of paying for more than a year's gas, and wine for communion for half a year.

Such was the state of things when I arrived, ignorant of all these details, but since my last visit having felt that clericalism and worldly principles had usurped the place of the Spirit of God. I had received no complaint, no letter about it. It was a letter, as I have stated, of Mr. H.'s which shewed me that all barrier was gone against evil which I knew to be at work, but which had been hitherto borne with as individual evil. The tract-shop had become a violent party sectarian instrument. It was an institution I always indeed thought objectionable. One tract was sold there shewing how the universal consent of the church was against those who differed from Mr. N. and that it could easily be shewn that those who did were "subverting the first elements of Christianity." This tract had been published on a resolution of the Plymouth teachers, taken after a remonstrance19 from some London brethren.20 It has been supposed that it was my sudden arrival which occasioned the feeling and conduct which followed. This is all untruthful pretence. Mr. Newton had ever since my letter to Mr. H. (I have the date from Mr. Newton himself) been labouring to prepare the minds of all he could against me. This I learnt after my arrival. It is only since the London meeting that I have known that Mr. H. had furnished him with my three or four private letters to him, which

Mr. N. took about and pressed on people, with his own reasonings, to prove that I was subverting the truth. Mr. H. did it most innocently.

In the letters (which I have not seen since21) I apprehend there was nothing. At least the brethren who came down to inquire asked me if there were others than these of the date in question, in which I had said something to Mr. H.: an inquiry of which I could not well tell the meaning till I heard the use that had been made of them (a use which was not confined to Plymouth). Of all this I was happily ignorant when I went there, and desired only in ministry to raise, if God enabled me, the spiritual tone of souls which I felt to be grievously sunk —I acknowledge I was a poor instrument for it. But the public weekly meetings in Raleigh Street were trebled in spite of all the prejudice raised.

But this is the way the letter-shewing worked. A great many took Mr. Newton's statements as to my views without further inquiry, and at the same time it was based in their subsequent statements on my own letters. If not, distrust was produced, and this was something. Those who were disgusted with this way of getting on were known, and set down and discountenanced as Darbyites.

I leave to others to recount, if they please, the meeting and consultings of the leaders to ensure united opposition to and rejection of me, as I have only known it since the London meeting.22 Such there were. I can only mention the facts as they occurred. I went to stay at Mr. R.H.'s the next morning after my arrival. There Mr. Newton came, and I met him cordially in manner, however pained. He sat down at the opposite side of the

room, whereon I resumed my seat by the side of one I was speaking to, and Mr. N. after a few words with Mr. R.H., who seated himself beside him, got up and said, Good morning, sir, and went out. Three brethren, Messrs. H., S., and B., then came, or were sent, separately, to ask me what I had come to Plymouth for. 23 Mr. Newton then wrote me word, that he had met me with intentional coldness, considering I had come as an antagonist to them, but on the report of B. and H., he could walk on peacefully in separate paths. I replied, that I objected to his “having acted very badly towards many beloved brethren, and in the sight of God.” He withdrew thereon the former kindly-written note, and applied for names and circumstances. I confess I felt this miserable. He had been writing for six years to every quarter of the globe (Mr. Newton boasted of it at last before the brethren who came), saying, the foundations of Christianity were gone if brethren were listened to; sisters had been employed in copying these letters; tracts had been published, declaring that we all subverted the first elements of Christianity! and he asks for dates and circumstances. I replied, it was the sectarianism and denouncing of brethren I complained of. This, he replied, was a new charge! And, as it involved all the rest at Plymouth in the charge as well as him, he would consult with them about it and meet, but demanded the dates or circumstances of the former charge or its withdrawal. As I well knew, and any one could see, that it was a mere explanation and enlargement of acting badly towards beloved brethren, I declined further communication unless before brethren; the rather as he alluded very incorrectly to past circumstances, and I thought such correspondence very useless. I had his letters declaring the foundations of

Christianity were gone, and the tract saying we subverted Christianity, not to mention that there were letters without end written under his influence.

But there are other circumstances I must now mention because it has been supposed Mr. Newton was charged publicly all at once, and no steps taken, and this has been even much insisted on. Before ever I came to Plymouth, and without any communication with me, Mr. H.Y., who felt equally the sectarianism and that every principle was set aside, had been to Mr. Newton and spoken to him. Mr. Newton answered him with the greatest violence, and declared that we were destroying the fundamentals of Christianity, that he was justified in what he was doing against us, and should continue. Mr. A.P. went also to him just about the time I came, and was met with the same avowed determination to persevere. 24 To continue, Mr. H. came down to me to say that Mr. Newton would not consent to have a sort of jury formed on him, but that they could have a meeting, to see whether sectarianism had been introduced. I replied, that they would have had no difficulty in having what he called “a jury” on a poor brother, but that I was content to have such a meeting, as I could go and take my part in the inquiry like any one else. He asked me who should go. I said, I suppose Y. and P., as they had been already to Mr. Newton; for the rest, any Mr. Newton wished to bring as his friends. I declined bringing any. I have always avoided the very semblance of party. Subsequently Mr. R.H. desired to come. Mr. N—r from Jersey, having been conversant with affairs at Plymouth, was there, and Mr. P—’s brother, and Mr. McA. The rest, thirteen in all besides Mr. Newton and myself, were Mr.

Newton's friends. Messrs. H., S., B., D., C—w., J., R., A.P., C.P., N—r., R.H., Y., McA. from Exeter.

Being called upon to state what I objected to I said, As an inquiry into sectarianism, any could inquire as well as me, any judgment on Mr. Newton's conduct having been avoided. Being pressed, I began by stating, that what I objected to was the sectarianism (I had previously declared to Mr. H. that I would not enter on the prophetic question as a doctrinal thing; it was a moral question to me).

Mr. Newton broke out in great anger, saying, that he waived all formal objections, that he did seek to make a focus of Plymouth, and that his object was to have union in testimony there against the other brethren (that is, as explained and is evident, their teaching), and that he trusted to have at least Devonshire and Somersetshire under his influence for the purpose; and that it was not the first time that I had thwarted and spoiled his plans.

After this declaration, I produced of course no proofs, and Messrs. Y. and P. said, that they had no need to state anything that passed, as Mr. Newton had declared his object as plainly as they could have alleged it. I called upon the brethren to say, If this was what Plymouth was to be, as, if it was, I should not go next Sunday. Mr. Newton said I had no right to ask that: it was his own affair, and he should go on with it. I however persevered. Mr. H. said, this made it difficult for him to act with Mr. Newton, as he could not seek union against anything. None other stated his feelings on the subject. 25 It was arranged, that those present should meet, to know what were the heresies which made such a course as Mr. Newton's desirable. There were two meetings, at

which I attended as desired, and stated my views. Some there said, the mountains were molehills; but Mr. Newton declared he was farther apart than ever; and that the differences were fundamental.

Mr. H. had interviews with Mr. Newton on the subject of the union in testimony, against the teaching of the brethren. He obtained from Mr. Newton the statement, that it would be an object, not the object, of his labours; with which he, Mr. H., was much delighted, as a means of peace. To me it was the proof of deliberate perseverance in a pursuit which anger had disclosed. Subsequently Mr. D. and Mr. H. obtained verbally from him, that his statement was objectionable, if taken irrelatively. But there was no explanation of this, but an unauthorized one by Mr. D., that Mr. Newton would go on with “brethren” on other points, but continue his own pursuit of the avowed object. I was dismayed, not at the existence of the evil, but at the utter insensibility to such a statement, the only thought of most being to save, not the church, but Mr. Newton from its effects; and all silent (save what I have stated). But on Mr. A.P. saying that brethren ought to say what they felt, Mr. B. replied, You may ask me, but I will not answer you. When I had asked at first, whether brethren acquiesced in this statement, Mr. Newton (as I have mentioned) interfered instantly, and said I had no right to put such a question. At the close of the last meeting, which was to know whether there was any disavowal of it, and at which the term “taken irrelatively,” was discussed, Mr. R. indeed asked Mr. N—r why he said nothing, and he said he was a stranger, and Mr. R. excused himself on the same ground.

I left for Somersetshire to leave time for those less obnoxious to Mr. Newton than I, to obtain some disavowal of the purpose —the “objectionable if taken irrelatively” was all that could be obtained. I then stated that perhaps I had better leave and ask for Raleigh Street. Mr. R. said that very great good had been done, that I ought to be uncommonly thankful, and urged me not to press any further disavowal then, lest it should produce a rupture with Mr. Newton, but wait and see. I said it was a sorrowful position to be in, but it was all that I was then doing, and acquiesced in the wish, and I continued to minister on the general topics of the grace of the Lord Jesus.

But I must now relate what my journey to Somersetshire further opened to me. I went there, quite unconscious of it all, to evangelize where none of these questions were. These circumstances were important as to Plymouth, as unfolding the working of the plan there. As at Plymouth they treated what wonderfully blessed new light they had got as to their church position, so here it was taught that, as the brethren had first learnt brotherly unity and fellowship, now they had been, as fresh instruction, led to church order. This church order was the authority of the teachers, who were exclusively to judge of, and recognize or the contrary, others as teachers.26 This was founded on “Let the rest [others] judge,” in i Corinthians 14:29. This was said to be the prophets, to which the teachers now answered. They were to try, and approve or not, of a person’s being a teacher. Mr. Newton had gone up and held a tea meeting there and expounded this. This came to such a pitch in these quarters that one brother, on these points being mooted, having urged that after all the Bereans were more noble

than those of Thessalonica, because they searched the scriptures whether these things were so, he was answered by a young, and, as far as I know, very nice-hearted young man who was associated in the ministry there, that it was Jews searching Jewish scriptures, but that, now that God had raised up teachers and given gifts, all that was changed, and they must listen to the teachers. The brother replied, Surely, sir, if Jews searched Jewish scriptures, Christians may search Christian ones. It was there taught by Mr. Newton, that Puseyism was the devil's imitation of a truth, and that, if brethren did not adopt it, God would set it up elsewhere. It was stated at Plymouth, at the close of these matters, on the question as to judging in the church, that the teachers were the representatives of the church, and that they were to decide, and the church to act on their decision. This may be and probably has been denied; but I know it to be true, and to have been stated as well since, as before all the debate about it. As to the explanation of the chapter there can be no doubt about it; not only because it was urged upon me and numbers of other persons; but even before I arrived, H. had objected to this interpretation, on the ground that it could not be approving and sanctioning teachers, for it was the teaching that was to be judged; and the person was assumed on their own shewing to be a prophet already. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

At Exmouth the principles were sought to be introduced first, rather roughly by one, and then more prudently by another; but the first person alluded to, acting on the principle, excommunicated a person on his own authority. He had withdrawn because the principles

were abandoned, and it was asserted that no one could leave the church, and he was excommunicated. I know it has been sought to shew that this met the mind of others. Some may very likely have been under the influence of the same principles, so that I should not deny this in a measure; but the excommunication was refused to be received by two bodies of the brethren, and at last the most of the other brethren at Exmouth took courage and restored him.

It is alleged that government and order are rejected. But let it be remembered that it was Mr. N. who deserted and broke up the Friday meeting, a point on which we shall see more just now. And, as to the brethren who laboured according to what was given them as servants of all to administer and guide as helpers of the body, Mr. B. in the counties I here refer to (and he acted on the same principle elsewhere) urged that five ciphers never could make one, a statement which became such an accredited one that it was repeated elsewhere by another as original; so that I was very near getting into a scrape by attributing it to him before those who had heard it from another. The excellent answer of a brother in those parts then was that, if the Spirit of God was there as one before them, the five ciphers would be 100,000.

All this be it remembered had happened before I came back to England. Mr. B. himself urged the point on me soon after I came. Yet, when things began to come out, it was repeatedly urged upon me, that some things had happened as accidents, but that there was no plan nor principle in it. It closed at Wellington by some of the leading brethren stating to Mr. Newton (in what terms I

do not pretend to know) that they could not be distracted by these proceedings any more.

Mr. H. went to Ireland and was very happy there with the brethren who were the great objects of Plymouth denouncement.27 This, after the open avowal of sectarian objects at the April meeting, I have no doubt acted greatly on his mind. At his return he spoke in the way of admonition. Such a party spirit blazed out against him, that I ceased ministering for a time. However, they seemed softened, and I began again. Mr. H. then laboured again at setting up the Friday meeting; as, except the few things Mr. N. wished to govern, which had now to be more cautiously done too, all common matters were in disorder. If it was a funeral, no one knew rightly what to do, nor a person wishing for communion; and he felt bound too to those who had been practically ousted. But he could do nothing.

At this time appeared the two documents upon which the famous question of the charges arose. Mr. C—w had printed a letter written to him by Mr. Newton to give an account of the April meeting of 15—both having been there. Mr. S. got it suppressed as soon as he saw it, but Mr. N. himself subsequently circulated it again. This (though so bad and sectarian, that some brethren counted it as bad as what was said) is, confessedly now, not a true account of the meeting. This rests not only on (besides myself) the testimony of Mr. H., N—r, McA., and many others, but Mr. R. (who, the most openly of all, took the part of Mr. Newton, and was cross-examined at length by Lord C. to get some modification of his testimony) persisted in the same account as myself. The only modification was that, instead of saying that he trusted he should have at least Devonshire and

Somersetshire under his influence for the purpose, he understood him to say, that wherever he could get influence in Devonshire, Somersetshire, and Cornwall, he should seek to do the same thing. Mr. N. himself at last said, as I understood, that as everybody said he did, he supposed he did say as alleged. Lord C. at last asked Mr. R. whether, if he had read that paper, he should say it was an untrue account of the meeting. He replied he must, but that Mr. N. was so angry (so chafed, I believe, was the word) that he did not think he ought to be charged with what he did say. This passed in my room when the brethren who came to inquire came to examine me.28 The other thing which formed the subject of charge was this. Mr. Newton published the first letter of the five, which had been circulating six years in MS., denouncing the brethren, with the following advertisement: “The following letter was written some years ago, in reply to the inquiries of a friend, who resides in Norfolk. It is now published with some omissions and alterations, but in substance it remains the same.” What was my astonishment to find, on comparing it, that a quarter nearly of the printed matter was not in the MS. letter at all; partly mixed up, but chiefly added at the end; and that the new matter consisted of reasonings against the doctrines he was charged with holding now as to the authority of teachers. So that these charges appeared most wanton and unfounded, inasmuch as six years ago the person charged had actually written against the things he now was charged with. This is all woven in at the end of the letter, so as to form part of it.

I had been already pretty well disgusted with diplomacy and special pleading, but this was too much for me. I

said to H. and S. I did not know what to do, and ceased ministering. But I still went down to the room, and sat in the crowd at communion, and went to villages to preach. I was greatly exercised about leaving—prayed much; and at last it occurred to me that, if the Friday meeting were set up again, these things might be inquired into there, and the body hindered from being responsible for it, or God might lead to some remedy, though humanly speaking it was a forlorn hope. But I said, I will not leave till I have tried all. I spoke to Mr. H., and he said he had twice tried, and it was no use.

I then spoke to Mr. S. He said there ought to be such a thing—it was absolutely necessary, but that he could take no step in it, as it would produce a rupture with Mr. N., as he would have nobody but the persons he approved of. I asked if everything was to be sacrificed to the caprice of an individual. In another interview Mr. S. said he had spoken to Mr. B., and referred to a particular brother as objectionable, not the one who had been chiefly obnoxious before. As to him Mr. S. said he must be of the Friday meeting. I said I should object seriously to some that thought themselves unquestionably entitled; but though I had difficulties as to some most looked up to, and which I could justify by Mr. S.'s own statements, I was content to waive them, and take them as they had been together.29 Meeting him a third time, I found nothing was done, and I told him I must then act on my own conscience. Again I thought of leaving, when it occurred to me, that still I ought not to charge the whole body with the matter, when it was only some party leaders and their followers that had yet been dealt with.

I therefore begged the assembly to stop after the service one Sunday morning, and told them that Mr. H. having laboured to restore the Friday meeting, things being in disorder or dealt with summarily and irresponsibly by one or two, I had pressed the point on those more immediately concerned, but to no purpose; I now laid it on the consciences of the saints themselves. Mr. H. was at this time absent, and Mr. W.H—n wrote to him that I had sought to turn the meeting into a dissenting body,30 but that nobody thought it worth taking the least notice of, and that it had dropped to the ground. This letter, I know, contributed very greatly to the emancipation of Mr. H.'s mind from the bondage it was under.

I then went to Jersey, etc., to give all the fullest time to consider the matter. As Mr. H—n stated truly, not one stirred. The fact is, while I attempted to heal or remedy, and walk with the evil, God, though He sustained me, never (after the April meeting) gave any efficacy to a step I took. I do not doubt I ought to have left then, or brought it publicly before all the brethren. I did not do so at the instance of Mr. R., Mr. Y., and some others. I can only sorrow now I was not more decided. The case would have been infinitely simpler, but God graciously overrules all. But no brother could have expected me to have stayed to have made Plymouth a focus, and join in helping a union in testimony against myself, not to speak of other brethren. It has been asked why I did not go on and teach at Plymouth. I answer, I did. Why did I not bring it before the leading brethren there to be remedied? They had been broken up, and their meeting was refused. Mr. Newton would not hear of it from any one. He had claimed, as already related, sole authority for himself and three or four others he had approved.

But I must now turn to some other collateral minor facts which entered into this miserable history.

An aged person, whom it is needless to name, who had long been opposed to and kept aloof from brethren, who himself preached, but whose congregation had died away, came into communion and began to minister on Sunday morning. He did not do so, strange to say, in general, when Mr. Newton was not there; at least when I was. I cannot answer for other occasions. But I heard him on week evenings. Though there was nothing unorthodox or wrong in his teaching, yet I did not at all think he was led of the Spirit of God in it, and when he came to speak to me about these things afterwards, I told him so. I was not at Plymouth when he joined, but I told Mr. H. I thought his joining was, under the circumstances, a chastisement; but if they put away the chastisement instead of the thing they were chastised for, they would have worse. Mr. H. spoke to him with no adequate effect at any rate. But Mr. B. one Sunday morning, being left (practically) in charge of the meeting as was customary, the other chief leaders being absent, the old gentleman got up to speak while the alms box was going round after the communion. Mr. B. pulled him back to his seat by the tail of his coat, and on the return of the box closed the meeting. A brother, well known and esteemed, long suffering under the state of things, remonstrated; and another urging, just after when the first was not listened to, that the first had said that if this went on he must leave, Mr. B. replied, Let him.

This person however was not to be daunted by this; and one day, when he got up to speak at the Sunday morning meeting, the sisters tried to put him down by scraping with their feet. At this period I sat among the

communicants, taking no part in general publicly in the service, though I once said something on a week evening. I was quiescent. That Sunday I was present. The next I was not, and then, as he rose to speak again, the sisters and some brethren began leaving, and before the close of the meeting one sister came and patted him on the back and told him, if he went on that way, all would leave. The Sunday following, before the brother who broke bread reached his seat to sit down, Mr. N. jumped up so as to prevent anyone's speaking.31 During the week I spoke to Mr. S., and said that it was impossible that all this could go on. He replied that it was very bad, it was regular jockeyship. I called his attention to his expression, and what would be said of me if I had used it. He repeated, Well, I say it again, it was regular jockeyship. I said, Do you feel the force of what you are saying? If the presence of God is thought of in the meeting, what jockeyship would be there? All this passed previously, and partly led to my putting the re-establishment of the Friday meeting on the consciences of the brethren at large. The present result was that Mr. Newton took Mr. H. and S. and silenced the person referred to, who left the meeting. No notice was taken of the means used to put him down in the meeting. I could not help feeling that all this was allowed of God as a humbling test of the state of things.

I now turn to another circumstance which occurred about this time. A brother, known at Plymouth (where the facts also are known, but whom I shall not name, as what I am about to relate is sad enough), rose up and spoke in the assembly after a hymn referring to the cross. He had never, I believe, spoken in the assembly, but had preached in villages. He was (I did not know

him before this, but as far as I can give any testimony) a truly upright godly person, respected by those who knew him. It was a sad instance of Plymouth ways. He spoke a little nervously in manner, but gave a godly and useful exhortation on really crucifying self if we celebrated the cross, and then pressed the evil of aiming at any importance for oneself. I asked Mr. H. who it was as we went out. He said, He is a godly humble man, but it will make a proper hubbub, and he will catch it, or some such expression. He was accordingly immediately set at, so as to be effectually dismayed. Nor was there one, as is well known at Plymouth, who spoke more strongly (unless perhaps one other not there now) against the kind of tyranny which was practised there, and the hindrance of all liberty in ministry or otherwise taking part in the meeting. Mr. Newton went to Mr. H. the next morning, and pressed him as to what he was going to do as to the brother's speaking. Mr. H. declaring he had no intention to do anything, Mr. N. pressed the matter, that this brother was not fit to minister, and that it was a sin against the order of God's church for which he had been sweating his soul for the last twelve years.32 Mr. H. declined. However he had been quite sufficiently cowed by other means used already. How did this history close? This brother, a respectable godly man, for such he has been ever esteemed, had given up a place of confidential warehouseman in the town, I believe conscientiously from the nature of the employment, and waited to see what would turn up. He was given33 a weekly allowance, sent out to preach, and began to speak in the meetings.34 In one of the meetings held by Mr. Newton by invitation to explain things, after the brethren who came to inquire were gone, this brother stood up and

testified that he never had been hindered,35 but always encouraged to speak, Mr. Newton and Mr. S., who knew all that had passed, sitting by.

Having gone through this collateral subject, I return to the general narrative. After some time I returned from Jersey, my mind much tried about leaving, but my conscience allowing me no longer to stay. I arrived Saturday and had no wish to act in a hurry. On Sunday week I detained the assembly and told them it was a matter of the deepest sorrow, but that I was going to quit the assembly; I felt it impossible to enter into details. It would have been a string of miserable facts, the public ones of which have been detailed here, and practically an accusation of others. I therefore refrained from them entirely, and only stated the principles on which I went: that I felt God was practically displaced; and more particularly, that there was a subversion of the principles on which we met; that there was evil and unrighteousness unconfessed and unjudged; and, as a collateral point, that the Friday meeting, which was a means of inquiry and service, had been suppressed and refused to be restored, so that the remedy for much was taken away. I then left the assembly.

Mr. H. returned that week or the next, and, having communicated the day to Messrs. S—s and R—e, gave on Friday his reasons for declining ministering any more.36 I had had no communication with him. Messrs. S—s and R—e had told him that they should gather the brethren to see what was to be done about his leaving. Accordingly, at the close of his address on Friday, Mr. R—e proposed their meeting on Monday to see if anything could be done or what. Mr. S—s got up and said it would be well at the same time if I was called upon to say why

I left. I was not present, being no longer of Ebrington Street. It was communicated to me afterwards.

Accordingly on Monday, after they had spoken of Mr. H., and prayed without any definite proposal or result, I was sent for to give an account to the brethren why I had left. Every engine had been meanwhile set in motion to hinder any coming. It was called a sin to go, because it was not called by the authorities in the church. The sisters held meetings in their districts for the purpose. It was denounced as “an electioneering meeting,” etc. About two or three hundred however assembled there. I stated my reasons, and, I can humbly say, with the presence of the Lord and in grace towards all; so that I know one very dear brother still in Ebrington Street went to Mr. S. and told him all would be well from the spirit in which I had spoken. It was at that assembly that I stated, in the narrative I gave, that the two printed tracts already referred to had stopped my ministering three months before my leaving. I brought no accusation against Mr. Newton in general at all. So far from it that facts, many many facts, which I thought much worse of I did not allude to, because they had nothing to do with my leaving. These had stopped my ministering, and I stated them.

I shall just now state one of the other facts, because it also was one of the most public points in the affair. The rest I shall pass by. But I will first close the matter of the meeting. As to the appendix and the letters, I stated that the first thing that made me uncomfortable was the circulation of three out of the five letters which had been sent forth against the brethren, with an appendix which related to the last two given at the end of the third and professing to relate to the first, while much

related to the two last which were not there. Mr. Newton was not mentioned in this statement; though, as Mr. N— r remarked, he being connected with this part of the subject, it would naturally be referred to him, which so far is true. I did not mean to appropriate particularly the measure of wrong, as I knew the copy I had was in a sister's handwriting. It has been alleged (and Mr. Newton made it a public charge at a meeting he held after the brethren were gone) that I stated he had altered the letters, and that I stated he had altered them after I had been told he had not, and a great fuss was made about it. A Miss H., it was said, had been authorised to say he had not. Miss H.'s statement made to me by letter is totally incorrect.37 Of this I have absolute proof. I never said the letters were altered. Had they been, it would have been no sort of subject of complaint. Mr. Newton had a perfect right to alter them if he pleased. Had I anything to complain of in this respect, it was that they were not altered; for they are full of the grossest calumnies against the brethren. Mr. N. had been remonstrated with about them; and in them brethren are called upon to have a categorical answer from any who teach, whether they agree with Mr. N.'s views On Matthew 24. What I spoke of was the suppression of the two last, and the adding the appendix which referred to them.38 This was the fact. All I said of it was that it was the first thing which made me uncomfortable, without any other charge whatever. The fact of the last two letters not being there was stated, and so it was.

Subsequently to this, the sister who had copied it sent for me to explain this, and of course I received all she said. I have published the statement elsewhere. I shall

here say why I used the word “probably,” because I could not honestly use any other. This sister put a copy of the letters (she was one of those employed to copy and circulate them) into my hand, and I observed that the three letters were there together also, and not the two last. This I noticed to her and said, Perhaps you copied them in two books, and that may account for it. She replied, Yes, I did so to give it to two to read at a time. This I of course accepted. But the sister added, that the reason the appendix was added at the end of the third, though it belonged to the first, was, that the letters were already written, and that she was obliged to put the appendix and notes in a space at the end. Now in my copy, written by this sister, this was not the case. The notes, which are very long, are all in their respective places. And therefore, though I let all this drop as utterly immaterial, I could (when urged to give the account) only say, the presence of the appendix there was probably accounted for; because, though I gave credit to this sister fully in what she said, it did not tally with the facts as to my copy in which the circumstance was to be accounted for.

As to changing the letters, not only would this have been no charge whatever (for what should hinder my altering my writings in a new edition?) but though Mr. N. made this a public charge among his own party at the meetings he held, that I had accused him of it after an authorised denial, and this was spread far and wide, he did not think of making it to me. I have his written authorized complaint, presented at his request by four of his friends, and there is not a word of that; but only of what I have stated, the absence of the last two letters; the other, so publicly charged and widely circulated, was

not ventured on in the account he gave of the charges he complained of in the communication with me on the subject.

Being now fairly out, and Mr. H. having declined further ministry, I received a letter from Air. L.P—r urging me to assemble a number of the leading brethren to see into it before I broke bread elsewhere. At the same time I received a letter from Capt. H. pressing on me the misery of a second table. I wrote two letters to Mr. P—r, stating in general, what led me to it, and saying that, if he felt as he said, he had better come himself. I wrote to Capt. H. to say I felt as sorrowfully about a second table as he could do, but it was a question with me of having any, not of a second; and, further, that I did not ask him to come as he had been considered hostile to Mr. Newton's views, but that if H—y or any of the brethren they thought right at Hereford came, they could judge of the grounds. No one came thence. I communicated to Lord C. what I had done, and said I did not ask W. as he was considered an adversary to Mr. Newton. I communicated it also to Sir A.C. Mr. P—r, who brought with him C, Lord C, and Sir A.C, with whom was Mr. McA., came. Mr. N. or Mr. S. sent for Mr. N.'s friends.

In result there were Messrs. McA., C, P—r, W., R., R—s, M—s, N—r, who arrived from Jersey at that time to let his house, Mr. M., Lord C, and Mr. W—r, who left early before the inquiry (I understood through the illness of his child). There is one fact I will notice here, that all who were not, and did not come as avowed partisans of Mr. Newton, declined breaking bread39 any longer in Ebrington Street; that is, Mr. McA., Sir A.C., P—r., C, W.: I am not sure whether Mr. N—r avowed it as the others,

but I believe there is no doubt of his judgment of the matter.

And allow me to ask a question here. Sir A.C. declares he cannot break bread there, and leaves Plymouth. Mr. McA. does so and leaves Plymouth; Messrs. C. and P—r the same. What were people to do who had come to the same conclusion in conscience, and that from much longer and fuller evidence, but who had shops and children at Plymouth, and could not leave? I could have left, but I should have failed in faithfulness to those brethren had I done so. The others had other places perhaps that claimed them; I was free.

I will now mention another circumstance, which though it were a publication subsequent to my leaving so that it did not influence it, did influence any thought of my subsequent return, or recognition of Mr. Newton in ministry. Mr. N., previous to the Clifton meeting, had taught assiduously in public and in private that the Old Testament saints had not the new spiritual life; that the Holy Ghost had indeed acted on them as men in the flesh, but the new life was not communicated to them. This, which was Lord C.'s account before the brethren, confirmed by Sir A.C.'s testimony, was what I had in a general form spoken about at the April meeting; that is, that they had not life. Other persons, whom it is not necessary to name, had full recollection of it. And Mr. N. does not now deny it, brethren having spoken to him on the subject. This at the time made me very uneasy. Mr. H. was very near being led by Mr. N. into it; but I spoke with him and he was preserved from it.40 I spoke to Mr. N. at the Clifton meeting about it in Mr. H.'s presence, and he gave it up.

When at the April meeting Mr. N. was stating why he must pursue his purpose of seeking united testimony against us, he urged the notion that there might be a difference in the circumstances of glory in the kingdom between the Old and New Testament saints. I demanded how he could be so violent as to a supposition that there might be such a difference, which was after all a settled idea of no one that I knew, when he had held and taught that they had not life. He replied, That is false. I said I knew it was not; but what had he taught? He said, That they had not the new creature. I said, I know I am right, but be it as you say. He replied, But I did not say they would not have it in another world. I said with astonishment, Well! this is a new kind of life-giving purgatory. They lived a life of faith without the new creature, and get it after their death. He replied, No, they may get it at the instant of dying.41 I left it there. This conversation is referred to in the publication I now proceed to mention. It had been very widely circulated, as every one knows at Plymouth and elsewhere, among rich and poor, that we denied that the Old Testament saints had life. This, and that I denied that redemption through the blood as to many, took away the Gospels, Hebrews, and Revelation, from the church, was the constant and assiduous charge by all the leaders at Plymouth, and still continues to be so.42 I left them to destroy themselves, which in every upright mind they soon did.

At the time however I now speak of, Mr. N. published a second letter on my Examination. In this, in the coolest and most deliberate way, he charges us, and me particularly, with the doctrine which he, and he alone, taught, and says that, as people’s minds are exercised

about it, I ought to explain myself on it. There is not even the excuse, itself absurd enough, that though he had been brought out of it by those he charged with it, they had themselves fallen into and propagated it afterwards; because, in the publication in which the charge is, he alludes to the discussion held about it in April. The brethren P—e and M—1 asked him as to this when I began to break bread. He stated that he had held as was stated, and that he was wrong; but that he had never charged us with holding difference in life, but only in glory. Every one at Plymouth knows whether this was true or not, but there is only need of appeal to the second letter itself (p. 17), where he says that it is no wonder we hold difference in glory, seeing we suppose difference in life. I must leave to every one to estimate the cool manner, and apparent zeal for the truth, with which this charge is made in the letter.

To proceed to what took place when the brethren came down. Lord C, Mr. M., and Mr. W—r arrived, Mr. W. and Sir A.C. about the same time; the others shortly after. Mr. N. had a very long interview at the Dispensary at Plymouth, with Lord C., Mr. M., and W—r, and with a physician of Plymouth, who sent a jointly signed letter to me, to name four persons along with Mr. Newton’s four to inquire into the charges I had made. I replied that I should not name any four persons; that the matter was an affair of conscience before the church of God (the most of it had already been first before 15, and then about 300 persons). I thought it a worldly way of settling it. Nor can I yet see that, when a person is charged with sin in the church, it is a scriptural way that he should name four persons to investigate it, and the one who has charged him four more. Indeed I was justified in this by

every spiritual person I know before whom it came. I shewed it to Mr. H. and Mr. McA. then arrived, and they said, What is the good for us of four people inquiring into this when we were there? Their report could not affect our judgment. However, I only declined having four on my side. I said that I was quite ready to meet the inquiry, that I would meet the four friends of Mr. N. individually, or all four together, and tell them everything, or I would go before the whole body, or (if a limited number were thought more suited to investigate) I was content it should be done in that way, or Mr. N.'s friends might re-assemble the 15 who met in April, or if Mr. N. chose to take it up as a personal wrong (which is what in fact he complained of), he could follow the scriptural rule in that case.

All I demanded was that it should be fully inquired into before the church of God. I mentioned that the statement of the charges themselves was inaccurate. I received for answer that it was not a matter of conscience but of fact; that they had expected to receive a withdrawal of the charges, or an acceptance of their proposal; that it was evident I was not prepared to substantiate them, and that they therefore treated my statements as unworthy of credit, and had given a copy of the letter to Mr. Newton to do as he pleased with; that bringing it before a public assembly was repeating the grievance, and that Matthew 18 did not apply, because it was a wrong done in public. They had never been near me at all (save Lord C, and with him there was nothing to say to this). They had never asked me what my charges were; and they had never asked a word of five or six brethren present at the April meeting, then in or near Plymouth, not partisans of Mr. N., that is, Messrs.

H., C.P., McA., N—r, R.H. I replied that I was sorry some I loved had put themselves in such a position, and begged for a copy of my letter, which, as writing to brethren, I had not kept.

It is not for me to state all that the inquiring brethren did, for I stayed perfectly quiet. I can only allude to some facts. They came to me once. Mr. N. was so anxious about his character that they had difficulty in getting at the question of principle, which all pretty much agreed, with more or less decision of conviction, had been departed from—some most decidedly who had not before suspected it. The facts were proved which I had charged. Indeed, as to one there was only to compare the publication professing to be the letter six years ago, and the MS. The testimony as to what passed at the April meeting, was such that Mr. N. himself at last said, he supposed he must have said what I stated, as all said so.

Here I would only remark as to the complaint of not going to Mr. Newton about it, that he had been gone to about it. Mr. Newton held no communication with me at the time. When the brethren urged me to wait in April, and grace and patience were to be continued, I went to call on Mr. Newton, and, not finding him, told him I had; but he never came to see me nor renewed any intercourse. I did not therefore go to him about it; it was indeed no wrong done to me, but Mr. H. and Mr N—r did, and both told him that his account was an untrue one; and, in spite of this, he himself continued to circulate it, before even I brought it before the brethren, and that I never did (having mentioned it only to Messrs. H. and S.) till demanded my reasons for leaving.

However Mr. N. assembled by invitation the brethren who came from a distance at the house of one of his strongest partisans, to give his statements.43 Some demurred to this as not the fitting thing. Sir A.C., Mr. McA., and Mr. W. one evening would not go (I know not that they ever attended such an one). Mr. N—r urged they should, as statements and impressions might be made of which they would be unable to judge; but they would not. Mr. N—r went; Mr. N. sent out Mr. C—w to hinder his coming in, and declared he would state nothing at all if he were present; and he had to go away. Mr. N—r went to Mr. Newton's the next day to know why, being one of the persons in the invitation, he was thus treated. Mr. Newton turned him (very civilly) out of his house, and told him that he did not want to have anything to say to him.44 Mr. McA. was soon convinced that all was wrong. He lodged in the house where Mr. H. lived.45 Mr. Newton met him, and said to him, Mr. McA. I should like to know on what ground you are here: you are in very suspicious quarters; and declared with very great violence, that if he believed one of the charges46 brought against him, he would have nothing more to say to him.

There is one other important fact which I mention, as it bears on other points, such as the truth of Sir A.C.'s statements so publicly and carefully denied.47 At Mr. N.'s first meeting with the brethren, before he made his statement he declared to them that if they came to meddle in Plymouth affairs he would tell them nothing at all. If they came to inform themselves, he could go on, and on this ground he continued. I may here add what is more important, that at their last meeting Mr. Newton (having had now months to consider, and many meetings

to see the bearing of things, and his statement in April discussed) stated that his object would be to produce in every gathering united hostility to the brethren's teaching who differed from him on the points discussed.

Several efforts were made by Mr. Newton and his friends to obtain a vindication of his character from the charges, which issued in nothing, as several declined signing them for different reasons: not merely because they were not satisfied, but because they felt that the church ought to judge such a case. This was the feeling of many or most of the brethren who came, even of those who were more particularly friends of Mr. Newton, as of all the rest. I will recur to this as a very material point, but to close the narrative as to vindication. After the refusal, for whatever reasons, of a joint signature of such justification, five brethren in order to settle this point, agreed to sign a paper, which was in fact printed with their signatures, Sir A.C., Lord C, Mr. R., C, and P—r. Some refused, and I think I am authorized in saying that Mr. P—r was glad when the paper was withdrawn, as being more favourable than his conscience really permitted. It stated that Mr. Newton had read a paper which convinced them that he had no evil motive in the papers on which the charges were founded, but that he had given occasion to them by what he had printed. Before the document appeared, Mr. Newton came with Mr. D. and declared in great earnestness that he was ruined if this came out, and that he should go to Canada. It was accordingly suppressed.

Immediately after, a declaration was communicated that as the brethren had been able to come to no conclusion, the brethren at Plymouth itself had drawn up and signed a document declaring their conviction that he was

completely cleared. This was signed S., and the names of C—w, B., D.,——, were added as concurring. I am informed on the authority of Mr. D., by a brother to whom he stated it, that it was he drew it up, not Mr. S. However that may be, being the parties concerned in the charge, it certainly was a strange document, more particularly as Mr. D. (to excuse Mr. Newton) had declared that he had suggested the addition of the matter to the letter printed as six years old, and Mr. C—w present at the April meeting had had the other printed and circulated. So that two of them were personally concerned in the things they professed to examine and clear Mr. N. of. I had done nothing save be ready for every call of the brethren who came, and answer their questions when they came to question me. Mr. N. declined to meet me as I was in the position of an excommunicated person. At that time it was a common subject of triumph that I was so, and therefore could bring nothing before the church.

In connection with this I may proceed to mention what passed as to this bringing before the church. Mr. C, Mr. P—r, I think Mr. R., Lord C, as well as others, as is known by their letters, felt that this was right. Yet it was not only resisted but effectually resisted. Mr. C, with whom was Mr. R., went and pressed it on Mr. Newton and alleged Matthew 18. Mr. N. answered, The church could not deliberate nor hear any question. Mr. C. quoted, “Tell it to the church.” Mr. N. said, The church might hear it but could not act. Mr. C. quoted, “Hear the church.” Mr. N. replied that they might come as individuals and express their conviction, but that was all. Lord C. and Messrs. P—r and C. took it in hand. They came to me, and Lord C. stated that they could not get

over the impression produced by my charges in the minds of others: would I meet the assembly if they could get it convoked, and undo the impression as to the charges? I said they must not ask me to state that my impression was not such, as I could not go beyond my conscience; but I would gladly meet the assembly, and urge upon them not to receive any impression from me; that I could do it with all my heart, as I earnestly desired that the conscience of the brethren should be aroused; that there was no good done, whatever judgment they arrived at, unless it was, that I thought the grand evil was that it had been deadened and dulled, and that they would be there to see whether I did it cordially; and that if these three brethren honestly brought before the assembly what they now admitted to be facts, and the assembly acquitted Mr. Newton of any evil in it, even if my individual judgment were not satisfied, I should acquiesce, because, being done as I should trust uprightly, the church's conscience would be clear before God. I left Plymouth to preach elsewhere, that this might be accomplished. Nothing was done. Sir A.C. made a subsequent attempt of which he has given an account. The church could not deliberate nor judge; nor could elders be judged by it. There was no person in the position of Timothy to do it. Since this has been formally denied (and persons authorized to contradict it) it was repeated amongst the poor,48 and put to a person whether it was right for the children to judge their fathers, and positively stated by one of the leaders at Plymouth, as it had been by others before, that teachers were the representatives of the church, and that they decided, and that then the church could act. This was to meet the case of I Corinthians, where the church were called upon to act. The case of Mr. G. was put to Mr. D.

thus. There at present is but one brother prominently active in teaching. Supposing he were to fall into some gross sin, what is to be done? The case where the person inquiring knew of only one active teacher was put, because they would admit that elders in the place could take up cases and judge them.49 The reply was, No, they could not judge him. If he had assumed such a place, they must leave him to the consequences of it. If it was so bad as to be unbearable, they must only leave. 50 The paper signed by the Plymouth leaders to clear Mr. Newton did more harm than good to their cause at Plymouth, as they were known by all to be the parties implicated, and it implied that the strangers would not do it. But the brethren from a distance having in fact come to no conclusion, for whose inquiry I had waited to give time, I had no longer now any reason for delay, and I proposed breaking bread. I hesitated whether I should demand Raleigh Street and do it as a public testimony; but praying over it I felt the humble and more gracious way would be to do it for my own need. I procured a small room, knowing about six who wished to do it, for I had most carefully avoided seeking any, and had entirely ceased visiting since I left, lest I should have even the appearance of making a party, though my heart was in that work. Sir A.C. would no longer break bread; nor W., nor C, nor P—r, nor McA. N—r still I think at that time did, or might, though strong in his judgment, but left for Jersey; that is, excepting N—r, all who were not avowed supporters and partisans of Mj. Newton. Mr. W—r had left. Mr. R. came to me on leaving, and while blaming my beginning to break bread said what I said as my reason was very strong, and that I ought instead of declining to invite Capt. H. and W. because they were considered hostile, to have got a number who took my view of it to

balance the others. He left me saying that I had acted with the greatest forbearance.51 This part was now closed. I began to break bread, and the first Sunday there were not six, but fifty or sixty.

As soon as the brethren were gone Mr. Newton began to hold tea meetings by invitation, at which he explained everything. The statements of Mr. W., Sir A.C., and myself were declared to be entirely untrue; and both Mr. Newton and Mr. S. declared that, if there had been any truth in them, they would have left themselves. This was carefully insisted on in private visits, and repeated by all those under them. Sir A.C. in particular was declared by these last “willingly and wilfully false.” Mr. Newton also said, publicly and privately, he had never sanctioned but always objected to the Friday meeting; that it had been begun by a brother who had semi-Irvingite views, on a wrong ground, etc. Unhappily a letter of his was in existence, appealing to it after years of attendance as a proof of godly order. It was then said, it was not the meeting which was objected to, but the composition of it. But alas! this same letter speaks of the persons composing it as recognized and submitted to by all. Subsequently it was declared that he had never objected to the church judging, nor to the brethren from elsewhere interfering.

This certainly was astounding to those who knew what had passed, if anything was so at Plymouth, his opening declaration to the brethren on their inquiring his statements of the matter, and all he had repeatedly said, as well as his associates, to so many. He declared that all he had objected to was the manner of doing it—that it ought to have been done scripturally: first come to himself, then take two or three more, and lastly the

whole body put him out if need were. This was said at one of the last Monday tea meetings, a very large one.52 Mr. B. has stated the same thing to others—it was only the manner which was objected to. Now, this scriptural manner which was declared to have been the only thing that would have been required, I had formally proposed, and had received a written refusal from the four persons employed by Mr. Newton, Lord C, Mr. M., Mr. W—r, and a physician at Plymouth, which written refusal was communicated by them to Mr. Newton at the time.

At these meetings, at which being by invitation, of course there was no one to answer, though invited friends were allowed to put questions, and did before the poor, a justification of Mr. Newton is stated to have been produced from the remaining part of the brethren who came to inquire, who had advocated Mr. Newton's cause all through. Indeed one of those who were thus sent for by Mr. Newton had privately written53 to him to say he might count on his standing by him in any way, though inquiring now as if an impartial person. It was further most carefully repeated and urged at these meetings that we denied the Gospels were for the church, and equally took away the Hebrews and Revelation; that we denied redemption through the blood as to some, and denied the heavenly glory to the Old Testament saints.

These things drove from them many who knew it was not so, but were believed of course by others. These meetings were continued for many weeks, after each of which some came amongst us. Meanwhile a system, such as I never saw save in Popery, was carried on to influence the poor. Long utterly neglected, save as to the sisters' district rule, they were visited, caressed, and

fed, threatened and literally worried, and what I must call open bribery employed, and the most positive and direct persecution. I declined visiting any who had not already come amongst us, unless a case of special invitation; and that there were not more than two or three of. They did not dare. A few complained to others of my not doing it; but I had decided on my path, and declined exercising any kind of influence over them. This system went to such a pitch that, in one case under the exciting influence of sisters, a poor man refused to dine with his wife if she did not come to Ebrington Street, and when she wished to go and hear in the evening at Raleigh Street, said he would be master; she is now in Ebrington Street. The custom of the rich was withdrawn from the tradesmen also in general who came, though any they hoped to win back were sent for, caressed, and invited, and persecuted with solicitations. Soon after this, deacons were balloted for in Ebrington Street (though indeed the persons had been openly spoken of before), and there they are now.

I will now turn to the paper circulated privately to the number of three thousand—not to answer it (it is its own best answer to every true and upright mind), but merely to notice one or two things in it which connect themselves with the history. Nor shall I say a word on the meanness of courting the pity of strangers by publishing every word they can scrape together out of its context, when for years they have been calumniating their brethren and undermining them everywhere as subverting Christianity, and it has been borne with; and when resisted openly and honestly, crying out as if they were persecuted and oppressed. Does any one believe that they have not accused of falsehood, for example,

myself, W., Sir A.C., over and over again? Everyone knows publicly and privately that their charges of falsehood were the most violent: aye, and in print, whilst they ventured to answer in public. No one need fear that I shall rake together here the proofs. The truth is, there was not a matter of which conscience told them they would be accused, but they anticipated by charging it on me or others, that, if it did come out, it might seem like retaliation and lose its weight. They must forgive my now saying “they.” They have clubbed together in it themselves. Here the gravest complaint is “veracity even is impeached.” Why in a previous letter of Mr. Newton’s, in the correspondence of which this forms a part, he declares “there have been falsehood and misrepresentation to an extent I could not have believed before the late events.”

I could cite plenty of like things, but surely I shall not. Everyone that has been at Plymouth knows it. The difference is this, Mr. N. charges in general with misrepresentation. Of such a general charge he can quote no instance as against himself. In his case specific acts are charged with being untrue; his account of the April meeting is said to be untrue; his addition of a quantity of matter to a tract professed to be written six years ago is complained of; his charging me and others with teaching a heretical doctrine, which he himself, as he does not now deny, and he alone ever taught, and out of which he was brought by those he charges with it; his declaration that all he required was acting on the scriptural rule of Matthew 18, and that he never refused to be judged by the church when it was positively refused; his declaration that he had always objected to and never sanctioned, the Friday meeting, when we had

and have his letter appealing to it as proof of godly order. These which refer to the public course of events here (for I pass over all private ones), and not vague charges, are what he has to answer. Mr. N. was asked, as he charged me everywhere with falsehood, what it was. He said, saying he denied the unity of the church, but this was all he alleged. I say so still. And further I here add, I have no expressions save “intellectual process,” and “eking out an argument” already apologized for, to regret or expunge—not one. If any, let them be produced with their context. The reader will say, but what of those quoted in this letter, and regularly between inverted commas? I answer, they are dishonestly charged. They are untrue, save that I do not own the table at Ebrington Street. The difficulty in this case is, that people have depended on idle statements of this kind, and it was impossible to answer them without charging the authors with untruth. This made me keep silence month after month. I did not know what to do. But the details I will enter into in their place.

Some phrases, though in inverted commas, are not in the tracts to which they are ascribed at all; others quoted and put into sentences which wholly alter their application (an application often expressly guarded against), in the tract referred to. In my judgment this letter signed by the five is perhaps the worst thing yet put out.

But to resume: it is a saddening and yet an instructive thing, to see at the moment that under the Lord’s special leading, and surely without their own wisdom, the brethren from every quarter were humbling themselves before the Lord for their own individual and common failure, the leaders at Plymouth, having refused

to come because it would turn to an investigation on their conduct, were making out a case for themselves. It is an epitome of the whole matter; but I leave it without any remark, to notice one or two statements merely. And first of all, what is the meaning of this joint disclaimer and declaration, saying, we do not hold such and such doctrines, unless the pure clubbing of a party, hand joining in hand? Who ever charged them with holding such and such doctrines? What has Mr. C—w, or Mr. S., or Mr. B., or even Mr. D., to do with my charging Mr. Newton's book with denying the unity of the church? Mr. D. indeed has carefully in public and in private maintained the thing he here denies, as many intelligent Christians well know, but he never was charged with it. Many well know that he and Mr. Newton, as others, have assiduously maintained that the Epistle to the Ephesians refers to all saints from the beginning of the world; and 1 Corinthians 12 to a local perfect church, with some idea of a sort of model at the beginning; but that the unity of the church, as such, with Christ at its head on high, in this dispensation, was denied by the constant teaching at Plymouth.

But Mr. Newton has published certain views upon it. These views are plain enough. They have been answered. What have, save as uniting in a party spirit, these other persons to do, to come and say we do not hold? But to such an excess is this carried that these five proceed to say that "even personal veracity is impeached." And now let me ask whose? This is an unfortunate sentence in which to have talked of Jesuitism. While calling for sympathy for the five, and in a sentence beginning with "we," it is stated personal veracity is impeached. It is not ventured to state whose.

Mr. Newton's has been openly and fairly. These four may of course identify themselves with him, if they please; but they cannot put their names as honest men to having their joint veracity impeached, because this impeaching is another's act, not theirs. Have they been charged with a joint He, or have they been severally charged with one?

The same plan was resorted to at the April meeting. I was said by Mr. Newton to have charged all with sectarianism, because a person could not be a sectarian alone. This, though unfounded, had some semblance of reason in it; but a man may surely tell falsehoods alone. I charge Mr. Newton with sectarianism alone. He tried to make a party with the charge, as if others were accused by me of it. I charged none but him. Others might have helped him, but he could not say I charged them. I charged Mr. N. with untruth in certain definite acts; I believe him guilty of it still. But if others choose to take his part, and identify themselves with what I judge to be utter want of principle, do not let them, in signing an ambiguous expression say, or leave to be concluded that others have impeached the veracity of the five together. Mr. Newton's veracity has been impeached. I impeached it.54 He has declined all means of clearing himself where those who charge him could meet him unless before eight persons, half to be nominees of his own, shutting the church out. Does he mean to involve the other four who sign this letter in the charge to relieve himself? No one else has.

Nobody doubts that I think the table in Ebrington Street one with which I cannot hold communion. I have left it. Can anything be plainer? The present narrative will say why: which I have never done yet. I have stated that

they deny the real unity and holiness of the church of God; I say so still. The Lord will judge who is right in this. They may escape by the support of a party; but it is not the position of any one, nor the numbers which support him, which can make evil good or good evil, or clear the conscience of the church of God.

Mr. N. may talk of manner of doing this. It has been done in no manner; not at Plymouth, because the elders should take it in hand, and they had assumed that place; not by strangers down here, because they did not belong to Plymouth; not in London, because the gathered servants of the Lord had no right to judge them. What is the manner it could have been done in which Mr. Newton has not refused, with the aid of the co-signature of these same persons? I appeal to Mr. C, Lord C, Mr. P —r, Sir A.C., Mr. R., and all who tried to effect it, whether they secured the investigation of alleged evil, as they sought it, before the church of God. The holiness of the church of God is then given up.

I think it a very sad thing, a very great evil, when any thing of the kind has to be brought before the church at large. It is the extreme case of discipline. I take this opportunity of saying, that I think the bringing every case of evil, or alleged evil, at once before the body wrong and unscriptural. “Tell it to the church” is the last resort in every way. I think it still sadder if the person in question be one who has been looked up to in the church. It tends to shake confidence in all. But judgment has been refused in every shape to save character.

If it be said that I after the April meeting, when sectarianism was avowed before fourteen of us, ought to have brought it before the body, I have indeed nothing to

reply, but that I refrained at the instance of others, particularly Mr. R., to spare Mr. Newton. Here I have always felt I may have been wrong. Further, I still state that unity has been denied, practically denied. And it is in part because of the way in which this has been disclaimed in the letter I am considering that I notice it. I will now examine the statement as to No. 1. If these brethren had stated what they held about it, we should have known what to think. The question is, what is taught in the Ephesians on this point, and whether they hold it. They tell us they hold it as revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians. This is exceedingly satisfactory. But what they hold we are evidently as much in the dark about as before. Now I allege that they really merely mean unity in heaven of all saints since the creation. It is clear there can be no other unity of all saints since the creation than unity in heaven. And this is what they have most assiduously taught as to the Ephesians. They have insisted that prophets, in chapter 2, verse 20, means Old Testament prophets; and the whole Epistle to apply to all saints from beginning to end. It is quite clear therefore it has nothing to do with the present unity of the church by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. If they deny this teaching, the answer is, it is a dishonest denial. We have all heard it, whatever their partisans may say. Further, Messrs. S. and C—w (in reply to the brother B—i, who, from reading Mr. Newton's books, had come to the conclusion that he did deny the unity of the church as taught in scripture) stated distinctly to him that the unity he urged was in heaven. Each of them, that is, did, severally and distinctly. Further, when intelligent Christians began to be exercised about it, and referred to the teachers at Plymouth to clear their minds, not believing what I and others affirmed from

what we had heard and read, they were in explanation distinctly taught the same thing, and it was stated by some that none at Plymouth had ever taught or held anything else, I among them. Now if public and private teaching, deliberate argument on the question, and explanation to clear the minds of those exercised, does not prove what men hold, what will? This second paragraph is then a fraud on the reader; because it conceals the fact that it only means a common unity in heaven, and has nothing to do with the church now more than with Abel, that is, that an individual now will be finally a member of the whole assembly of God. That is, it denies any special unity now by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Hence we have a second paragraph for unity of the saints on earth, as by one Spirit baptized into one body. Here however church is not used. But of this just now.

There is another circumstance connected with this I may here record. Mr. Newton has publicly taught (strange for one who complains of Matthew 24 not being considered to be exclusively the church), and taught after being remonstrated with by Mr. H.55 when he taught it in private, that John 17 has no application now till you come to verse 22; which I beg the reader to note. Mr. H. urged the verse, “Sanctify them through thy truth.” Mr. Newton replied, that a saint might appropriate it individually by special faith, but that it had no application to the present time. Evidently verse 22 applies to the future, and is absolute in its form, so that the denial of the unity of the church of God down here was confirmed in every way.56 Indeed I would repeat here that in the teaching I heard from Mr. Newton one object was evident as the object, and this was teaching

something contrary to the other brethren, so as to set them aside with those over whom he had influence, or who gradually took in his teaching. Nor was I the only one that remarked this. But as to the unity being in heaven, I had asked, Was the doctrine that the Gentile churches together constituted the one church St. Paul's statement of the unity of the church? Mr. N. answers (page 56, of his second letter), "I should think not, because St. Paul speaks of the invisible unity of the church in heaven." Can anything be plainer than such an answer where the charge was made, and an explanation given? St. Paul's teaching, St. Paul's statement, is of the unity of the church in heaven! Mr. N. had "been speaking of the visible unity of the churches on earth." But "this visible unity of churches constitutes the one church of the living God." "The churches (page 60) were members of one body." "The Catholic unity of the body would have been marred and lost, the moment one church had forfeited its place and had its candlestick removed."

Now what is the good of five persons coming and saying, we have not dropped the unity of the church into churches, when one of them has printed it as plainly as words can be, save in the sense which is concealed in these numbered paragraphs, in the sense that the unity of the church, means its unity in heaven, "invisible unity in heaven"? And I ask here if St. Paul's statements refer, as Mr. N. has printed and published, to invisible unity in heaven, which are the passages in scripture which refer to the unity of the church in this dispensation on earth? It is totally untrue that St. Paul's statements refer only or properly to that (though of course it remains true), for he is speaking of joints of supply in the one body on

earth. Which is right, or the truth, page 4 of the letter of these five, or page 56 of Mr. Newton's letter? Or, I repeat, what is the meaning of five persons coming and saying we do not hold what one of them has printed and published he does hold; and as every one who has heard it knows, taught constantly by word of mouth? Nay, the holding the contrary view, namely a special unity in this dispensation by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, was the very ground of the charges against brethren, and made the plea for accusing them of denying life and glory to Old Testament saints.

But further, as to these second and third paragraphs, they entirely avoid the question. No one says they deny the unity of the church, if it be meant of all saints from beginning to end in a glorious and heavenly state at the close of all things. But there is not a word in the second which would not be satisfied by this truth. The point in question, of the unity of the body by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven now, is entirely avoided. And so it is in the third, strange as such an assertion may seem to a simple-hearted saint. It is then changed into "unity of the saints upon earth "; not the body. But it will be said, but it is added as baptized into one body. So it is. But what body is this? On earth is not added here. And the unity of the body here is not mentioned nor spoken of. There is the unity of the saints on earth (not as a body). Perhaps (as stated by Mr. N.) unity in faith, doctrine, manners, in independent churches, all alike, but all independent.57 The body into which they were baptized is, as far as any one can tell here, the general universal assembly of all that surround Jesus eternally. Of this we all own they are. But the unity of the body, as by one Spirit sent down from heaven after the exaltation of

Christ, is entirely avoided here. Now that is the whole practical question.

I may add that Mr. N. teaches, or did teach, that the Old Testament saints had received the Spirit as much as we, only that it was a spirit of bondage in them. He had taught of old, that the difference was, that it did not then abide in the saints.

On the fourth I shall say little. The Holy Ghost present and acting in the assembly is here avoided to be admitted. This is again the whole question. Any such action was denounced as impulse. It was stated that those at Ebrington Street went to meet God, and not the Holy Ghost, and we the Holy Ghost, and not God. But since even this letter the effect of the teaching on souls has been to make them believe that the Holy Ghost dwelt in individuals, but not in the body. When Capt. H. taught both, they were warned that they were likely to fall into Mr. Prince's snare. It was taught most positively that the Holy Spirit dwelt in individuals, and that the aggregate of these increased the blessing, but this was all. It was not taught that "the Holy Ghost resides only in the teachers"; but it was that the Holy Ghost worked by members, and that these members were the teachers, and that, though it was not a gift to pray or give out a hymn, none but gifted members would do it. It was stated, though here I believe the contrary was afterwards also stated, that the Holy Ghost was not in the assembly, but God over it to bless it. No intelligent brother can mistake the meaning of all this.

It was most distinctly taught, that it was wrong for the saints to meet, unless they had a responsible teacher to direct them; so much so, that a brother of known

uprightness (who was never in communion, but had long known the brethren) said to his sister who was there, all the brethren's system is gone; because he had heard this statement from Mr. N. Nor were the most glaring facts wanting to demonstrate it.

Now turn, reader, to paragraph five. You would suppose that all these extracts were from "Darby's Remarks on the Tracts on Signs." You will be surprised, I trust at least, to learn that in the postscript to those "Remarks," which postscript is the statement alluded to, I have stated that the question had nothing to do with tradition. Mr. D. in that tract had appealed to "universal consent" as sustaining the doctrine taught at Plymouth. About this not a word is said in the paragraph; but tradition introduced which I said had nothing to do with it. I stated that "the demon of Popery is the active demon of the day"; and so I think, not that they were associated with it; and that in appealing to the principle of universal consent, and in addition to scripture, "its leading introductory principle was advanced "in that passage; referring to the well-known canon of a father, always cited by high churchmen, who have a leaning towards Popery. I have spoken of a principle here printed and published, using these last words in the postscript. Is it not so? Why do they introduce extracts, I really know not whence, referring to tradition, a subject I had expressly rejected as inapplicable, and put my name as the authority they quote, leaving out the point I did assail, and which is printed and published by one of their number in a tract on the express words of which I was commenting? Is it honest to conceal what was attacked and implicate me, trusting to the confidence which would be had, that quotations with inverted

commas must be truly given, in charges which he perfectly well knew I had nothing to say to? It was Mr. Newton drew this up. And even in what is found in that postscript the citations are garbled. I have stated the course clericalism takes and its issue in the full-blown Romish clericalism, but I have never charged it on them, but urged the danger of introducing its leading principle in the doctrine of universal consent. I have said I did not allude to them, but to a system.

The reader may also remark that “uphold” is not of the quotation, nor “associated with”; and that the use I have made of the words which are so, may be as different as possible from what is here stated. The truth is in the postscript, in the sentence quoted from, I have carefully set aside individuals. I have stated, that I have introduced other principles of Popery not advanced, as a matter of general warning, because this one of universal consent, which drew forth my comments, shewed the door was not closed against evil on this side. “Advance its leading principle,” is a false quotation. I have said that its leading introductory principle is advanced in appealing to “universal consent.”

As to the sixth, no one speaks of the doctrines of Independents. Mr. N. has stated that the churches are independent.

As to the seventh my answer is that it is, as regards Mr. Newton, a bold untruth. I appeal to Mr. C, Mr. P—r, Lord C, Sir A.C. I ask the whole number of those who came whether Mr. Newton did not preface his communications to them by saying that, if they came to meddle in Plymouth affairs, he would tell them nothing at all. They all know that every opportunity was not given j that Mr.

Newton would not meet me before those brethren, nor the brethren at large, nor a limited number of them. He told them what he pleased, but no other opportunity was or would be afforded. When was it afforded? Will it be afforded now, with this letter added to the subject of it, and the brethren who were there come down again? Either these five, or Sir A.C. and others, are guilty of flagrant untruth. That Mr. N. sought the presence of brethren who supported him is quite true, so that Mr. R. blamed me for not making a balance.

As to the eighth, how Mr. S. could sign this after his statements to Mr. R.H., for it is to him Mr. R.H. alludes in his tract, I leave him to answer. Everybody knows many were hindered, and many stopped. I may add an instance here. A sister went to one very gracious brother who has ministered both before and since with blessing to many, and told him he must attend Mr. Newton's prophetic meetings. He replied that he did not wish to do so, that he felt pressing peculiar views on either side tended to division.58 He was told that then his ministry would not be allowed in any of the gatherings round. Of course he was shut up. But I will here give the sequel of what refers to him. He was offered his expenses and a weekly salary to go out and labour, which he refused.59 Subsequently he left Ebrington Street. Whereupon it was circulated at Horrabridge that I had offered him a salary. Happily the brother at Horrabridge mentioned it to one who had just heard from the brother in question himself that it was just the opposite.

But to return to the paragraph. Mr. S. stated to Mr. R.H., as Mr. R.H. has stated in his tract (I only add Mr. S.'s name, as having now signed this), that he had said to Mr. Newton that he had participated in the sin of

keeping brethren away, and instanced Mr. B—t and asked Mr. N. if he could now receive him. Mr. N. with some hesitation, said, Yes. Mr. S. asked him why there was this change. Mr. N. replied that the people, he thought, were now sufficiently made up60 to resist his teaching. Let any one only compare this with the eighth paragraph.

As to the ninth, I appeal solemnly to all the brethren who came to inquire. Either their statement to me, that is, of several of them, was an invented calumny, or this article is a direct positive falsehood. From first to last Mr. Newton took this ground.

As to the tenth, my answer is, You do. Mr. Newton has published in his “Thoughts on the Apocalypse” what, as an expression of thought, is justly so designated. The grand doctrine of Buddhism is that a sort of absorption into Deity is perfect bliss; now Mr. N. states that the glorified saints will be omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, using the terms; only they would still worship. And therefore I say, his doctrine does make a sort of Buddhism of Christianity. As to their views and opinions on open ministry, my object is not to discuss views but relate facts here, and I pass them by.

I have only one more statement to allude to. There is a scripture appropriate to everything, and I confess the one which at once suggested itself to me was, “The unjust knoweth no shame.” “We are virtually excommunicated persons.” Did any one ever dream that I excommunicated Mr. Hatchard, or Mr. Courtenay, and a thousand other saints, because I do not go to the Established Church? Was ever such nonsense palmed on people? And yet one of my reasons is because they do

not judge evil nor exercise discipline, as it is as to Ebrington Street. Mr. Newton's alleged evil, and to my mind proved evil, deserved to be judged, and so did other evil, and it was not, but was avoided and refused to be judged. When the brethren, who certainly treated me with very little concern, whatever they did Mr. Newton, said I must be judged too, I made no difficulty; but nothing could induce Mr. Newton to allow it, and they had no courage to go any further. It was not to be. But this is not treating people as excommunicated. Mr. C—w urged, at one time, walking in love as brethren still on me in Mr. R—e's shop. Did I treat him as excommunicated, or Mr. S.?

But this is not all. It is really not a shameful but a shameless statement. Mr. S. who signs first here, positively refused to dine at table with me. Will he deny it? Mr. Newton refused to meet me, when investigation was desired by our coming face to face, because I was an excommunicated person. It was the common ground of triumph that I could not bring the matter before the church, because I was an excommunicated person by leaving the assembly. Shall I say that Mr. D. lectured that, though Christians, yet all were not to be treated as such? Shall I name all those who, led by the example and instruction of Mr. Newton, refused to salute us in the street?61 those who by Mr. N.'s directions refused to see old friends they had previously sent for? Mr. N. began it to a sister, who stated she had proposed calling on him to assure him it was no want of good feeling towards him in leaving, by refusing to see her, and telling her in the name of the Lord Jesus he could have no more Christian intercourse with her. The oldest friends were first not visited at all and then were told

that they visited as friends, but could not own them as Christians nor pray with them. And this was done so grossly by Mr. N. himself that the husband (not in communion) of one sister met Mr. Newton and told him that, had he been still of the world, he must have used his cane to him. One poor man excited by the sisters refused to eat with his own wife till he got her back to Ebrington Street.

It has been attempted since shame has fallen upon them about it, to say it was only to be done to leaders. Were the sisters, one of whom only came to hear in Raleigh Street, who sent to dear Mrs. Newton flowers and little things suited to the sick when she was ill, leaders? They were sent back as unreceivable from Mr. N.'s house. Captain H. was refused to be received into the house of one long accustomed to look up to him, but who had fallen under this miserable influence. And now I challenge them to produce an act of ungracious or evil dealing towards one of them. Why, will it be believed that many of them no longer dealt with the shops of those who went to Raleigh Street, as well as threatened to withdraw Christian kindness from the poor? and to deprive them of temporal advantages they enjoyed? Last of all, while I am writing this, they have been forbidden, had they desired it, in case of any wishing to shew it was no want of personal kindness, to attend dear Mrs. N.'s funeral62—a person who, though excited about this matter, had by her walk among the saints for many a year engaged the affections, I may safely say, of all, and who has been happily, may we not say taken from the evil to come, and we have excommunicated them!

I have done. I have gone over the public ground only, and I have only to add, that I was confirmed in the

resolution not to swerve, because I found that the system of untruth and finesse was undermining the probity and truthfulness of mind of others, and demoralising God's dear children. And it is. I have refrained from the private facts, which yet operated of course with equal force on one's mind as to the state of things, though not as fit to be publicly brought forward.

It has been alleged by Mr. Newton himself, and received by some, that it could not be with an intention to deceive when refutation was so easy. Those who receive this do not know how these things worked. This last letter is the proof. Nine-tenths of the saints out of Plymouth would take the statement as true: and I should be very sorry to think that they would suppose it possible to be otherwise until forced to it. I have yet a difficulty myself in believing the things I know to be true. At Plymouth the majority were Mr. Newton's party at all cost. If anjj separated themselves from it, they were not spoken to nor owned as Christians; even their temporal interests injured as far as possible. In private statements, it was a similar case. An untrue one, suppose, was made. Probably the person believed it; a gracious mind is not the most suspicious. The effect was produced, the prejudice excited, and the person fell under Mr. N.'s influence. If not, in general persons, particularly females, who were especially subjected to this, do not like probing into evil and discreditable things, nor getting into conflict with persons who act in this way. If they took the trouble of inquiring, and stated what had been said, the statement was denied, and it was a question of their character and Mr. Newton's. Few liked this; perhaps their husbands did not. If it was proved, then it was said, It was not meant so, and it was

uncharitable to fix on a man what he did not mean. If they were disgusted and left, no one was to speak to them. This was the operation of the Monday evening meetings, held after the brethren were gone, for Mr. N. to explain everything. The majority believed the statements without more. A few were driven out every time. They were no longer spoken to, unless to worry them to come back, if there was hope of that.

And now, as these five, as well as Mr. Newton speak of the manner of the investigation, and Mr. N. and others for him have repeatedly said it was only this he objected to, I shall repeat what I proposed to him. I refused to name four as my friends to investigate it, because it was taking it out of the hands of the church of God when already before it. I never heard of a person accused of evil in the church of God naming four to inquire into his case, and those who knew of it four more. It was taking it out of the church of God altogether. I declined to name them.

It is supposed that no one had been to Mr. N. This is a mistake. They had: two had as to the untruth! (and first two—besides myself by letter—and then thirteen as to the sectarianism); and the whole had been before three hundred of the brethren. But in reply to this proposal I offered to meet the four he named individually, or together, to go before the whole body, or before a Hmited number, if that was a better way; or to let the four named by Mr. Newton collect the thirteen before whom the matters first had been; or Mr. Newton might act on the scripture rule of Matthew 18 if he considered it a wrong. I received for reply, that Matthew 18 did not apply because I had done the wrong publicly; that bringing it before the body of the brethren was only

seeking to repeat the grievance; that my letter was an evasion; that it was evident I was unprepared to substantiate the charges; that my statements appeared unworthy of credit, and that copies of the letters were given to Mr. Newton.

And two of the signers of this letter were among those who pursued the inquiry afterwards. One left almost immediately after signing it. It is generally known that these brethren refused to go up to the London meeting, too, because it must take the character of investigation.

In fine, when finesse and untruthfulness, when flattery of the rich with contempt and neglect of the poor, and then caresses and threatenings and appeals to their gratitude, attract the Spirit of Christ, then while under its influence I may return; or when avowed sectarianism and union in testimony against brethren is that to which I wish to be a party. Till then I can have no such thought. There are saints of God there who ought to be, and I can boldly say are, very dear to me. I would do all there every good I could. Nor have I the conscience of an unkindly feeling towards one, I should rejoice with unfeigned joy were every statement I have made proved to be wrong to my own shame. But, without pretending to apportion blame, to say who originated it or helped it on, supposing it possible (and I would hope true) that all have been only led in it ignorantly, I believe that there has been a direct work of the enemy, and this to subvert the blessed truth that Brethren were specially trusted with; a work which has shewn itself in doctrine, principle, and practice, as is always the case, very subtly and very gradually, but surely and constantly. I shall notice in their plain effects the doctrines.

First, practically the present hope and expectation of the Lord's coming was put off and set aside.

Secondly, the heavenly calling, which Brethren had specially been favoured to bring out, and the glory of the church with Christ, is confounded with earth, and subverted and set aside. Our Mother is declared to be the establishment of a system, which had been going on from the beginning in glory in the earth. "Christianity supreme in the earth in Mount Zion and Jerusalem" "identical with Zion arising in the moral grace and dignity of its high calling in the earth" (Thoughts on the Apocalypse, pp. 138, 142). "This is our parent, the system to which we belong," Jerusalem.

Thirdly, unfeigned faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost to guide and minister in the assemblies of the saints was undermined and subverted.

Fourthly, the unity of the body of Christ, as gathered by the presence of the Holy Ghost in this present time of the church on earthy was undermined and subverted too.

Fifthly, the deification of the saints, that is, "Omniscient power of superintendence, "Omnipotent power necessary to such execution"; and, referring to EzekiePs vision but as a description of the power of the cherubim who symbolize the redeemed, "nowhere absent but everywhere present in the perfectness of undivided action," and they "will apply to the earth, the63 wisdom of the elders, and the throne."

And, as a sixth point, the constant extenuation of the evil of Popery, with the decided absence of Christ from the teaching, while the saints were exalted "almost into co-equality with God."64 I may add, as a seventh, the

exaltation and beauty of a personal Antichrist in a way quite contrary to scripture, so as to alarm and shake the minds of the saints. As to principles and practice, I do not go over again the statements made in the preceding pages; statements more than confirmed by incidents arising from day to day which it is impossible to reduce to writing.

I have now sufficiently given the history of what has passed, as far as I have been concerned in it. Others must give what has passed behind the scenes. As I have already stated, private circumstances I have not mentioned. But it must not be supposed that they have not influenced those who dwell at Plymouth. If there had been remedy, they would not have been a reason for leaving; but they called for a remedy which, if refused, made it impossible to stay. This direct working of Satan few perhaps may distinctly estimate; but the Spirit of Christ will have no difficulty in judging the facts I have stated, and the course of things to which I have alluded.

My word of unhesitating testimony is, Come out from among them, and be ye separate. They have sought to perplex the poor (clear in their judgment of where evil was, and where Christ was) by asking, Now on what scripture did you leave? They knew what they left by experience, and judged rightly about it; though, as a priest might come and puzzle a soul that knew well on what ground it stood, they could ill answer perhaps a cross-examination of what scripture they were on. My answer to them is simple, my text is plain: Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. If they would have yet more, I cite what they have sufficiently pressed upon others, “Cease to do evil.” There is evil unconfessed and

unjudged; evil (I judge) of the very worst kind, speaking of evil in a Christian assembly; and I suppose there must be scriptures for leaving it, or we should never have been gathered at all.

I will only add, as much has been said in print of Mr. S.'s asking Mr. H. to stay, that he asked Mr. H. to stay to help him to resist Mr. Newton, against whom he felt unable to make head alone, and he stated to Mr. R.H. that all the evil had come from letting him have his own way. Here you have the history of Plymouth. Whether Mr. S. is now able to do so and does so, others must judge. In its present form, Mr. Newton drew up the letter addressed to the brethren in London.65 Mr. S.'s name appears the first in the list of signatures. He had been free through the earlier scenes, from the want of candour which existed. I must sorrow that at the close, why the Lord must judge, he has placed his name first on what, on the whole I must judge, to be the worst and lowest of all the sad series of this unhappy history.

I am aware of the influence which Mr. N. exercises over many minds, but I do not hesitate to say, that I had rather see my child die than be under the moral influence that rules at Ebrington Street. Wherever its direct influence reaches, moral integrity is gone. I know it has been stated, that it is a mere personal question on my part. Now I appeal to this single assertion just as a proof of the destruction of integrity. Has not Mr. Newton, have not others, stated in public and in private, that we deny the Gospels and I know not what else, and that the foundations of Christianity are gone, if our doctrine is received? Is this a personal question? The fact is where it is hoped that consciences may be alarmed, it is stated we deny the Gospels, etc. When a

soul is getting uneasy at the state of things among them or it is thoroughly known that all this is false, then it is stated to be mere personality. Mr. N. is named because he has been the public actor in this matter. And I am not writing here to give my private opinion as to who else may be as really guilty as he, it would be quite out of place. I give the brethren at large the facts which led to my leaving Ebrington Street.

I have omitted to speak of the fasts. In doing this I add a circumstance early in the history, which I omitted to mention. There was very assiduous teaching from Revelation 1 on the stars, Christ holding the stars of ministerial authority in His hand. After a time during which 1 had ceased attending the prayer meeting, I think after the first fast (I am not quite sure), I thought there was some softening, and returned. The first thing I heard was one of the persons whose name appears in all these documents earnestly praying that Christ would uphold the stars which He had raised up and held in His right hand, and that we might own them. As to the fasts, at a very early stage of the business I urged that we might fast together. Mr. H. pressed it on them. I had conversed with Mr. D—k, Sir A.C., etc., as to it, who desired it and wished to come, and that brethren might join in it. But all pressing it was useless. Mr. N. declared there was nothing to fast for, and that he would not have Plymouth made a plague spot of. It was anxiously explained over and over again, that it was meant to charge none, but that, as we were all in trial, we could go and cast ourselves before God, and I said I should go with all my heart and confess any want of spirituality in me that had helped it on; but it was useless. I could only weep and fast to myself.

At last on the occasion of the disorder of the aged brother’s speaking above mentioned, Mr. Newton went down on Saturday to the coach to Mr. H., who went for the Lord’s day elsewhere, and stated he should give out a fast the next day; which he did for circumstances which had occurred here and elsewhere. However, though I thought all this very bad indeed, and all understood what this meant, and other brethren were necessarily excluded, as it was given out for Wednesday that week, I went. The brethren who have since left mourned and confessed unfeignedly. Mr. N. blessed God for giving them the truth and prayed God to give them firmness to maintain their position. I thought the whole matter the very worst thing that had taken place. When Mr. C—n came here, Mr. N. peremptorily refused to have any confession about Plymouth; Mr. C—n stated in private that he would not hear of it, and that they could only have it general for all the church. This to me was far worse than nothing here.

Subsequent to Mr. C—n’s saying the evil was want of unity in judgment (he declined to me any inquiry into the circumstances here)66 and that love depended on it. Mr. N. took it up warmly, and stated that the Lord had sent Mr. C—n; that brethren had all along differed as to redemption, Christ’s offices, characters, and a fourth thing I do not now remember; and that there could not be union. After this they had other fasts which I of course did not attend; some, since out, did, and part of it was so bad that I know those who had to leave the room. Since then I know nothing of what has passed there.

1 [These have now been added as foot-notes.—Ed.]

2 I have what I believe to be a correct statement of the meetings Mr. Newton attended. He did not attend 1834, 1835, but he was at 1836; that is, I believe, the last Irish meeting. He did not attend London or Liverpool, that is, the two last English.

3 One meeting of a smaller number of brethren was at once broken up, that is, never met again, on some objection to critical remarks being made by another brother.

4 Mr. Y. made, it is true, a mistake in his tract as to the Clifton meeting, which he states Air. N. not to have attended: but, though this was made a handle of, the truth is that, though he mistook the particular meeting, the case was much stronger than that, as may be seen above.

5 Mr. Newton can easily deny this, as he and I were alone, walking up and down before the Gloucester hotel. This, of course, will not now hinder my stating it, though it did my referring to it publicly in the inquiry by the brethren. There is One who will judge who is truthful in the matter, if he does deny it, and to Him I leave it. I might here refer to the testimony of an intelligent brother, a physician, who plainly states that Air. N. ten years ago pressed the principles I have done now, and which he resists; but then he declares he always thought them a delusion, that he joined the “brethren” as a sect, and continues with them as such. Loudly, as this is denied, a sister, whose zeal for Ebrington Street would not be questioned were I to name her, said to me that it was quite evident there were two systems among the “brethren” which would produce their fruits and gatherings everywhere. My reply was, I did not doubt it,

and respected her sincerity. I would that others had the honesty to own it: they were all assuring me there was not.

6 Capt. H., of course, went freely at the time, and the influence of Mr. N. may even at that time have been shaken by circumstances; but the main fact of the statement remains unaffected by this.

7 These letters have been sent to Ireland, India, Canada, and wherever an opportunity was afforded, as Mr. N. avows and (I may say) boasts of.

8 “Thus this passage, and with it the whole Gospel, and all the Gospels, are swept away as not properly pertaining to the church.” Till I found this passage of large inference, I never could conceive what gave rise to this charge of rejecting the Gospels.

9 It is well that it should be known that, though this is the ground still taken as the reason for denouncing the “brethren,” Mr. Newton has entirely given up the main point of his prophetic views, insisted on in these letters. The whole of the second letter, to refer to nothing else, is occupied with the proof of the saints of the Christian church being in tribulation. Indeed every one conversant with these matters, knows that it was a test of the holding of Mr. Newton’s views. We were told what a mercy of God to prepare us for it by testimony. Indeed the fact is too well known to require further proof. People were planning leaving the limits of the Roman earth, to be out of it; Mr. Newton now (both by argument in the “Thoughts on the Apocalypse,” and in express terms in the “Thoughts on the End of the Age”) declares that they will not.

10 I am well aware that this is denied by the five signers of the letter to the brethren in London. But in the first place it is perfectly well known to multitudes of the brethren. Moreover Mr. Newton had been spoken to about it before I arrived at Plymouth. He answered, that he could not help their breaking bread, if they came, but it was a yoke he was obliged to put up with, and that they would have no welcome from him. Anyone can understand the effect of conduct answering to such language, unless a person came to contest the point with Mr. N. Mr. H. was asked, when saying at the last meeting in April that he should invite the Irish brethren, could he give them this invitation from the others at Plymouth, and he could not say he could. Further, confession, public confession was made of it by two of those who signed that paper—by one with "if any have been kept away," by another without. It was owned in private by one of these, and Mr. N. was spoken to by him about it, saying that they had done so, and that he had participated in the sin. I am fully aware everything will be denied But this must not arrest the plain statement of facts for brethren. The writing of letters by the sisters discrediting the brethren was attempted to be called in question too; but brethren being present in the April meeting who had seen them, and having declared that heretic1 was too good a name for the Irish brethren in their letters, it was no longer attempted to be disputed. [1 "Heretic was too good a name." Though I have a perfect recollection of these words being used, yet as being in animated conversation and a general representation, it is desired to correct this by saying that what Irish brethren held and taught was spoken of as heresy.]

11 This explains to me a statement in the letter sent to the London brethren, signed by the five leading brethren at Ebrington Street, saying, that they recognized no one in the position of Timothy now. At the time he wrote the letter alluded to in the text, Mr. N. in England denounced my views as subverting the foundations of Christianity.

12 Prior to my previous visit to England, Mr. S. had issued a tract holding up a most beloved brother as a public warning, on account of holding prophetic views discordant with Mr. Newton's. I answered this by shewing that Mr. S.'s arguments could not be sustained, hoping to check these attacks on brethren, made as if truth, "the truth" as it has been called since, was at Plymouth alone. What was unsold of Mr. S.'s was suppressed, and the whole of mine, at the instance of a brother who hoped controversy might be ended. I had stated no system of my own. It was a mere effort to check the tide.

13 The confirmation by Mr. R.H. does not apply to the words "educated gentleman," but the general idea that God now made use of talent and worked by it, and, as he apprehended it, not in uneducated persons: and these statements of Mr. N. were commonly current at that time.

14 These statements were at first denied, then explained, and then confessed and apologised for. I add this note on account of the last circumstance. The person concerned (a brother, whose integrity no one would dispute) freely forgave Mr. Newton, and thinks no more about it as a wrong to him. But this does not affect the historical state of things, and it is in that way that I

bring it forward here. Mr. R.H. declared, when this came to be known, that it was no isolated case, but the constantly inculcated doctrine at that date.

15 I have some doubt of the stability of this gathering, from what I have heard since, but I do not pretend to know much about it. Others can give more exact details of this than I can, as I took no part in it; but I give the substance of what passed, as I had it from the mouths of those concerned; and I myself know many of the facts.

16 At this moment there are some twelve or twenty persons that take part, who never opened their lips nor ventured to give out a hymn till the separation. Of these I refer to several, even in Ebrington Street, where, since the separation, it has taken place as to speaking, praying, and giving out hymns.

17 “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” Now the presence of Jesus, though of course in Spirit, implies many associations of heart which His name peculiarly bears, and His authority too as Lord. But when met, the Holy Ghost is the acting power in every ministration which is not mere fleshly worthlessness.

18 Before I arrived at Plymouth, Mr. H. used to call this room the Chamber of the Inquisition. [Lest this note should identify unduly this name with Mr. Newton, it may be right to state that the name was given to the upper (not the back) room as much through Mr. H.’s use of it for the purpose as Mr. Newton’s. Mr. S. went down as well as Mr. H. He stated in the conversation that they were not acting on the principles they began upon: if they were, he should leave. At Exmouth this departure

from original principles was avowed by one brother distinctly.]

19 I do not mean that the remonstrance turned on this sentence. It was, I believe, rather on the earlier part, and practically imputing certain views, and on other points.

20 ‘London brethren’ should be a London brother. As to the letters only one, which was the material one, was taken about by Mr. Newton. The word ‘furnish’ is merely meant to convey the fact of their communication.

21 Since I wrote this, I have seen them, and, though written with the unguardedness of private communications, there is nothing that I can see unscriptural. I suppose brethren thought so too by asking me if that was all.

22 But in truth, when I think (knowing now something of what passed there) of all the professions and protestations made to me, and how I was assured all was suspicion on my part, and accident without design, if anything had crept in, it is sickening.

23 I would just ask what, now that I know such a meeting was held to get rid of me, I must think of the statements in the letter to C—w, that every door was opened to me, and that Mr. Newton would have a decided objection to its being otherwise; though why they should have opened it, if my doctrines subverted Christianity, would be hard to tell. I must add here that Mr. C. declared that the statement as to him (a brother from Ireland) in that letter was not the fact; that he was asked what views he held on prophetic points, and when he replied that he had no fixed views, but was open to

receive anything that could be proved to him, that then ministry was opened to him.

24 It has been already stated that Mr. Newton had been complained of as to these letters by brethren all over the country, and I had been compelled to read them, and had at the instance of others remonstrated with him four years before. Mr. S.'s letter has also been referred to as shewing that it was going on and remonstrated against.

25 This silence was subsequently taken notice of, and by some as matter of self-reproach.

26 The doctrine decidedly taught there was that the Holy Ghost, who was sovereign, wrought in the body by members, and that these members were the gifted teachers. I am aware that the five brethren who signed the circular letter say, "we do not hold that the Holy Spirit resides only in the teachers." I am aware they do not. But they did teach that it was by gifted members He acted in the body, that is, by teachers. And every one knows, that anyone's taking a part in the meeting as led of the Spirit to do so was denounced as "impulse." Moreover I know that, since this has been under press, it has been pressed at Plymouth, that it was by instruments prepared before they went to the meeting that God acted in. it. And long ago, when praying and hymns were urged as not being gifts, it was admitted, but answered that only gifted persons would take part in either. It will be remarked in the statement referred to, that it is carefully avoided saying, that the Holy Spirit acts in the assembly. But on this hereafter.

27 At the April meeting of 15, when I referred to the sisters' letter writing, denouncing the Irish brethren, I was challenged to prove it and produce instances. Of

course, though I knew of it in every quarter, the letters were not to me, and I had none of them. But a brother who was there stated he had seen the letters—some that is, of course, and that in them ‘heretic’ was too good for the Irish brethren.

28 Mr. Newton declares in his letter to C—w that every door of ministry was thrown open to me, and that he should have decidedly objected to its being otherwise. At the time he says this was so, he was assiduously insisting that we denied the Gospels, redemption through the blood as to some, life in the Old Testament saints; and that the fundamentals of Christianity were in question. Can anyone give credit to these things together? It is a mystery, I confess, to me, how Mr. H., who knew of the meeting held to arrange united opposition to me, could have got on at all after this letter was published. He did go to Mr. N. to speak to him about it, telling him he regretted it for his own credit and character, as he (Mr. H.) must say (if asked) that it was untrue; but I confess I do not see how common action is to go on in such a case.

29 At this time Mr. S. spoke most freely on all these points, taking a sort of independent place. I think it better not to repeat what he said to me as to people, but merely relate the facts.

30 It is objected that the statement as to Mr. W.H—n’s letter is rather too strong; that he blamed my act as being rather a dissenter’s principle to bring it before the whole assembly.

31 I was informed by several brethren that this was constantly the practice. I speak of what I saw.

32 If anyone knew all the pains taken to persuade me that, if there were evils they were unintentional accidents, they would be surprised. This was not the only occasion on which Mr. N. made use of this same expression.

33 Since writing this, the state of things here related has ceased to exist; and the brother, whose godliness none called in question, not only has employment of his own, but his conscience, I apprehend, better informed as to many facts, is out of the snare that he was in. But I have had no communication with him. It is not his path I refer to, though he may have been caught unawares in the snare; it is that of those who were active in the matter—the system.

34 As regards the brother alluded to, whom I have seen since the publication of this narrative, he assures me that the supplies which he received he did not receive as a fixed weekly sum; and that as to the villages in which he went to preach, he went at the request of those to whom they had been previously allotted, and did not consider himself sent by the leaders of Ebrington Street. I may add, that he has since ceased speaking in Ebrington Street.

35 The reader must remember that he did not know what had passed between Mr. Newton and Mr. H.; but he certainly was inconsistent in this, that no one had spoken more plainly as to the hindrances there were.

36 The meeting held after Mr. H.’s return, at which he explained his reasons for ceasing to minister, was at the instance of other brethren, not at the suggestion of Mr. H.

37 In saying this I have no doubt whatever of her entire uprightness, I merely state the fact.

38 This itself was a publication of my private letter without communicating with me, but of the unsuitableness of this Mr. N. has no sense, and there I must leave it. It has been repeated in other cases and in much worse circumstances.

39 I am warned that this might seem to say that they did not break bread at all. This is not at all the meaning. “Any longer” refers to after their investigation of the matter, which gives it indeed its whole importance.

40 The reader will kindly efface from “Mr. H.” to “from it.” The circumstance alluded to, does not properly connect itself with this point.

41 To Mr. C, when the brethren were here, he stated that he always held at that time that they would receive it at the resurrection.

42 Instances have happened while printing this narrative.

43 At the moment of this meeting, Sir A.C. was not, I believe, in Plymouth.

44 Mr. N—r had been here before the other brethren, and had gone among the Ebrington Street people. They had as usual made all kinds of statements to him, but instead of taking their truth for granted as most have done (and no wonder) he had inquired in detail, and found many things to be wholly untrue; and hence he was very obnoxious.

45 It is suggested that I should insert that I lodged in the house. Mr. McA. was not, however, with me, but in Mr. H.’s apartment. Suspicious quarters may be

corrected by “renders you liable to suspicion.” Mr. Newton’s friends who had come, were guests among his friends at Plymouth, which no one of course thought of calling in question, nor would it be noticed now but for the insertion of this correction, as explaining the force of the remark.

46 Delete “one of,” and read simply “the charges.”

47 It has been attempted to modify this denial. Any one conversant with the poor at Plymouth knows that the tracts of Sir A.C. being found to act on their consciences, it was publicly and privately declared to be entirely false, and by the secondary agents of these statements “willingly and wilfully,” but by the principles everywhere declared to be false. Mr. Newton and Mr. S. both declared at the meetings they subsequently held, that if Sir A.C.’s statements were true, they themselves would have left Ebrington Street. As to the thing denied, it will come in by-and-by.

48 It is now held amongst them avowedly, to my knowledge, where this influence extends, that the church itself cannot judge. They have told me that they did think it was right, and so understood Matthew 18, but now they understand it is not.

49 At Plymouth it was the persons who assumed the place of elders who were charged. One poor person on whom following the elders was urged, replied, But are not Mr. Darby and Mr. H. elders as much as Mr. Newton? Which am I to follow? She was told it was not denied we were, but God had raised up Mr. Newton to a special and peculiar place in the church. A paper to this effect and assuming the place of Mr. N., of displacing

leaders here and there by his own authority, was widely circulated at Exmouth.

50 The last two lines are to be omitted. They are only an imperfect repetition of the preceding.

51 Mr. R. did not hesitate then to declare to strangers to both parties that they had ceased to lean upon God, and that the Spirit of God was not practically owned. I have not had an opportunity of communicating this to Mr. R., but my informant is one whose authority is above suspicion, and respected alike by Mr. R. and myself.

52 I know it to have been frequently repeated since, and recently.

53 This letter was circulated, because it contained statements of all the errors the writer had been led into by the brethren.

54 Only however before brethren, of course.

55 Mr. H. remonstrated with others, and spoke very strongly about this teaching; but I cannot confirm die fact that he spoke directly to Mr. N. I give the statement therefore as to the remonstrance merely as I heard it just after, of which I have an absolute certainty. The fact of the teaching is unquestionable. I will add here the ground on which it was based: Christ’s prayer could not but have been answered; hence He could have asked it only for the apostles in their time; that toe have the heavenly blessing in this respect; they had the heavenly and earthly. It will be seen how entirely this confirms what is stated as to the assertions made as to unity in the letter of the five to the London brethren commented on.

56 Mr. Newton has also distinctly stated, as is well known to many resident at Plymouth, that as to the heavenly calling, or the unity of the church, no new light whatever had been developed from the word amongst brethren; that others, before the present movement, had held it just as clearly. The only fresh light given was to be found in the prophetic views he insisted on.

57 “Separate one from another—all equal, all alike: connected by no visible bond, neither revolving round any common centre. They were independent one of another; but not independent of Him who invisibly walked amongst them, and who was able to preserve the likeness to Himself, and to one another, which His grace had given them; to keep them what He had made them alike in faith, manners, and testimony”; and again, “in faith, doctrines, manners [they] were emphatically one.”

58 The reason first given for not attending one of the more private meetings was somewhat different. This brother felt himself out of his place there; subsequently he ceased attending the more public meeting on the ground stated. The material fact however was rather stronger than stated here, that, unless he received Mr. N.’s views, his ministry would not be received here or in the meetings around.

59 I know myself a second instance of Mr. Newton’s doing so; besides which penny-a-week collections have been a long while carried on for similar purposes. After I came, the collectors were desired not to go to persons I visited; a foolish direction, for I visited everybody. The sisters were the agents in this.

60 For “sufficiently made up,” read “sufficiently instructed.”

61 It will hardly be believed at Plymouth, that Mr. S. has stated in more than one place, that it was we who would not salute them!

62 It will hardly be believed that after having forbidden any to come to the funeral, saying, that we hastened Mrs. Newton's death and were not to come and trample on her grave, it was carefully circulated by them that we would not go to Mrs. N.'s funeral!

63 Mr. N. has since taught that the saints will have essential power. He states in the "Thoughts" that man will be blest in himself, and the source of blessing to others, p. 56.

64 These are Mr. N.'s own words. This absence of Christ in the teaching was a very principal thing which drove the poor brethren out. They felt the effect, though knowing little of the cause, and felt justly. The way works were pressed and said to be offered by us to God because done in our new nature, statements (some of which are already mentioned) as to the Lord Jesus Himself, and the unsettling the mind as to truths relating to Him, would have made it impossible for me to have wished anyone I cared for to attend the ministry. As a mere question of ministry, it would have been sufficient to have driven me away. I add this while printing; for the more I have considered this point, the more I am satisfied of its importance and of its application to numberless statements made.

65 Mr. C—w stated that he sat up all night, and drew it up that one night.

66 Mr. C—n's principle is that, where there exists a body of Christians, no false principle, even in the ground of their union, is a sufficient reason for leaving them.

Letter To The Saints Meeting In Ebrington Street

On The Circumstances Which Have Recently Occurred There My Brethren, Though I felt reluctant to print anything as to what is passing, still now that all have stated (I suppose) what they think right, the excitement of it being somewhat passed, I shall, without returning to matters already discussed, give you my judgment on what interests us all here—I trust in meekness and grace. Several brethren having come down here subsequent to my leaving Ebrington Street to inquire into the facts, I felt I owed it to them, however fully convinced I might be in my own mind, to give full time and opportunity to them to satisfy themselves as to everything that had passed. This opportunity has been given, and I have felt free to act on my own convictions before God. During the latter part of their stay here, three of these brethren, Lord C, P—r, and C, having proposed to bring before the brethren at large certain charges which had mixed themselves up with the question, asked me if I would seek to remove the impression my previous statement to the brethren had made. I stated to them that I was perfectly ready to press upon the brethren not to receive any impression from me on the subject, and that they were bound to judge for themselves (these brethren having ascertained the facts, at least as to what I had stated, so that it could be put before the brethren at large); and, farther, that I was ready, if the facts as thus admitted by them were plainly set before the brethren, to abide by their judgment as to any intention or motive involved in these

facts, inasmuch as the conscience of the body would then be clear as to them, though there might be other points which.demanded inquiry. I left Plymouth for a fortnight, other motives also concurring, so as to give them time to arrange this while I worked elsewhere.

Nothing resulted. As to myself, all know that I have been at all times ready to meet the brethren as to any thing that concerned myself. Here I shall say nothing. I am conscious of nothing wrong in this matter, however imperfect in my ways: the judgment of man is of little moment, and I prefer committing myself to Him that judges righteously. I can bless and thank God heartily and unfeignedly for everything as to myself, and trust Him in it all.

To pursue the subsequent facts. You have all seen the letter of Sir A.C., and the way in which the judgment of the brethren was utterly rejected in principle. I need not repeat here his plain statement. Mr. C. on another occasion alleged the passage in Matthew 18. “Tell it to the church,” and not only tell it to the church but “if he neglect to hear the church.” This also was rejected. If told to the church, it was said they could not act on it as a body, though individuals might come and state their judgment. To Mr. W. the same principle was maintained, by another who acts as teacher and ruler, on the occasion of taking up the chapel in Raleigh Street. Mr. W. stated that if there could be any appeal to any from the alleged evil which had driven away many long-known brethren, he would seek still to go through with the matter in Ebrington Street. He was told there was none, he had only to submit if those who held the place of rulers were concerned and did not act, and this even if it were a crime they were charged with themselves.

Since then it has been taught openly that it is wrong for the church to act judicially, and that it could call no one to its bar; and the other two, not included in the previous statements, who have assumed the place of teachers or rulers, or both, confirm the principle that it must be left to the rulers, and that the church must judge by its representatives. Such is the way godly conscientious persons have been met. At any rate it is notorious that, in whatever terms it may have been expressed, the principle has been deliberately and systematically acted upon, when there was evil enough judged to be there by many godly brethren to drive them away. There was no remedy. Here then I get at the broad principle of the congregation meeting in Ebrington Street:—the church cannot judge evil.

Another has been brought clearly out by the presence of these brethren. They were not allowed to interfere because they were strangers and not of the congregation in Ebrington Street. This was distinctly asserted and maintained:—the unity of the body is denied.

There is a third point which has been brought out by the visit of these brethren. Mr. Newton has declared, in substance, that he would pursue what would produce everywhere united hostility in every gathering to the teaching of the brethren whose doctrines he disapproved of. Now with this I can have no fellowship, nor sustain it by public association with those who seek it. Until it be openly and distinctly judged by the assembly, they are parties to it now that it is avowed either acquiescing in it under the plea of preserving unity, or at least helping it on unconsciously. I could be no party to their doing either.

But while party sectarianism is avowed, and for this alone I should feel bound (separate from evil, and identifying myself in heart with its low estate) to take my place in the unity of God's true church and away from what I believe to be thus avowedly sectarian, still I would not dwell farther on this now. There are other principles in the facts I have mentioned which I present to the consciences of brethren. The fact that these brethren known to all, who came from elsewhere, were not allowed to meddle with the affair here, because they were not of Plymouth or of the gathering in Ebrington Street, is a direct denial of the unity of the body of Christ.

It is not a question of deference for those habitually here: I never heard the brethren who came accused of want of that. It is a question of principle. From the outset their interference was rejected on this ground. The unity of the body is therefore denied, and any gift or wisdom which other brethren who do not reside here possess cannot be exercised freely in the body. The gathering in Ebrington Street is a sectarian party everywhere, or an independent church, and the true unity of the body of Christ is denied there. It is useless to say that all saints are admitted to communion. So they would be in any other independent church in the kingdom. The real unity of the body as a whole is denied.

Secondly, the judgment of evil is positively refused to the church in defiance of direct plain scriptures. "Do ye not judge them that are within?" "If he neglect to hear the church." "Put out from among yourselves that wicked person."

And here comes out another principle. The teacher and his authority are set above the written word. The word says “judge.” The rulers say you must not judge, and the fact is no judgment takes place. Perhaps, if the rulers bring a member before the body, the body may be suffered to excommunicate him; they have, that is, an executive and not a deliberative capacity. That is, when the rulers have deliberated and resolved (for I suppose there is to be some deliberation), the body is to execute; but the exercise of conscience or spiritual judgment by the Holy Ghost working in the body is not for them at all. This is what in principle has actually taken place. If those who have assumed the place of rulers commit even a crime, there is no remedy but to leave it to the Lord—none in any way. The body cannot judge: and if brethren, ever so gifted, come from elsewhere, they cannot be allowed to interfere, for they are strangers. There is an absolutely irresponsible body of rulers who have assumed the place to themselves (for who placed them there?) who can sin as they think fit till God is pleased to interfere. The gathering in Ebrington Street, besides being sectarian is really an independent church which has no power to judge evil, with irresponsible rulers who have assumed this place, and cannot be judged by anybody for anything they do.

For these two reasons, my brethren, I cannot own a table in Ebrington Street in any way. I look for two things especially as constituting distinctively the table of the Lord. First, the unity of the body of Christ—we are one body as partakers of one bread; secondly, that it should be a holy table. Both are denied in Ebrington Street. I do not mean that there are not individuals who believe in the unity of the body, and who are holy

persons and desire holiness; I do not the least doubt it. I speak of the principle for which they are responsible there.

Hence further, I fear nothing of the charge of a second table. There are many tables in Plymouth, and where dear saints too go conscientiously: but they do not, I judge, rightly own (in terms they would admit it as much as Ebrington Street) the unity of the body. Now I doubt that in any of them the friendly and gracious intervention of known brethren to help them through a trying case would have been rejected, as it has been in the gathering here; and certainly none would hold that there was no remedy at all for evil in their rulers but to leave it to the Lord. But I do not judge, we do not judge, they are what we seek for at the Lord's table; and I do not go there, and you do not go there. I act then as I acted seventeen years ago, believing that, where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there He is. I do not speak of a second table as regards Ebrington Street, more than I should say a fifth or sixth, if I began to break bread where there were four or five other dissenting bodies already established in a place.

I have given, in principle, my reasons why I do not own Ebrington Street at all, though I love, and look to God for grace to continue to love, the saints who go there. God forbid I should not: for I count them members of Christ's body, however they may divide it. I appeal now to their judgment as saints. But while the unity of the body is denied in fact, and the judgment of any evil doers is refused to the body, I cannot recognize their way nor them as the body of Christ at all as to their actual position. Do you really think, beloved brethren, that absolute irresponsibility as to evil for all who can

assume the place of rulers is the principle of the church of God, being neither remediable within, nor others allowed to interfere? “I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say.” You will find, and it is worthy of note, that in the first to the Corinthians, where directions are given as to these things, they are addressed to all saints, and no rulers or elders are mentioned in the matter. The point was to have the conscience of the body clear.

I believe then, that the two great principles of the church of God—unity and holiness—have been denied at Ebrington Street; not as to individuals, I mean nothing of that, but I speak of that on which the table spread there is based as a principle. I cannot therefore own it. I do not recur to what made me leave it, but to the judgment which what has passed since leads me to form of it. Till judgment of evil and unity were rejected I could be in suspense. Now they are rejected. But I shall say what I judge as to the whole matter, and as to the brethren who came here. As regards those who came here or who acted when here in a determined party spirit—to them I say that all I desire is, that, if their consciences do ever recognize this, they may be assured that they have my full and hearty forgiveness, as I do not doubt that they will then have the Lord’s: but as to the brethren in general who came—there are several whom I love and value very highly, and whose judgment in ordinary cases I should be most thankful to have and generally would rather have had than my own; but I judge that with one or two exceptions, which of course I do not name, their faith67 was not equal to the emergency in which they found themselves. They might have confined themselves to obtaining information for the guidance of their own conduct, or they might, as

members of the body of Christ, have identified themselves with the body here, and strengthened and acted in and with it according to their gift and grace. They did neither; they went beyond one, and they failed to do the other. They will forgive my putting this my judgment plainly before them and the brethren. Still the Lord ordered all for good, however painfully. Their coming has made the state of things and principles quite plain to every heedful conscience. The Lord is always faithful and cannot leave His people, however miserable they are. I believe He never shewed Himself so much in favour of the brethren and their principles as His, as in this matter, but it will decidedly sift all and elsewhere too in a great measure as well as here.

I feel bound to add another point. Indeed but for this I do not know that I should have written this. I am fully persuaded that there is a spirit of delusion from the enemy at work. I have feared it long. I have not myself the least doubt of it whatever now. Terrible as such a thing no doubt is, it is a comfort in one point of view that it accounts for otherwise unaccountable things, and it relieves the mind as to them, because one is sure that the power of the Deliverer is above it. wilful rejection of anything would evidently be a more hopeless case. The quiet rejection of the Gadarenes was far worse than the “what have I to do with thee?” of Legion himself. It may be comparatively in slight and less perceivable things, but I have the unhesitating conviction that it is at work. I do not say in all, though its effects may reach far, but over many. Finally, I recognise that many dear saints of God are in that which I have left. That they do not, many of them, see their way out I fully believe. They cannot of course act beyond whatever light they have in their

consciences. All I ask them is to look earnestly to God their Father, through Jesus, that He may enlighten their consciences, and by the power of His Spirit give them power to act on His light; for that we need too. And we know that, if their eye be single in this, they will find light and power too, and be in the presence of God, where everything gets its true place. I commend them with all my heart to Him and to the word of His grace in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

Finally I admit that it is a very serious thing to quit any body of Christians; but it is equally serious to remain where the table is based on principles which make it not the Lord's in truth. Moreover unity with Ebrington Street is not unity with the body of Christ; nay, it is the contrary now to me. And the insisting on the doctrine of unity to prevent the judging of evil, and that by the consciences of the saints, and assuming it into the hands of the rulers, is one of the very worst forms of evil, if not the very worst form which exists. Unity is insisted on by Rome, and on that account evil within is not allowed to be judged by the consciences of the saints. The representatives and rulers have that in their hands, though they may and do associate to themselves the body in doing it.

It may be alleged that young saints are unfit to judge such things. I believe there are many things a young saint would, in these days, judge better than many an old one. But that is not the question. Individuals are not called on to judge as such. The objection brings out a further point—the denial of the Holy Ghost acting in the body so as to guide it in a common act. And this is the real root of the whole matter.

One word more. The question may be and has been raised of returning to Ebrington Street. My answer is here simple. There is nothing there now for me to return to. If the saints who are there are delivered from what I believe to be evil, I boast of no superiority because I have been so before them. We are at once all one on common ground. It would be my most hearty joy. But there is nothing there for me to return to.

I take this opportunity to say, as others seem very anxious it should be said more publicly than it has, that I think the absence of the last two letters of the five of manuscript copy has been probably accounted for.

As to the appendix I shall state what was stated to me, as far as I can remember it. I attach not the smallest importance to it one way or other whatever; but as others do, here it is. I had remonstrated with Mr. Newton some five or six years ago as to these letters. He had been then, and it has been going on since, employing certain sisters in copying them, and the copies were sent to India, Canada, Ireland, etc. I wrote in a letter after the remonstrance certain objections to Mr. N. One of those sisters applied to Mr. Newton for any answer he might have to certain difficulties I presented on the subject, which she had heard at a meeting held at her sister's house. Mr. Newton gave her my letter to copy, desiring her not to copy a certain part which referred to personal matters, and, at the same time, his answers to the objections contained therein. This was introduced at the end of letter three as an appendix to letter one, under the title, "Appendix to letter 1. Some difficulties suggested to the interpretation in this letter with Mr. Newton's answer." The sister in question says, if I understand right, that

Mr. Newton is not answerable for its being there. I have no remark to offer on this, because I attach no sort of importance to it; but as others do, I take this opportunity of giving additional publicity to this also. Any importance I attach to the appendix, which is more as a proof of the letters being still circulated after remonstrance than anything else, is scarcely in the smallest degree affected by it. This has nothing whatever to do with the question of the printed documents to which the charges so often spoken of related, and on which I do not touch now at all in any way.

67 It is possible that I might have acted more in faith myself by leaving in April. But the Lord (I trust) has overruled all.

Account Of The Proceedings At Rawstorne Street,

In November And December, 1846,

With an Answer to the “Reasons” Circulated in Justification of the Refusal of Mr. Newton to Meet the Brethren68

Part 1

If it be a sad thing to be engaged in such an affair as that which occupies the saints at this moment, it is a matter of great comfort to be directed of God in it. It has been the conviction of the saints in Rawstorne Street, that they could not enter into reasons for not clearing their own consciences in the matter of evil charged against a brother who had refused to meet them on those charges; and that they must act on the fact of his refusal, when every means had been used to induce that brother to retract it and meet them; the rather, as they understood, that these reasons, as is now evident, would force them into the whole question of what had passed at Plymouth, and the merits of the case, as it had occurred there. This they felt under the circumstances incompetent to enter into. Mr. Newton was not present to reply for himself; witnesses as to the facts were not there. Had I made a statement, they could have only judged of its correctness ex parte. Moreover it was not what they had to do. They had to act on the repeated refusal of Mr. Newton to satisfy their consciences; and on that ground and that alone they did act, having come to the conclusion that if he refused to satisfy them, he could not come to communion with them till he did. That

refusal was finally given; and they thereupon wrote a letter to inform him, that he could not communicate till there was a full investigation.

I think they were bound to act so, and that the Lord guided them. Still I felt, having acted as the discipline of the church of God required, it would be satisfactory if the “Reasons” alleged for refusing to meet them came before the saints and were fairly examined; and I thought of applying to those who had attached their signatures to them to print them, and then I could reply. This thought was in my mind only the morning after the meeting at which the final letter to Mr. N. was drawn up, when I found, on going out, that they were already widely circulated in print among the brethren in London, before the letter communicating the judgment of the brethren had been closed by those entrusted to sign and send it. This publication of the “Reasons” has given full opportunity for entering into them; and it is to me a source of unfeigned satisfaction, though at the same time of sorrow, that the whole thing has come out into the light.

I now give the facts and papers, as they occurred connected with what took place in Rawstorne Street.

It was no volunteer whatever on the part of those meeting there. They had been advised, at the time Lord C. before them all had charged Mr. W. with schism,69 not to take any steps as to Plymouth, till the Lord made it a matter for their own consciences, and brought it before them; and accordingly they had remained entirely tranquil in the matter. I came up to town, on my way to France, got my passport signed, and orders on the continent for money, ready to start. At this moment

Mr. Newton arrived in town, and held some private meetings at which he lectured. At the close of one of these meetings, held in the immediate neighbourhood of Rawstorne Street, at the house of three who usually attended there, at which our brother G—h was present, Mr. N. took Mr. G—h aside and saidf that one object he had in coming up to town was, to satisfy the minds of any brethren as to the charges made against him. Mr. G—h, hoping things were going to be cleared up, said he should soon see some of them, or words to that effect. Mr. G—h communicated this to Dr. C. Dr. C. communicated it to the Saturday meeting, which is composed of brethren from different gatherings, whose communications for mutual edification, if there is no further service, tend to maintain unity of action in the gatherings (which are numerous) in and around London. At this meeting, cases of discipline and of persons desiring to be received into communion are named, that they may be known; and brethren can consult together in any matter that arises. Dr. C. at the same time communicated the judgment of Mr. R.H—d who had been obliged to leave the meeting, that nothing would be satisfactory unless the parties concerned met and the matter were fully gone into. All concurred in the propriety of meeting the proposal of Mr. Newton. Dr. C. was asked to undertake this, together with Mr. R. H—d, and any others it might be deemed wise to associate with them. Ultimately Mr. R.H—d, Dr. C, and Mr. D—n, communicated with Mr. Newton. Their efforts resulted in a failure of obtaining from Mr. Newton any satisfactory arrangement, for meeting the charges, or for satisfying brethren as proposed.

There is a meeting at Rawstorne Street on Tuesday morning, at which any needed diaconal service is considered, if there be such, after a prayer-meeting of those who attend. At this meeting, Mr. G—h being there, the matter was mentioned, and concurrently with, though independently of, the steps taken by the three above-named,70 it was agreed that the ten then present should write to Mr. N., and propose to him to meet the saints. The following letter was accordingly written:—

“Rawstorne Street, Nov. 10th, 1846.

“Dear Brother,

“Having been informed at our meeting for prayer this morning, that some of our brethren71 have invited you to attend a meeting of the saints (the importance and necessity of which for the Lord’s honour we feel), for the purpose of considering before the Lord the unhappy circumstances that have arisen amongst us, and as it is understood that you have expressed your readiness to meet the saints and to answer any questions on the above subject, we earnestly request you to inform us when and where you will do so.

“We are, dear brother, yours truly,

“Thos. A.

“John U.

“Joseph B—r.

“Henry G—h.

“Porter H—nd.

“Edw. G—e.

“George P—n.

“Chas. Jas. H—n.

“W. H—t.

“John E. W—d.

“P.S.—Your answer may be addressed to J.B—r, College Street, Islington, or to any one of the brethren who have signed this note.”

This was sent down the same evening to Dr. C.’s, where the meeting of Mr. Newton with Mr. H—d, Dr. C., and Mr. D—n took place; and Mr. N. said, he would answer it the next day in writing. His answer follows:— “My dear Brother, “My time is now very limited, but I hope to be at our brother G—h’s to-morrow afternoon, at three o’clock, when I should be happy to see any of the brethren who have signed the note to me, and to answer their inquiries as far as lies in my power.

“Yours in Christian regard, (Signed) “B. W. Newton.

“Tuesday Eve.”

To this Mr. B—r replied in the name of the brethren:—

“College Street, Nov. 11th.

“Dear Brother,

“The object of the note sent you from ten brethren yesterday morning was not to request that you would meet those who signed it, as your note seemed to infer (which, by the bye, did not reach me till twenty minutes to ten this morning, a period much too late to summon brethren for three o’clock, as they were all scattered to their several occupations), but that you would state when and where you intended to meet the saints publicly, ‘for the purpose of considering, before the Lord, the unhappy circumstances that have arisen

amongst us,' and to which they still request a direct reply.

"Yours truly,

"Joseph B—r.

"Mr. B. W. Newton."

Mr. Newton replied as follows:—

"Nov. 11, 1846.

"Dear Brethren,

"There were last year certain charges of moral dishonesty brought against me by Mr. Darby, at Plymouth in a public meeting, such charges having72 not first communicated to me. When I heard of these charges, I requested four brethren, of whom Lord C. was one, to wait on Mr. Darby and request him to nominate other four to investigate the truth. This was declined. Besides this, I requested those brethren who are regarded at Plymouth as addicting themselves to the ministry of the saints there to treat the matter as they would any other matter that might seem to require discipline. This was done, and a paper published, stating that they had examined the case, and reporting thereon to the saints. This paper you may see. Besides this, I appeared twice before ten or twelve brethren from various places, such, for example, as R., Lord C, M., Sir A.C., C, and others. They entered into an examination of the charges fully; and Lord C. will tell you that all, with the exception of Mr. W., declared that I was free from the charge of moral dishonesty that had been brought against me. A written defence was prepared by me, and laid before these brethren. Mr. B—er, of Hackney, has this defence, and can shew it to you. After all this, I feel

that I cannot be properly asked to plead again. As regards other charges in the ‘Narrative of Facts,’ the others affect the whole gathering of Plymouth as well as myself,73 and I hope to consider with them the desirable mode of satisfying our dear brethren that they are untrue. The personal charges against me will, I think, be sufficiently met by the papers in possession of Mr. B—er.

“Yours in Christian love, (Signed) “B. W. Newton.”

Hereupon, the following paper was drawn up and signed:—

“The undersigned ten brethren, after the meeting for prayer usually held by some brothers on Tuesday morning, felt it laid on their consciences to write to Mr. Newton, requesting him to state when and where he would attend a meeting of the saints publicly, for the purpose of considering, before the Lord, the unhappy circumstances which have arisen amongst us.

“This Mr. Newton has refused to do.

“Having thus acted in obedience to what they felt to be the Lord’s guidance in so solemn a matter, these brethren, in fellowship with others who have added their names hereto, now desire to leave it in testimony upon the consciences of the saints to act upon their responsibility to the Lord in so grave a matter.

“Henry G—h.

“Porter H—nd.

“George P—n.

“Thos. A.

“Chas. Jas. H—n.

“John E. W—d.

“John U.

“Joseph B—r.

“Edward G—e.

“William H—t.

“We have full fellowship with the act of these brethren.

“Frederick L.

“Matthew James S—g.”

Thursday evening is the weekly worship meeting at Rawstorne Street. There was a full attendance of the saints on the following Thursday, as it was understood the result arrived at would be communicated by Mr. D—n. The ten brethren requested him to do this for them, as one who had long laboured in Rawstorne Street and enjoyed the confidence of all. He had also been associated with Mr. H—d and Dr. C. in their meeting with Mr. Newton. Having enquired of Mr. G—e if the letters were there, he read the paper to the meeting. Mr. S—11, who had never formally joined the brethren, but who constantly breaks bread in Rawstorne Street, urged that brethren should not deal unfairly and judge on a statement of the kind, and that Mr. N. ought not to be judged without being heard; that Mr. N.’s was not a direct negative, and that he gave his reasons, and the letters ought to be read.

Mr. D—n replied, that Mr. S—11 had entirely mistaken the question; that they were not judging the matters at all; that, instead of not hearing Mr. Newton, what they complained of was, that he would not come and let them hear him; that, of course, he gave reasons, but that it

was a direct refusal, though he gave reasons for that refusal; and that at the meeting at Dr. C.'s they had proposed everything they could think of as a means of getting Mr. N. to meet satisfactorily the charges made, and that he would agree to nothing they could propose; that he (D—n) had merely taken the office of communicator, and that his service was now ended. The letters were read, and Mr. D—n closed with prayer.

Mr. Newton had said, on leaving the three brethren, after refusing the different plans they had suggested, that they might write and propose something, and they at Plymouth would consider it. Mr. H—d and Dr. C. thought that, not having said "No" at the time, they were under some obligation to do it, and they pressed it on Mr. D—n. He wrote accordingly the following note to Mr. N.:—

"40, Southampton Street, Reading,

"Nov. 20, 1846.

"Dear Brother,

"I now write a line to you in connection with the subject of our conference at our brother Dr. C.'s last week. I did not myself think it needful to press the matter any further upon you by letter, after the repeated negative you put, in that conference, upon every proposition to meet Mr. Darby and others connected with this sad business face to face. However other brethren think that in fairness you ought to be allowed, even now, an opportunity to retract that refusal, if you are disposed; and I am sure personally no one would more rejoice that you should do so than myself, convinced as I am that nothing but meeting the question in a fair and open way, in the presence of all concerned, will have the effect of

clearing yourself, or of satisfying the consciences of the saints. Let me ask you therefore to say whether you are prepared to meet Mr. Darby and others concerned in this question, in the presence of the saints at Rawstorne Street, where your visit and expressions of willingness to meet investigation have brought it on. I beg to say very distinctly, I do not write to brethren at Plymouth for any opinion as to the scriptural mode of proceeding in this investigation; not because I despise their judgment, but because the only satisfactory course for me to pursue, if I am charged with evil, is openly and fairly to answer to those charges when I am required to do so by the church, whose province it is to judge the evil, and not to be raising questions about the competency of the tribunal. I may also further say, that I write to you simply as to your personal course in this matter, because the charges are brought against yourself and not against others. Dr. C. wishes me to say, that an immediate answer is desirable, as Mr. Darby has been requested to stay in London until your reply is received, in order to give you the opportunity of meeting him and others, as required.

“Yours affectionately in Christ,

“W. H. D—n.”

To this Mr. D—n received the following reply’:—

“7, Woodside, Nov. 24th, 1846.

“My dear Brother,

“Newton having submitted to myself and other brethren your letter to him, we have requested him to allow us to answer it. This answer has been delayed by my own inability to write or to give due attention to the matter,

owing to an inflammation in one of my eyes. Our letter is intended to assign our reasons for counselling our brother to decline your proposal to him.

“Hoping to write to you with the least possible delay,

“Believe me, yours affectionately in the Lord,

“Henry Wm. S.

“To W. H. D—n.”

Mr. D—n declined waiting for any reasons, as the refusal to meet the saints was fully expressed in this note. Dr. C. wrote a separate note to Mr. Newton, making another proposal, namely, a meeting of brethren from different gatherings to enter into it with Mr. Darby present. Mr. Newton in his reply referred him to the above note of Mr. S. to Mr. D—n.74 Mr. D—n met the saints at Rawstorne Street on the Thursday evening following, and communicated the refusal to them; adding that, without judging upon the charges, a person who refused to meet them must lie under them—that he could not receive reasons for not meeting them; that he pressed no judgment by the brethren—they would act for themselves in it; but that after what had passed, if Mr. Newton came to Reading or Oxford, where he was now labouring, he as an individual would not break bread with Mr. Newton. And having thus discharged his own conscience, he had done what he had to do in the matter, into which he had been introduced by the invitation of Mr. H—d, Dr. C, etc.

In all these proceedings, though I had stayed in London at the particular request of brethren, I had taken no part whatever, nor been present at any meetings on the subject, save these two Thursdays, when I was at the

regular worship and stayed, but took no part, save that a brother having urged that I should meet the saints and give full information, I said that of course I was ready to give any explanation, but felt it would be neither right nor gracious to bring in new matter at any such meeting.

On the Sunday morning following, it was given out that a meeting of brothers75 would be held to consider what ought to be done under the circumstances. They met on the Wednesday following, a very large body of brethren —several from other gatherings beside Rawstorne Street being present and taking part in suggesting what they thought might minister to charity and godliness. At this meeting the great body were satisfied that all had been done that was needed, and that they must come to the conclusion that till Mr. N. satisfied them he could not come to communion. A few doubted whether they could be considered to have received a direct refusal, however right they might think the steps of the ten. A Kennington brother declared that Air. N. had said to himself when calling on him on these points, that the church was not a judicial assembly, and that he would not answer to it.

Mr. G—h also read thereon part of a letter of Mr. N. to Dr. C.,76 stating that he would meet him as an individual, but positively refusing to meet the saints in a formal manner. The brethren who had some difficulty were satisfied by this; and it was then proposed, that though they adopted the act of the ten brethren, an appeal had not been made by the body; and, however hopeless they might be about it, still charity would try. Mr. D—n who was present proposed this formally. A brother from Kennington said that, though he knew it did not apply in the letter, still the analogy of Matthew

18 might be used, and that the last step therein mentioned had not been taken; if that was taken, he should feel nothing more could be done but to refuse to receive him. This proposal was deferred to, Mr. G—h thereon definitely presenting it to the meeting, and the following letter was written and agreed to. Mr. B—e very graciously said, that he did not personally concur in the alternative stated in it, as, supposing there was a refusal on the part of Mr. Newton, he did not feel that it would hinder his breaking bread with him. It was settled that the letter should be read on Sunday morning to the whole congregation, which was accordingly done by Mr. G—h, and it was despatched on Monday, no comment having been made on it on Sunday. I must say, nothing could exceed the grace and good order and deference for the feelings of the weakest, that characterised the meeting of Wednesday. Mr. S—ll (who as I understood, avowed himself a member of another body of Christians) rebuked Mr. D—n for saying, when declaring that he could not read the reasons, that they had not satisfied him. Mr. D—n acquiesced in the justice of it. Mr. W. objected to the fitness of Mr. S—ll's taking a prominent part; but the brethren discountenanced the objection, and though silent till the close of the meeting, he spoke again the Friday week following. I should not mention these things, but that I would state nothing as to the character of the meeting without giving a general outline of all.

"My dear Brother,

"I have never proposed, but entirely declined, a formal meeting. If you wish to see me as a Christian brother, and would ask me any questions that would tend to elucidate facts, I should feel obliged; but I would

consent to nothing further, nor would I see any brethren without first being acquainted with their names. I will endeavour to call on you to-morrow at the time proposed; but it is only to see you, and to afford you an opportunity of satisfying your own mind as to facts, if you desire it. But I come to see you alone.

“Yours, in Christian love,

“B. W. Newton.”

This letter having been publicly read by Mr. G—h, it is given; as without it the account of the meeting would not be complete. The rest of the letters are in private hands.

The note addressed by the meeting was as follows:—

“London, Dec. 7, 1846.

“Beloved Brother,

“We beg to transmit to you the following communication from a meeting of brothers usually breaking bread at Rawstorne Street, with some brethren from other places present and concurring; and which was afterwards presented and concurred in by the saints met together in the name of the Lord at Rawstorne Street on Sunday morning last.

“Having been fully informed of your refusal to meet the saints at Rawstorne Street, to satisfy their consciences as to the truth or falsehood of the charges brought against you, in the ‘Narrative of Facts,’ in the presence of those concerned in the charges, we now make to you a last appeal as a body, in the hope that you may yet be moved to recall your expressed determination on this point, and that you will not force us to a formal

expression of the only scriptural alternative left to us in such a case.

“We request that you will kindly send your answer, addressed to Mr. G—h, 20, Trinidad Place, Liverpool Road, Islington, so as to reach him by the nth inst., as it is the purpose of the brethren to meet on that day to receive it.

“Signed on behalf of those named above,

“Yours in true Christian love,

“H. G—h.

“W. H. D—n.

“To B. W. Newton.”

The brethren met on Friday. W. A—e gave out a hymn, and Mr. Darby prayed.

Mr. G—h read the following reply:—

“Plymouth, 9th Dec, 1846.

“Beloved Brethren,

“Knowing, as you well do, our strong conviction so long and in such various ways expressed, that the meeting you propose is entirely opposed to the directions of the word of God, you cannot be surprised that we should again meet it with the most firm and decided negative.

“If you had allowed us a few more days, we should have completed the answer to your letter which we are now preparing, and which we hope to forward with the shortest possible delay. “We can scarcely expect that you will attach much value to the expression of our judgment; but we think it our duty simply to warn you

against the course that you appear to be so precipitately pursuing.

“We are, beloved brethren,

“Yours affectionately in the Lord, (Signed)

“B. W. Newton.

“H.W.S.

“W.B.D.

“J. C—w.

“J.E.B.

“To Messrs. W. H. D—n and H. G—h.”

A letter from Mr. T. accompanied it, warning the brethren they were all wrong, which it is hardly necessary to insert. Part of it was, however, read by Mr. G—h.

It will be seen from the letter previously addressed to Mr. Newton, that the meeting on Friday was to receive the answer and act on it if it was a refusal; and this was fully understood by the brethren. The brother who had urged Matthew 18, and pressed the brethren so to act as they accordingly did, put it on that ground, as indeed the passage would make evident.

However, at Friday’s meeting, some of Mr. Newton’s personal friends came (none of them having been at the preceding ones, but Mr. S—ll)—Mr. W—s, who did not say much, but objected and left; Mr. W. B—er, Mr. S—ll, Mr. W—n from Brixham in Devonshire, Mr. A—e from Tottenham; Mr. O. from St. Austell, Cornwall—and endeavoured to hinder the brethren from acting, declaring their incompetency to act, that Mr. Newton

had never come77 among them at Rawstorne Street at all, and therefore they had no reason for acting; Mr. W—n urging the reading a quantity of papers he had in his possession to prove Mr. N. innocent. Mr. D—n replied to this last, that they would be quite proper to be read, if they were trying Mr. Newton, but they were not, nor passing judgment on his guilt, but clearing their own consciences as a gathering, acting solely on his refusal to meet them. And another brother also said that, if they heard these papers and the reasons, Mr. Darby might reply, and Mr. Newton was not there to meet it, so that they could not enter on that ground. It was said that they were as ready to judge Mr. Darby (if the charges were untrue, for then he was a calumniator) as Air. N., but Mr. N. had made it impossible to enter on it. Mr. B—er said Mr. N. had not refused to meet Mr. Darby under certain circumstances; that he had said, that if brethren declared it was absolutely necessary, he could not say whether he would refuse, but that it would be time enough to consider it when the case arose. Mr. D—n replied to this, that Mr. N. had said at the meeting at Dr. C.'s that, if any brother would say solemnly before the Lord, that he felt it was necessary for the glory of God that he should meet Mr. Darby, he would do so; and that Dr. C. had replied that he did say solemnly before the Lord that it was necessary for the glory of God that he should; and Mr. N. replied then that Dr. C. would not say so if he knew all the circumstances.

Other brethren of Rawstorne Street merely urged, that all this was not the question, that they had to act on the refusal to meet them and satisfy their consciences. Mr. O. said, were they right in judging that Mr. Newton had refused? He had seen Mr. N. within a week, and he had

told himself that he did not refuse to meet the church. It was replied, that Mr. 0., not having been at the meetings, was not aware of course of what had passed; that on Wednesday week preceding a letter had been read from Mr. N. himself, declaring that he would not. And Mr. G—h was called on for the letter. A brother however said, “We all recollect it”; and nothing more was said on this point, and the brethren waited patiently till twelve o’clock, owing to the attempts of the above-named brethren to hinder their acting. One brother, E—s, stated he felt difficulty on the ground of Mr. B—er’s statement, but on the letter being read at the close, which it was proposed to send, he rose and said, as he had made a difficulty, he felt called on to say he entirely assented to it. Mr. Frederick P—x protested against the competency of the brethren to act, and questioned if Air. N. had refused. Another brother made a difficulty as to the course of procedure on this ground, that I ought indeed to have left Ebrington Street, but to have retired to a neighbouring gathering, and got them to judge the whole conduct of Ebrington Street gathering, for not having judged the evil, and therefore I ought not to be listened to at all. Having graciously and quietly stated this, all in the gathering felt that this was a principle that could not be entertained a moment, just as they at this moment could not judge Ebrington Street. They judged unanimously, with the exception of this objection, and of Mr. P—x (for it was an appeal made to all, “Whether any had any difficulty?” which had drawn out these objections), that a letter Should be written to Mr. Newton, stating that they could not hold communion with him till he met the charges fully. The letter follows: —

“London, Dec. 13, 1846.

“Beloved Brother,

“The saints at Rawstorne Street, with some other brethren present and concurring, having received your refusal to meet their request, now communicate to you, with the utmost sorrow and pain, that they feel precluded meeting you in fellowship at the table of the Lord, until the matters in question have been fairly and fully investigated. In this communication the congregation at Rawstorne Street do not express any judgment on the matter charged, but simply on the fact of your refusal. They need not say, with what joy they would welcome any change in your disposition as to this matter.

“Signed on behalf of the saints above named,

“We remain, dear brother,

“Affectionately yours in Christ,

“W. H. D—N.

“H. G—H.

“To B. W. Newton.”

Mr. W. prayed, and the letter was read a second time and approved. It was again read at the table on the following Sunday, and then sent.

I mentioned on Saturday morning, the statement of Mr. B—er at the meeting on Friday evening, and I allude here to what passed, because, as Mr. B—er’s statement was made before a very large body of brethren, it is well that the explanation should be known. It did not affect the question before the saints at Rawstorne Street, because it referred to the interview of the three with Mr.

N., whereas the brethren there acted on the refusal addressed to the ten brethren, confirmed by the letter of Mr. S. to Mr. D—n, and on the final refusal of Mr. Newton to the joint application of the saints, and other communications which confirmed it. Indeed on one occasion, when allusion was made to the paper signed by Dr. C, Messrs. R. H—d, and D—n, knowing that Mr. B—er was invalidating the authority of that document, I dissuaded the brethren from referring to it without saying more, than that that meeting was not before them, that they had not been there, and it would be better to act on what had been addressed to themselves. And it was not referred to. When on Saturday morning the above letter, signed on Friday night, was communicated to the Saturday meeting, it of course introduced the subject; I said, that what had passed shewed the entire uselessness of these private meetings: here was one at which brethren we all honoured and respected took part; as the responsible persons, they draw up a report as the result of it, and it is left to act upon the consciences of the saints (though happily they had acted independently of it); and, at the end of three weeks, a person present at the meeting, and present and admitting its truth when the report was drawn up, comes and seeks to hinder the saints acting by a statement invalidating the report. Mr. B—er was asked by Mr. H—nd, if the report had not, when drawn up, been read to him, word by word and paragraph by paragraph, and that he had stated it was true: he assented that he had agreed to it as true, and added, that he said now it was true, that is, as far as it went; but that what he had said since was true too. Mr. R. H—d remarked, that Mr. Newton had said what Mr. B—er referred to (namely, that on Mr. B—er’s pressing him to

say, would he refuse to meet Mr. Darby if brethren insisted on it as necessary? Mr. N. replied, he could not say, that if the brethren insisted on it as necessary, he would in all circumstances refuse, but that it would be time enough to consider it when the case arose). Mr. R. H—d added, that perhaps a better account than the one signed might be, that Mr. Newton had refused every actual proposition made to him,78 but made a reserve of hypothetical cases, which came to nothing. I said, that I did not understand how Mr. B—er could consistently assent to, as true (fair had also, at the time, been urged by Mr. S—r, and admitted by Mr. B—er) an absolute statement, that Mr. Newton had refused, and then say, that he had not refused under all circumstances. Mr. B—er said both were true. I said, I could not doubt a moment of the effect produced on D—n, H—d, and Dr. C.'s consciences, before whom the interview took place, which effect never appeared, and which was nullified by an invalidated report. Had it been before the saints themselves, their own consciences would have been under the impression. Mr. R. H—d said, that the best thing perhaps to say was, that it was impossible to give a straightforward report of what was not straightforward. There the matter dropped.79 Having given all this comment on it, so that it may have its just value, I add the report signed by these three brethren.

"In the meeting at Dr. C.'s (10 Nov. 1846), it was urged upon Mr. Newton, that there was need of a full and open investigation. He was challenged by some present (in accordance with the object of the meeting) to meet J.N.D. and others face to face openly, and to say before them what he had said privately, which he refused, giving reasons against it: but, at the conclusion of the

meeting said, that if a proposition was made in writing, they at Plymouth would consider whether it was scriptural.

“Signed by

“D—n.

“E.C.

“R. H—D.”

I found on going to this Saturday meeting, that the reasons for refusing to meet the saints, signed by Messrs. S., C—w, B., and D., were circulated in print, by post, together with Mr. N.’s defence, as widely as had been possible among the saints composing the congregation in Rawstorne Street, and provision made for their gratuitous distribution. To these documents I now turn.

This report of these proceedings has been submitted to Messrs. D—n, J. H—d, and a considerable number of the saints who took part at Rawstorne Street, and has received their corrections. Mr. R. H—d has corrected what relates to the part he was engaged in. He was not at the general meetings of the brethren, of which an account is given above. Many brethren wishing to sign it, as well as the two named above, it was thought undesirable to select on the one hand, or to delay it on the other. It would have taken several days to attach these signatures, and this notice is substituted.

Besides the corrections made, some of the brethren doubted whether Mr. S—11 had not said, he had been, not he was, a member of another body of Christians. Mr. W.’s objection to the fitness of his taking a prominent part in a case of discipline was on the ground that he

still was, though often coming to Rawstorne Street. His feeling was overruled, as stated.

Part 2 Being the Answer to the "Reasons."

I am exceedingly thankful for the publication of these papers. The saints have now Mr. Newton's "Defence," and his friends' "Reasons" for his not meeting the saints. In a word they have the case before them. While the brethren in London were discussing the question of how to judge the case before them, I refrained from taking any part whatever. In the last two meetings, after Mr. Newton had refused to meet them at all, I felt free to take a part, because the merits of the case were not in question, but the competency of saints to clear their consciences of evil; but though provoked by multiplied assertions of proofs of innocence and reasons, I refrained from all answer whatever to these, and refused to say a word on the merits of the case or on the "Reasons" (though it was very trying to me), because it would not have been fair on my part. The printing and distribution of the "Reasons" and "Defence" have set me perfectly free as to this.

I shall consider, first, the "Reasons."

There are one or two general remarks which I would make. In the first place these documents set up my narrative on the highest ground of fairness. For this reason—three things are here alleged80 as clearing Mr. Newton, namely, the acquittal by the brethren who went down, which he suppressed; the letter written by a certain number of them, here published; and the acquittal by the four who sign the "Reasons." Now I have stated all these things in the "Narrative." The letters of Mr. R. and Lord C. I could not give, because I

had them not, but I have stated their existence. The alleged acquittal, suppressed by Mr. Newton himself as ruining him, so that he declared he would go to Canada if it came out, I felt to be the best thing for him which he had got, as he now feels it to be; and I stated that there was such a document, and its substance, although he had got it suppressed. I will discuss it farther on. I allude to it now as a proof of the fairness of the "Narrative." I have stated also the acquittal by the four who sign the "Reasons."

I have now another remark to make which is of all importance. There is not the smallest attempt whatever made to meet the "Narrative," but merely the charges inquired into at Plymouth a year ago. Now the main charges in the "Narrative" were not before the brethren at all then. They had never been made. They inquired into certain charges made in a public meeting in Ebrington Street in November, 1845, and none others. Now at that meeting I was called on by the saints to say why I had left Ebrington Street. In giving the account to them of the matter, I stated certain things (amongst many other facts) which had stopped me from ministering three months before I left. These particular things affected Mr. N., and these particular things alone were inquired into; but they are by no means the only ones, nor are they in my judgment by any means the gravest. There is not a pretence that the others have been inquired into in any way whatever. The "Reasons" of 1846, as well as the "Defence" of 1845, confine themselves to the inquiry carried on at Plymouth in the year 1845, and leave the main allegations of the "Narrative" untouched, I would I could say unobserved

upon. They fix the reader's attention on the Plymouth inquiry, and take it off the "Narrative."

But I must now draw the saints' attention to what they do say. After stating that the four who sign are implicated in the main bulk of the charges in the "Narrative," they continue:— "The only exception is in the case of the charges of personal untruthfulness. Of these specific charges our brother Newton is the only object. Now as to these: it might be quite sufficient for us to refer you to his own paper, entitled 'A Defence81 in Reply to the Personal Accusations of Mr. Darby,' a copy of which accompanies this letter." … "Now we understand your letter to refer only to these last-mentioned charges." … "These charges were" —and then they give their statement of the charges alleged to have been made at the meeting at Ebrington Street in November, 1845, and never notice the charges in the "Narrative" at all. God is my witness, brethren, that I wish I had never heard of them again, and that they were all proved untrue. I would bear the shame with joy, if it could be so; but that is not the question here. The plea here against meeting them is, that they have been inquired into, and the accused acquitted of them. Of what? Of the charges in the "Narrative"? No: but of the charges at Plymouth in 1845, which appear82 indeed in the "Narrative," but are by far the smallest part of the matter. And the reason why these only were mentioned then is evident. These particular matters were the reason for my leaving, and therefore I mentioned them alone at the meeting in Ebrington Street. I avoided anxiously every aggravation, and stated only what had led to my leaving, for this was what I was called upon to state. In my "Narrative" I stated the facts in general,

avoiding private ones. In the “Reasons” these four go back to the Ebrington Street meeting, and declare that the charges made there were disposed of, and never make the smallest allusion to the charges in the “Narrative.” These remain untouched; the most important of them were not alluded to in the meeting at Ebrington Street, nor in the inquiry which followed; and some of them happened after both ‘the meeting’ and ‘the inquiry,’ though in the affairs connected with them.

Mr. Newton took the same ground in his reply to the ten brethren. After urging his acquittal from the charges made in the meeting at Ebrington Street, he adds: “As regards other charges in the ‘Narrative of Facts,’ the others affect the whole gathering of Plymouth as well as myself.” The answer to this statement is, it is wholly untrue. Mr. N. must really draw largely on the credulity of his readers. He is charged with several cases of want of truthfulness, in which he alone (would he were not either!) is concerned. For example to cite only one: the imputing to myself and others a certain heretical doctrine in a tract written by himself alone—when he, and he alone, had taught it in a worse shape, and that after explanation had on the subject; and then denying that he had charged us, though the charge was in print.

I repeat twenty times were it needed, I would to God he could disprove it, were I put to utter shame; but believing not only that the church of God, the saints beloved of Christ are concerned, but that Satan is seeking to ruin the blessing with which God had entrusted us, it cannot now be so passed over. I am ready (I have ever said and felt so) to confess my share as the first among those whose unfaithfulness and want of spirituality gave occasion to the inroad. Moreover, in

general I stand as a poor sinner, with no hope at all but mercy myself; and I read, “he shall have judgment without mercy who shewed no mercy.” But I cannot (even though my failing may have helped to give occasion to the ruin coming in) acquiesce in it, when it is come in and is manifest. Nor do I think it mercy to leave the poor and simple saints exposed to it (Brethren may judge me as they think right): I cannot do so before God. I am reproached now with not bringing the first charges against Mr. Newton openly before the whole church. I did bring what was a practical point of clerical assumption and the instrument of sectarianism, and pressed it on their consciences much before I left, and they would not stir. I avoided bringing the charges personally disgraceful to himself. My heart resisted it. I am now reproached with it. Perhaps I was wrong. I do not envy his friends who reproach me with it, and take it up as a ground why nothing can be done now. When the evil was sought to be spread afresh, so that I felt forced to come out with a statement of what passed, that is resisted. My answer is simple. God knows the end, and will bring it about to His own glory. But I resume.

The reader may here mark the difference of the two replies one has to deal with. Mr. Newton (in the letter to the ten) comes forward with a plain untruth, namely, that the other charges affect all at Plymouth. It will be answered, that the detection is so evident that he could not mean to deceive. (Mr. Newton uses this same plea in his defence.) But this is a mistake. Few carry the facts in their mind so as to detect the falsehood. If Mr. Newton’s plausible statement is accredited, he appears an injured and aggrieved man; the fairest words are used: the person gets under his influence; once there no

contradiction is listened to, no exposure read, a partisan is gained. The tact of the writer of the “Reasons” is more subtle. He states generally, “The only exception is, in the case of the charges of personal untruthfulness. Of these specific charges our brother Newton is the only object.” This seems fair enough. Then in page 2 a history is given of my conduct and charges at Plymouth in 1845, as to prophecy, sectarianism, and, finally, Mr. Newton’s veracity. And then it is said, “Now we understand your letter to refer only to these last-mentioned charges. For of none others could it, in any way, be said that they are brought against our brother Newton only, and not against others. It is to satisfy the consciences of the saints as to the things charged against his veracity83therefore, that we suppose you ask our brother Newton to appear before the saints in Rawstorne Street, etc. Now, we think it impossible that such a proposition could have been made by you, had you been aware of the way in which these charges have already been met and examined into in this place. These charges were,” etc.; and then comes an elaborate account of what they allege to have been my charges in 1845 at Plymouth. Now the reader will naturally suppose—he is left to suppose— that the charges in page 2, thus entered on, are the same as those spoken of in page 1, and that Rawstorne Street had specifically these, and these only, before it. He would hardly suppose that “these specific charges “in page 1, and “these charges were” in page 2, are quite a different matter, two only of the latter being found amongst the former. Page 184 refers to the charges in the “Narrative of Facts,” which is thus subtly attempted to be swamped in what passed at Plymouth in 1845, where, as I have said, I confined myself (when called upon to state what

led to my leaving) entirely to what had led to this, not wishing to bring charges, though I already knew of many other things; but they had not led to my leaving, and I said nothing about them. The alleged charges of 1845 are thus quietly assumed to be “the things charged against his veracity,” and that “of none others could it be said that they are brought against Mr. Newton only.” But I turn to page I, and I say with it there are “specific charges” in the “Narrative of Facts” —of which three (besides two of those found here) may be read in one page of the “Narrative,” besides others in other parts of it. And in a following page of the “Narrative” it is distinctly urged that they regard Mr. Newton alone.

These first two pages then are a mere attempt85 to merge the “Narrative” in what passed at Plymouth in 1845, and the charges then made; to which alone the alleged acquittal can be pretended to apply. As to them, it is attempted to shew there has been an acquittal (the force of which I shall just now examine), but this acquittal does not in any way apply to the great body of charges in the “Narrative” at all. What shall we say to such a defence as this?

Having now shewn that the “Reasons” do not really touch upon or treat of the great body of charges as to truthfulness contained in the “Narrative,” the whole case is really disposed of (viewed as taken up by those to whom the paper has been addressed). The “Defence” does not even allude to these charges, having been written before the “Narrative” came out. But I will, for the satisfaction of the saints, go through as briefly as I can the “Defence” of acquittal set up as to what is touched upon.

It is stated (page 2) that my complaints were directed against certain writings on prophetic and kindred subjects, and the way they had been disseminated. As every one knows, I do not agree with these prophetic views; I think them wrong in the most really important points; I do object to the manner in which they are disseminated. But, instead of beginning with this, I positively refused to enter on it as aground of complaint. I said my ground was a moral ground. There can be no dispute as to this, because there is proof in writing. Here is Mr. Newton's account of the charge I made.

"The charge preferred against me in the meeting was a systematic effort to form a sect, and discrediting and denouncing those who do not adopt the opinions which form its basis." This, though not the terms used at the meeting, is correct; it is taken from a previous note of mine to Mr. Newton. The first terms of the charge made, which, as well as this, was privately to Mr. Newton (I quote from his own note) were that he had "acted very badly towards many beloved brethren, and in the sight of God."86 Secondly, my attention was called to the subject of clericalism by an expression in Mr. Newton's first note, and I took it up with him, whereupon he withdrew his kindly written one. It is perfectly true, that the way in which the scheme had ripened I had at first no idea of. It is equally true, that it was "afterwards" I made the charges against his veracity: for the simplest reason; he had not made the statements on which they were founded till afterwards. I will here repeat, that though I did not go to Mr. Newton about them (he declined intercourse with me at that time, though I had called on him in order to renew it, and, not finding him, told him so); I did speak of them to Mr. H. and S., who

were intimate with him, and in whom I had confidence. Mr. H. as well as Mr. N—r did go to him, at any rate about one of these charges, before ever they were brought forward, and he persisted in the thing in spite of remonstrance. The whole paragraph therefore is a misrepresentation, save that I did not make the charges before they were called for. My purpose in going to Plymouth was anything but making charges.

Next, as to the charges; they are stated to be four. Now I deny absolutely that I ever made more than two at the meeting in Ebrington Street in 1845. The parading the two first is merely to make out a case. None of the four who sign were there. Mr. N—r, who was, bore me out as to the terms I used in the meeting. The charge made behind my back was, that I accused Mr. Newton of altering the letters, after being told he had not. The charge made to myself by Mr. Newton was, that I had charged him with suppressing two out of five. This statement, as I shall shew, is the only plausible one, even from his own account. Here is the charge forwarded by him to me: “first, That of five manuscript letters (which it is not needful more particularly to describe), Mr. Newton had suppressed some.”

This is his written complaint sent to me by the four persons mentioned in page 3 of the “Reasons.” To aggravate and attach importance to this, the four, who here reproduce them, add “secret” suppression; and to make it square with the charge made behind my back of altering the letters, it is added, “or parts of them.” In page 16 of the “Defence,” made in 1845, Mr. Newton, referring to a book now lying before me, says, “This book Mr. Darby appears to have seen, and to have inferred that the two last letters were suppressed,” etc.

This statement then, in the “Reasons,” is itself an entirely unjustifiable one on any ground. As to the second, I do not exactly see how the addition of an appendix constitutes, or can constitute, a charge of moral dishonesty. There may be a want of fairness in the manner of it. Whatever the charge is worth, the fact is so. An appendix was added, at the close of letter 3, with this title, “Appendix to Letter 1. Some difficulties suggested to the Interpretation in this Letter with Mr. Newton’s answer.”

Since the meeting at which this was alluded to, Miss J. has declared she is answerable for this, and that she put it in; that she had asked (being employed, note, to copy and circulate these letters) Mr. Newton whether he had an answer to certain difficulties I had raised to his views87 expounded in these letters. Mr. Newton supplied her with my letter to him (telling her what part she might copy, and what part she might not), and with answers thereto from himself. Miss J. declares that, though authorised to copy it, she was not expressly authorised to put it in the letters. This was communicated to me subsequently to my statement at the meeting, and I published it at their request in the first tract I printed. I do so again now.

All I said at the meeting was this, that “the first thing that made me uncomfortable was the renewed circulation of these letters, two of them being wanting” (I cannot answer for the word “suppressed”; I may have said in a copy in which two of them were “suppressed”), and in which an appendix was added as belonging to the first letter, which referred in a material part to one of the letters which was not in the book. My only words in pursuing the history of what led to my

leaving were, “the first thing that made uncomfortable.” The facts are just exactly as I stated them. My charges were quite distinct. I shall go into them in a moment. It is possible this rested on Mr. N.’s mind with pain, as a charge, from Miss H.’s writing to him about it. I will touch on this when I come to it.

I shall now state, as to the details, how the question of the place of the appendix came in. My grand objection was the circulation, in spite of remonstrance, of the letters denouncing the brethren’s teaching. Miss J. states, she left the two out to circulate them in another book, and thus among twice as many people. Now in one of the two last Mr. N. makes this statement, that before the tares are judged on the earth, the saints will be raised and stay on the earth for an interval (probably a brief one), and that their being seen in their changed bodies must be an awful and terrible sight to the ungodly, and that while they were there the tares would be separated from among them;88 that at that time risen saints alone were the wheat, and that gathering the tares from among the wheat meant gathering sinners from among risen saints on earth. I had (no one, I think, will be surprised) objected to this statement, and I do think it a little unreasonable to declare, as Mr. N. does in these letters, that “the foundations of Christianity are gone,” if people do not fall in with a system involving such absurdities as this.

Mr. N. in the Appendix added by Miss J., as belonging to Letter 1, denies some of my remarks being correct, as for instance, that he had said the tares were burned while the risen saints were there. It is possible he had not said so; but if I may judge from Mr. Newton’s extract of my letter in the Appendix, I said no such thing, but

gave the quotation in terms from his letter, though he seems to imply I did, by denying it. However this may be, I felt it objectionable to declare that the comment referred to Letter 1, which did not contain all this, whilst my objection was based on Letter 4 or 5, which was not there to be referred to, this point being the first and leading one given. This objection, I dare say, may have been taken by Mrs. B—h, whose kindness and integrity no one will question, to be a charge of altering the letters. If she said so, I am sure she thought so; but it is evident it had nothing to say to it. I have given these details, as so much has been said about it. But the fact is, I entered into none of them at all at the meeting. I said nothing whatever but that the circulation of these three letters, with the Appendix, without the other two was “the first thing that made me uncomfortable”; and so it did.

Mr. N. had been remonstrated with about these letters at least four years before, and this was a kind of new edition; and I referred to the matter in some such terms, stating merely the fact as to the other point, Mr. N.’s name not being even mentioned, though I do not doubt it was referred to him, though a vast body of the statement did not exclusively. I knew it was Miss J.’s hand. I had been asked, previously, to the meeting, how I knew the Appendix was from Mr. Newton, and I shewed its heading.

I made a long preface then as to the disastrousness of having to make charges against one accustomed to be looked up to, and then stated those found as the third and fourth in page 3 of the “Reasons”; which, though not in the terms, amount to the matter of the charges. As Mr. N. refers to them in his “Defence,” I will refer to

them there; and will now take up the allegation of their having been inquired into, and Mr. N. acquitted.

First, as to the fact of the investigation by these four; they allege an investigation by the natural guides of Plymouth, and besides that by other brethren. There is a long statement contained in pages 3 to 8, to the effect that those co-operating in ministry (designated in the rest of the statement by the word “we,” that is, the four who sign the “Reasons”) felt that the charges “demanded a prompt and searching inquisition,” and that this was gone into. It is then added in page 8, “But investigation into this matter has not been confined to the saints living here. The presence here, in December, 1845, of many brethren from other places (who came indeed expressly to investigate what was transpiring here) afforded an opportunity for yet farther inquisition into these personal charges; and these brethren did in a very patient protracted way go into the whole matter.”

So that there was a prompt and searching inquisition by the four ministering brethren at Plymouth,89 which proved the charges were so groundless they were not worth communicating to the church, but the result of which was at last communicated to them, and satisfied the church; and there was a yet farther inquisition, in which other brethren did in a very patient and protracted way go into the whole matter. Now let us see on their own shewing how it was done. And let us consider first “the prompt and searching inquisition” by those who cooperated with Mr. Newton in ministry, that is, the four who sign the “Reasons,” before we touch on the yet farther inquisition. Turn to page 3. “The first step towards such an inquiry (that is by the four ministers) was indeed taken by our brother Newton

himself, though with our full and entire concurrence. He proposed that he should name four brethren, and our brother Darby other four, and that these eight should investigate the case, and report the result of their investigation to the church.90 Our brother Newton accordingly nominated four—our brethren M., Lord C, Dr. C—y, and W—r; but our brother Darby declined to accede to this mode of investigation."

I confess I was astounded at this (not at the fact, which, corrected as in the note, is true, unless it be the concurrence of the four who sign the reasons, which I know nothing about; but) that the first step of the co-operating ministers to make a prompt and searching inquisition was Mr. Newton's nominating four other persons to conduct it (a step taken by himself), and with four to be named by me, to report it, when closed to the church. That can hardly mean the inquiring ministers.

But note yet another thing, how prompt it was. For I press attention (because there are loose words afterwards in which this is sought to be wrapped up), I press attention, I say, to the words "the first step." Now who are the four named by Mr. Newton? Three of them are of the number of the brethren who came to carry on the "yet farther inquisition" in the most patient and protracted way. That is, not a single step whatever was taken before the brethren had come from a distance to inquire into what had transpired. And then the first step of the inquiry of these co-operating ministers was taken by Mr. Newton himself nominating four other persons, three being the brethren from a distance. But then it may be alleged that it is said, "But before this proposition was declined, indeed, as soon as the charges became known to us, our brother Newton conversed

with some of us," etc. "The propriety of this was felt by all" and then "we felt that we had nothing to lay before the saints." Now, still as to date, it is clear that this could not be before the first step was taken. This was taken by Mr. Newton; as he himself confirms. His letter to the ten brethren in Rawstorne Street who wrote to him says: "When I heard of these charges, I requested four brethren, of whom Lord C. was one, to wait on Mr. Darby, and request him to nominate other four, to investigate the truth. This was declined. Besides this I requested those brethren who are regarded at Plymouth as addicting themselves to the ministry of the saints there, to treat the matter as they would any other matter that might seem to require discipline," etc.

"Before the proposition was declined, indeed, as soon as the charges became known to us," does not give thus one instant before the first step which put it into other hands. The reader may think that "before "includes some considerable period. But "the first step," when Mr. Newton heard of the charges, was Mr. Newton's speaking to Lord C, etc., so that this "indeed as soon "is no time at all, though it may look like some preceding act. And how much was the lapse before Mr. Darby's declining the proposition to put it in other hands?—the brethren from a distance being then come to investigate, before which, as we have seen, nothing was done at all, the first step being taken with three of them. The proposition of Mr. Newton's nominees to me after hearing Mr. Newton's statement is dated November 26, 1845. My answer declining it is November 27, 1845; their final reply to me, November 28, 1845, at which time the patient investigation of the other brethren was in hand. On the 14th of December Lord C. signs a paper

acquitting Mr. Newton as the result of it. And Mr. S.'s letter of acquittal given in the "Reasons" is dated December 17, at which time, as every one knows, the inquiry of the brethren had closed, and several were already gone. So that we get the plain fact, that not one step was taken of the prompt and searching inquisition before the brethren came from afar, and that then it was put, with the concurrence of the four, into the hands of some of those who came and who were to report to the church; and that then whatever it was worth, or however consistent, Mr. Newton put it into the hands of those four, as those who were regarded at Plymouth as addicting themselves to the ministry of the saints; who, before his putting it into their hands and telling them they might do it, never took a single step whatever. And at this time, it was under the investigation of the brethren from afar.

And now the question arises, why Mr. Newton spoke to "some of us" and who are the "all" by whom it was felt. Was Mr. H. not co-operating in ministry at Plymouth? Where were Mr. R—e and Mr. S—s, who used to co-operate, or Mr. R.H. or others, who once "addicted themselves to ministry" there? Well, they were not co-operating may be said by the four who sign this paper. Messrs. R—e and S—s were. (They had joined in requesting Mr. H. to say why he could not minister, if it was so. Mr. R.H. had retired to Plymstock, disgusted, it is true.) Mr. H. indeed was not; he had, exactly at this time, declared before seven hundred brethren in and around Plymouth, that he could not minister any more, because of the conduct of Mr. Newton and his friends; and he went to Mr. Newton, as to one of the charges of untruth, to say he was sorry for Mr. N.'s credit and

character that he had made the statements, for if he was asked, he must say they were untrue. Is it not singular, that the names of these persons are not mentioned in connection with the saints at Plymouth, when this inquiry was to go on, nor such a fact as the statement of Mr. H. (who above all was looked up to by the body of saints there) to the whole gathering, which statement happened just three days before I made the charges alluded to? This is not even mentioned. This is on the face of the document.

The fact is, and I feel free here to add, that there is not one at Plymouth but knows that the four who sign this paper were the associates and instruments of Mr. Newton; and as to Mr. C—w and Mr. D (though every one will own dear C—w, as in other circumstances, an amiable and upright brother), had their names been previously mentioned as responsible for the consciences of the saints, it would have excited the smile or the indignation of nine-tenths of the congregation of Ebrington Street.91 Moreover these four appear in a singularly unhappy position here, because they have months ago signed a joint paper with Mr. Newton, in which they declare that in all that has passed they have been accused together (that is, in the letter of the five to the four brethren in London, who invited them to the London meeting in April); and even in these very "Reasons" they say, that in the great bulk of the charges they are implicated as much as Mr. Newton, though not in these particular ones. And note here, that the investigation by the church is confined to their investigation. "This the church does, we believe through those of its members capacitated by God for such service," that is themselves; they being, as they

confessed afterwards, the accused persons. Can they present themselves as independent elders charged with judging Mr. N.'s case for the church to-day, and complain along with him of lying under a common accusation of these same charges to-morrow?

But, however, we have their own testimony that there was no inquiry by them till Mr. Newton had put it into the hands of four other persons who were to inquire and report to the church. Further, the statement in page 5, "that they had in company with them (the brethren from other places) the fullest opportunities of again and again sifting all that could be said on it," is wholly untrue. They had nothing of the kind. They appeared with Mr. Newton before them when he answered and the brethren examined them, but they were never in company with them in other examinations—not at mine, nor at H.'s. They had not such opportunity. I ask here, at whose examination were they in company with them? They were in company with Mr. Newton when he was examined. I shall now give the letters of these four, and my answers, in which I declined acceding. I thought this part of the case so very bad, that I did not do so in the "Narrative"; but as it has been thought proper to print the letters of acquittal, let all come out fairly. I sorrow to be obliged to do it, for brethren I count otherwise gracious and godly are implicated. It is no fault of mine if they have chosen to identify themselves with those who have brought them into such a position.

"Plymouth, 26 November, 1845.

"Dear Brother,

"We are desired by Mr. Newton to request that you will name four brethren to meet an equal number nominated

by him, to inquire into, and report on, the charges said to have been made by you on Monday the 17th instant, 92 at a meeting in Ebrington Street which appear very seriously to affect Mr. Newton's moral character.

"We understand you to have stated:—

"1st. That of 'Five Manuscript Letters' (which it is not needful more particularly to describe), Mr. Newton had suppressed some;

"2ndly. That Mr. Newton is the author93 of an appendix which you have seen subjoined to one of them;

"3rdly. That a tract recently printed, purporting to be a publication of the above-mentioned letters, 'with some omissions and alterations,' is so changed by additions, that it no longer 'remains in substance the same'; and—

"4thly. That a letter addressed to Mr. C—w, professing to be the substance of what Mr. Newton had stated at a meeting held here in the beginning of the present year, is not the substance of what was spoken by him on that occasion.

"Not doubting your ready acquiescence with our request, we will thank you to make your nomination known to us at your earliest convenience.

"We remain, dear brother,

"Yours with Christian regard, (Signed)

"[Lord] C.

"John M.

"George I. W—r.

"J. C. C—y.

"To Mr. J. N. Darby."

This letter distressed me, because it was an evident effort to take the matter really out of the hands of the church, and even out of the hands of the brethren who were come down to inquire; and, if I did not accede, to give me the appearance of refusing investigation. But I trusted God. It spoke of reporting on the charges. It is said in the “Reasons,” “and report the result of the investigation to the church.” Now there is not, we have seen, a word about the church in the letter; and if one could have trusted that it meant this, it actually was taking the matter then away from the church, where it really was. And four named by Mr. Newton could easily, as they actually did, seek to swamp the matter, so as to hinder investigation. The four (though I suppose those who signed might be the ones) were not nominated, as the choice was still left open, I thought the mode an objectionable one, and that the only possible result and meaning of it was hushing the matter up. Subsequent events have proved how rightly I judged. Had I named four, it would have at once stamped them as my friends and partisans. It may be as well here to recall what brought the ten brethren down. Mr. P—r and Capt. H. had written to me urgently about the matter, the former pressing the assembling brethren from elsewhere; I said to him, “If you think so, you had better come.” I communicated this to Sir A.C., Capt. H., and Lord C. Mr. Newton and his friends thereon sent for those whose support they relied on; namely, R., M., M—s, R—s, and W—r. Of course I do not pretend to know in what terms they were written to.

My answer follows.

“Dear Brethren,

“I am perfectly ready to enter before brethren into the statements I made at the Monday meeting (and I can only add, I should rejoice more than I can say, to be proved entirely wrong), but in a way which is righteous before God.

“None of you were at that meeting, and you cannot know what I stated; and no one could have made the statements which are contained in your letter from what he heard at that meeting.

“I was called on by my brethren to say why I left communion in Ebrington Street, which I had laid upon three grounds, one of which was an accessory one only.

“It is true, that in stating one of these, I was obliged to state two things which did affect Mr. Newton’s conduct. I did so with pain before God, and I did it before the saints, whose consciences were concerned in it. I acted before God and them, in leaving them on grounds of which these two things formed a part. I did so in stating them. I stand before God, and owing it to His saints to render an account of what I stated. I am perfectly ready to do so, but I shall name no four persons, as if they were friends of mine, and it was a worldly question to be settled by arbitration. It is a matter of conscience before God. Let it be before Him. Are not the brethren interested in this? Have they not heard it? Let it be before them. It is spreading nothing, for that would not be charity; but the statement has been made; let it be proved where it was made. And were I to name four, it would be even useless. Where would be the twelve or fifteen brethren who heard the statement in question? God’s place of conscience is the church of God. Let this, which is a question of conscience, be judged there.

Where two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be. I know of no other tribunal but His, and His now in the church. It seems to me that that which you propose is a mere worldly tribunal. Of course the brethren who sign it, if as individual brethren they wish to inquire into it really as a matter of their conscience (not of curiosity), are free to do so, and if really of their conscience, in charity, I will tell them everything; but I shall name none, nor take it out of the place where I believe God has set it—the judgment of the church of God, under responsibility to Him as such, looking for His presence, and able to count upon it.

"There are many more than four cognisant of all the circumstances, and many more godly sober saints interested in it. Let the conscience of those concerned be informed in it. Besides, these are a part of a long train of facts which have been going on for years, and which form a most important part of the bearing of both the papers alluded to, and the statements I made about them.

"Let it not be supposed I seek any popular meeting as such. I have no such thought. I ask only that the consciences of those whom God has given an interest in these things be informed and made clear about them. I desire all to be there. If the brethren at large are content that a more limited number be there, as more really conducive to their own satisfaction in the matter, it is to me all the same; but I shall act before the conscience of the church of God. There I can own Him and look for His presence; but I shall name none as my friends, as the world. If the four brethren who have signed this think right to come to me together and

investigate for themselves (trusting that they will come as before God), I am ready to state all I have to state.

“It is a matter of deep, deep sorrow; but I demand that it may be done openly and fully before God and those concerned, and where the consciences of those concerned can bear witness, or the contrary, to what is brought forward. Nor would indeed the investigation of the points named solve in the least the questions in which the saints are concerned. I may be, and am, ready to go into these; but there is a long train of other facts and circumstances, which cannot be separated from them, must be inquired into, before the consciences of those who have a right to have them clear of all evil could be righteously satisfied. These must be inquired into too. I desire to produce none (God forbid) which have not in one way or other, acted already on the saints; but let all be fairly out before the consciences of the saints. I repeat it, before God’s ohurch, as far as it is already concerned in it. Anything that is really meant to bring it scripturally before them, I will gladly, though sorrowfully, acquiesce in.

“Your affectionate brother in Christ,

“J. N. Darby.”

“If Mr. Newton prefers to take it up as a personal wrong to him, let him act according to the scripture rule in such case. But this evidently is not my part to act in. I may just add that the two points in which my statements did affect Mr. Newton, as alluded to, are as simple as possible. If the brethren who write to me desire to inform themselves, they have nothing to do but to go to the brethren who were present at the meeting,94 and inquire as to one of the matters; and, as to the other, to

compare the documents, only informing themselves to what the statement alludes.

“I ask to bring no persons at all. I am accused of wronging Mr. Newton. I ask in this to bring no one. Let the four who signed the paper get those who were present together and inform themselves. Nothing can be easier to them. If they wish to satisfy the consciences of others, let the others be there to be satisfied. I am ready of course to state (before them and those who were then present) what my objection is.

“John M.,

“Mr. C—w’s, 1, Boon’s Place.

“Nov. 27, 1845.”

The following is the answer to my letter:

“Plymouth, 28 Nov., 1845.

“Dear Brother,

“We have received your letter in reply to our note of the 26th inst., and have given to it our prayerful and best attention.

“We informed you, that you were reported to have made certain statements very derogatory to Mr. Newton’s personal character, and that Mr. Newton was desirous to submit them to the scrutiny of a given number of brethren, one half to be named by yourself, the other by him.

“We did hope that you would either have denied having made the statements at all, or have withdrawn them as made in mistake, and have expressed regret at having been led into error; or that you would have been willing to have them investigated; but although you

acknowledge having stated ‘two things that did affect Air. Newton’s conduct,’ we infer, from the tenour of your letter, that you are not prepared to sustain them.

“Had the wrong of which Mr. Newton complains been done to him privately, the course prescribed in Matthew 18 (to which we suppose you refer when using the words ‘scripture rule’) might have been taken by him; but after availing ourselves of such sources of information as lie open to us, we feel satisfied that charges against Mr. Newton’s moral character were made by you at a meeting consisting (in the opinion of some) of scarcely less than three hundred persons. Under such circumstances, we think the plan proposed by Mr. Newton unobjectionable. You call it ‘a mere worldly tribunal’ We see in it nothing unscriptural; and certain we are that it is not according to ‘scripture rule’95 to publish charges against an individual without having first given him an opportunity of clearing himself from them.

“We also differ from you entirely in thinking this is ‘a question of conscience,’ to be referred only to ‘the church of God.’ We regard it as a matter of fact—a simple question of evidence, to be best dealt with by a few competent persons; and we think a public meeting the place of all others the least fitted for cool dispassionate inquiry. It is true, you disclaim all idea of appealing to ‘a popular meeting, as such,’ whilst the language of your letter is unintelligible, if you do not really seek a public assembly there to repeat the grievance.

“We are therefore under the sad and painful necessity of saying, that we can only regard your letter as an

evasion; and we feel that, as the matter now rests, the charges you have brought against Mr. Newton's personal character are not entitled to credit, and ought not to detract from the esteem and respect in which he has always been held.

"It is our intention to give to Mr. Newton a copy of this correspondence, leaving it with him to use it as he may think best.

"We remain, dear brother, your's faithfully, (Signed)

"George I. W—r.

"[Lord] C.

"John M.

"J. C. C—y.

"To Mr. J. N. Darby."

I beg the reader to read my previous letter. The four who sign this had never asked me a single question on the matter. Three of them I had not even seen, nor had they been near Messrs. H., R.H., C.P., N—r, McA., who were all at Plymouth, and had been at the April meeting, the account of which was called in question as untrue; the only others present in Plymouth who had been at that meeting being Mr. Newton's personal friends, brought there by him.

The following was my answer:—

"Dear Brethren,

"On the whole, however painful, I am thankful for your letter. Still it is with very deep sorrow as to the subject. You are brethren, and some at least known as well as beloved. I only sorrow over some things in the position

you have put yourselves in; but it would be out of place for me to express it now, after the letter you have sent me. I might complain of some things. You were none of you here, or present in March or April, when that took place to which one of the charges refers, or aware of the circumstances to which the other alludes. You did not even ask me what the charges were which I made at the large meeting on Monday; and even Lord C, who spoke about the grounds of my leaving, had no detail from me of what the charges were. But I shall not trouble you with these points. It was suggested to me to keep a copy of my last letter. I said that I was acting before God, and would trust Him, and not deal thus with brethren. I have now to beg you will send me the original of my letter that I may copy it; you shall of course have it again. The person you trust it to can stay till I return it to him. I have in one sense evaded this miserable subject, but it certainly was not in that letter (I happily read it to the brethren96 H. and McA. before it went, to know if it was quite clear on the point). But it can now be evaded no longer; and my heart just sinks while I say it. As far as the saints go, it is made unavoidably a church matter. I only regret that names I much love should be mixed up with it, as your letter has done. I am, with however much sorrow, “Still affectionately yours in the Lord, “J.N.D.”

The following note closed the correspondence.

30th November.

“Dear Brother,

“When you have taken a copy of the enclosed [my letter], will you be kind enough to return it to me at your convenience, either to-day or to-morrow?

“Believe me, yours faithfully,

“George J. W—r.”

Mr. W—r was called away by the illness of his child, and saved the pretence of carrying on an investigation, after writing a letter saying my charges were not worthy of credit. Lord C. and Mr. M. pursued it, however, and they are two of the persons whose certificates of acquittal were given in December 14 and December 30, as having made up their minds subsequently to the inquiry. It is quite evident they need not have waited quite so long.97 Mr. M—s had written98 long before to Mr. Newton, that he might count on him to stand by him in any way. Mr. R—s’ and Mr. R.’s testimony remain: that the latter has sought to clear Mr. Newton all through cannot be doubted. I will consider the value of his acquittal, which is on the same ground as the other alleged on by all the brethren, when I come to the defence of Mr. Newton. The inquiry by the ten went on, and they separated without any joint testimony of guilt or innocence. That is a clear fact; or a letter from Mr. R. answering for three others, and another from Lord C, need not have been produced when the rest were all gone. But I will close as to the alleged inquisition of the four who sign the “Reasons,” as their last act comes in here. A paper of acquittal was put forth with their signature. Let it be remembered, that the first act of any inquiry was Mr. Newton’s putting it into the hands of three of the brethren from a distance, and one of Plymouth. The four Plymouth ministers had done nothing before this. This was the “first step.” Their inquiry, if any, must have been while that of the brethren from a distance was going on. No one certainly ever heard of it then. Not only so; they were (so they state in the “Reasons”) examined

themselves by the brethren who came,99 and the fact is, they always appeared with Mr. Newton as his associates when he was before the brethren from a distance.

And now, having stated these circumstances, let us turn to the document itself, and see what pretension it has to be a joint result of a common investigation carried on by ministers together in behalf of the church. It is in page 6, where you will find it an individual testimony of Mr. S. “What I now state” is what he says; not a word about a prompt, solemn, or any inquisition of the elders at Plymouth. “He believes “Mr. N. “entirely innocent,” etc., and adds, “Should any of you desire to know the grounds on which I have come to the conclusion stated above, I shall be happy,” etc. The three others say they unite in the testimony, because they have come to the same conclusion, signing their names in a postscript. Mr. S. says he does it to allay agitation. Is this a joint report to the church of a solemn investigation carried on by elders? Its real effect on a vast number was just to prove that the brethren from a distance had not come to such conclusion; and further, these four were known to all as Mr. N.’s instruments in what had produced all the confusion, and it recoiled on their own heads, and that was all. It was felt by many as ruining Mr. N.’s cause and their own on these two grounds.

And now I may repeat circumstances connected with it here, which will lead us to another of the alleged acquittals— the suppressed one.

Mr. Newton (as is admitted, nay asserted by himself) got the paper which had been drawn up by Sir A.C., and signed by others, suppressed. This having been done, the countersigned letter of Mr. S. was produced, saying,

as the brethren have given no conclusion on the charges, they had drawn one up themselves, and now sent it forth. And I think I may say, that the way in which the one was suppressed, under a threat to go to Canada, as ruinous to Mr. N.'s character, and, as soon as they had succeeded in this, producing and issuing their own entire acquittal, opened Mr. P—r's eyes (one of those who are said to have entirely acquitted him) more than anything else to the misconduct of the party. He is reported to have said, that he never saw such things among Christians in his life. Now these two documents, one of which supplanted the other, are the two things which are said to be, one the solemn acquittal of the church of God at Plymouth, and the other that of impartial brethren from elsewhere. And now I will consider this last.100 First, it is a strange thing for Mr. Newton to allege now as an entire acquittal a paper which he says himself he got suppressed then. He did get it suppressed; that is, the four who had added their names to Sir A.C.'s withdrew them, and the latter gave it up. And why suppress this entire acquittal? The fact was, he said then he should be ruined by it, and that if it came out he should go to Canada. Sir A.C.'s account of the matter to me was that, when it was shewn to Mr. N., he was beside himself; that he declared that I had made four charges, whereas this paper applied only to two (all I really had made), and that he had given no occasion for the charges which the paper said he had.

What I believe101 to have been the fact as to the paper, is this:—Most of the brethren were satisfied as to the sectarianism, and thought it might be got rid of, but found the moral charges stood in the way—Mr. Newton would listen to nothing else. I do not say all the

brethren. M—s and R—s insisted after this on the clerical principle; and the latter openly deprecated the principles of brethren. But Lord C. says now, to all who will hear him, that he would not go to Ebrington Street, though he condemns my proceedings. He has declared to me, that he had not believed the sectarianism and clericalism charged till he went down, but then he did; and that he would not break bread there now. This being more or less felt by several, and the moral charges, “a dreadful encumbrance to the real question,” several of the brethren having left, Sir A.C. thought he could bring it to an issue by going as far as possible in clearing Mr. Newton; and at the same time quieting me by saying he had laid himself open to the charges; and insisting besides on a full investigation before the church, which, in a subsequently published tract, he has stated he did, and indeed so informed me soon after the transaction, during which I was myself absent, the investigation being over. It was in my judgment an unadvised act, though with a godly intention, and God in fact set it aside altogether. I was not at Plymouth. I left it all to the Lord when not called to answer, which I seldom was—only once by the whole number of brethren. Indeed (while many of these brethren I look up to and love most dearly and value much for both godliness and a wisdom I should far prefer to my own in their service in the church in most cases) in this matter my sober judgment is, that they came without the wisdom of God, remained without the strength of God with them, and departed without the honour of God upon them. How far my answer to P—r contributed to this I do not pretend to say. However God interfered, as He overrules all; and though it went, no doubt, far beyond any other document in Mr. N.’s favour, he insisted on the

suppression102 of this paper. Sir A.C. withdrew it—a strange procedure, if it were a solemn act of acquittal by the ten brethren.

I will now see how far as a matter of fact it is true that there was really an acquittal by all. Sir A.C. subsequently published a tract, in which he declares in italics, “Anything like an open investigation of his [that is, my] statements, is positively denied.” I know not what the four who have signed the “Reasons” judge of this statement coming from one of those who they say fully investigated it. Mr. P—r told me that he did not attach much weight to the charge as to the letter to C—w, but he thought the.other very grave. He, it is not denied, went to urge Mr. N. to confess it. I do not state what passed, though I have heard it. I cite it merely as to the notion of a full acquittal. Mr. W. refused to sign it at the time, whatever it was. Mr. McA. had gone away, on the ground that he was satisfied as to the evil existing, and would not have the appearance of staying to inquire as if he doubted. Mr. N—r was gone; and he says to me (having gone through all the inquiry) as to the “Narrative of Facts,” “so far as I am able to speak, I believe the pamphlet is what it professes to be, a statement of facts sad and humbling indeed (and who that has had anything to do with the enacting of them, does not feel his own place that of self-judgment as well as of identification with the sin of his brother?) yet facts. My own judgment with respect to Ebrington Street, though other things have their weight, is mainly based on the way in which conscience has been blunted and inquiry stifled.” Now I do not produce this as proving that Mr. N—r holds Mr. N. guilty, nor anything of the kind. It is not the question. I am not proving him so

myself; but I ask, Is this the language of a man who has pronounced a full acquittal of charges found in the "Narrative"? I speak only of the two inquired into in 1845. As to any others there is no pretence of an acquittal. I have then, as to this acquittal, the the fact that it was suppressed by Mr. N. himself as ruinous to him. Further, the person who drew it up declares, in a subsequently published paper, that anything like an open investigation of my statements was positively denied; another refusing to sign it at the time; another gone because he was convinced of the evil; another declaring the "Narrative" true; another urging confession of one of the charges on Mr. N.

I may add that, when Mr. C—n proposed giving a paper to Mr. N. clearing him, on Mr. N.'s complaint that he could not get one, Messrs. P—r and C. declined signing it. I do not pretend to say on what ground.

As to Lord C, he had acquitted him before the inquiry began; so had M. and W—r (the last had nothing to say to this last matter); M—s, R—s, and R. remain, all three of whom were there as Mr. N.'s friends. We have their testimony, and what it was founded on, in the "Reasons"; and these form the third alleged acquittal, which will lead us, we shall see, to our closing matter.

Mr. R., in stating (page 9 of "Reasons") that he, with R—s, M., and M—s,103 was perfectly satisfied that Mr. N. was entirely free from the charge of moral dishonesty, adds, that if Mr. N. "would lay before the saints an explanation similar to that you have read to us, either by printing or otherwise, they will then see for themselves the reasons of our having arrived at the conclusion above stated." This Mr. N. has now done in printing the

“Defence” then read, so that we can fully judge of the ground of any alleged acquittal as to these two points, for this paper was the avowed ground of it, and of any satisfaction afforded as to the charges to these three or indeed to any one else. We have only therefore to examine the defence. Whatever it is worth, Mr. R.’s acquittal is worth, and no more. This “Defence” we will now examine before closing with the “Reasons.”

First, as to the suppression of letters and appendix, I have stated the real facts as to this. Miss H.’s letter, etc., only remain. First Mr. N. states (page 14), to make out the charge heavy, that at Exeter after the reading meeting I there repeated the charge. Miss H. replied, many persons being present, etc. You will think, doubtless, this is at the close of the meeting, a sort of public accusation. “Mr. and Mrs. McA.”, Miss H. states (page 17), “remained to dine at Mr. W—n’s with Mr. Darby. After dinner, the conversation turned on Matthew 24.” It was after the reading meeting to be sure; but what had it to do with it? The whole force of Mr. N.’s complaint is gone in Miss H.’s statement. It was a conversation among private friends. What was said there? I charged Mr. N. with altering the letters (page 17). Mr. N. however gives a different account, and, so far, a just one, in page 16. “This book Mr. Darby appears to have seen, and to have inferred that the two last letters were suppressed.” So that Mr. N. fully bears me out in my contradiction of Miss H.’s statement as to altering the letters. I refer to this because an immense handle was made of this for months. We have seen that the four who sign the “Reasons” try, by inventing a new104 statement of my charge at the end of a year and three-quarters, to bring in both Mr. N.’s and Miss H.’s

statements. I have already said that I did not really make this charge in Ebrington Street at all, though I alluded to the fact as above explained. Farther, I also have an account of Miss H.'s as to this conversation, in which she endeavours to convince me of her accuracy. She has entirely convinced me of the contrary: I shall here say why. The proof she gives is, that I stated that I supposed that the tract entitled "Signs of the Coming of the Lord, for whom are they given?" was Mr. Newton's, and that she informed me it was Mr. D.'s. This was a most unhappy proof of her accuracy. Mr. D.'s initials are on the tract. Further, I had written an answer to it, since published. Mr. N—r urged me not to do so, as it would only puff him up more, and do him harm. Not only so: but it was in this tract we were charged with subverting the first elements of Christianity. Mr. D. having said in the April meeting of fifteen, that I was putting my interpretation on the denunciations made against brethren, I replied, "Well, you shall have your own," and pulled his tract out of my pocket. The reader may judge of how accurate Miss H.'s account must be, when her proof of it is that I did not know whose tract this was. I regret sincerely that Miss H. should thus have allowed herself to be dragged into publicity. Miss H. upsets Mr. Newton's attempt to aggravate whatever did pass by saying it was after the reading meeting; though his authority is the letter that upsets it. Mr. N. refutes Miss H.'s charge by his own account of the real state of the case; namely, that it was the absence of the last two letters which was in question, as indeed he did not venture105 to impute Miss H.'s account to me in the already cited letters of his four nominees; and Miss H.'s proofs to me that her memory is accurate proves to me how exceedingly inaccurate it must be; while I entirely

deny, as Air. Newton confirms me here in doing though he charged me with it fiercely elsewhere, that I ever said a word about altering letters at all.

As to the Appendix being a substitution for the letters, it is mere nonsense. I do not even understand what is meant by it. But all this is very immaterial: it served to distract from the real charges. These begin with the third: that is, that a letter, professing to remain in substance the same, did not remain the same. Mr. N. justifies his omissions. He has perfect right to do so. Nobody complained of them. He said he had made omissions, and of course had a right to make any he liked. The additions are the thing in question. He states he added two paragraphs: he has added about five pages and a half to a tract of twenty-four pages. But the quantity is not the material point. It is the contents and manner of it. And first, note here, the fact is not denied. What I charged is, as a fact, admitted. Now I do not enter into intention. The question is, Is it honest?

I go further: had Mr. N. said at the end, “I take the opportunity of denying,” etc., though this matter had been added, no charge could have been grounded on it. Anybody could have understood, that it was no part of the original tract. He has not done anything of the kind. He has not, as he says he has in the “Defence,” even negatived the two evil doctrines imputed, as he says, to them. He has interwoven with the most assiduous care into the subjects of the tract itself, statements which go to charge the things he was accused of rather on others, or at least to disburden himself of them, in such a manner as would make it impossible for a reader of the tract to suppose that it was not a part of the letter written six years ago; so that he appeared as an

indignant refuter six years ago (before he was conscious of such imputations) of the things he was charged with now. Surely, if I say it remains the same in substance, the substance of the published tract ought to coincide with the original. But here the substance of near a quarter of the tract is on topics agitated at the time, interwoven into the old matter, so that it required very close examination to find it out; and matter on the old subject added in the new part, so as to make it look like an original part of the tract. It requires an actual examination to demonstrate this. I refer to passages to indicate it; page 20, he had been speaking in the old part of the body gathered on the Abrahamic basis. Thus begins the new, "It would be happy if we could pursue the history of this new family of faith, and find that it preserved its likeness to Abraham its father." "The succeeding chapter, the thirteenth of Matthew," etc. "The commencement of the history of the present professing Christian body by the personal ministry of the Lord," etc. "It would be strange if such a parable should belong to some other body, and not to the visible church at all… I may also observe, before I conclude, that the almost invariable effect of the Jewish principle of interpretation [the general topic is here continued of the tract], is to throw into such a state of perplexity, etc., into felt inability to divide the word, etc., or else induces the adoption of the dictum of some favourite teacher under the shelter of whose name, etc., and what is more to be deprecated than this? It would be, as if the Spirit of God resided only in the teachers, as if the saints could not for themselves prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. It would introduce one of the worst forms of Popish evil." The tract then goes on warning against upsetting universal consent; thus gradually interweaving

the original six-years-old subject and the present controversy, throwing back on others, as if he had done it six years ago, the charge of shutting out the Spirit; and sustaining the doctrine of universal consent. Now, while spun out of the old, all this is new matter. I repeat again, I say nothing of intention; but is the thing honest at a moment of controversy on these points, in which he says he was charged with these very things? Others may think it honest; I confess, I have not much respect for his judgment of honesty who thinks it is. But the truth is, we have no need to speak of any judgment of honesty. Mr. N. first speaks largely of his charity in making the omissions which nobody said anything about, and then says, he added two paragraphs negativing charges made. Now any person accepting this answer could not (assuming him to be honest) have examined for himself the tract, because there is nothing to be negatived at all. The writer continues his discussion of the principles he is treating of in the tract, and his arguments against the principles of interpretation he is opposing, and, as illustrating this, shews that certain consequences follow in the mind which demonstrate the danger: which consequences (here of course to be taken as very evil) were the things he was charged (or says he was charged) with; and it was left to be supposed that he could not hold doctrines which he here treated as serious evil consequences. But though it really was another subject, it is carefully linked into the matter of the tract as a whole. There is no negative of anything; and then the doctrine of universal consent as a rule of faith, which had been objected to as of Popish tendency, is not negatived, but set up upon its legs again in a more subtle covert way, it having damaged their position when openly avowed previously. Now that I have the

“Defence” to read, and have re-read that which I charged with unfairness, I have only to say, that I think very much worse, and on deeper grounds, of the thing I so charged: but I do see reason to credit what Mr. D. stated at the time, that it was he got Mr. Newton to add it; for the closing paragraph is very subtilely and covertly propping up Mr. D.’s argument in favour of universal consent as a rule of faith.

And now a few words as to the charges negatived: Mr. Newton says, that I brought against him a false and most injurious charge, in order to destroy his character as a teacher. I print, he says, that charge. He replies by simply negativing the doctrines imputed. This is an entire misrepresentation. We have seen what “simply negativing” means. Now, as to the charge. Popish principles were secretly spreading. I was urged by brethren to make a stand. This I did in an answer I wrote to a tract of Mr. D.’s, because Mr. D. had openly appealed in his to the doctrine of universal consent, as a ground of receiving truth, and as a rule by which to judge. I then alluded to popish principles in general, inasmuch as this appeal to universal consent proved that we were not secure on that side. The doctrine as to teachers may have been imperfectly stated; but it was the real substantial fact, deny it who may. Mr. Newton is not alluded to in the tract. I have said on the contrary, “Let no one suppose I allude here to individuals. On the contrary, I am very anxious to draw attention to a system,” etc. “The demon of popery is the active demon of the day. Its leading introductory principle is advanced in the passage on which I comment. I have noticed some of its other elements, because the introduction of this general one shews that the door has not been kept

closed against it." This is at the close of the reply to Mr. D. Is this printing a charge against Mr. Newton? I believe that these two have been the persons who introduced it. But I was thinking a great deal more about the system than about them.

Saints will judge whether there was need of being on one's guard, when I repeat to them the fact that, when, on urging the authority of teachers in one place, a brother replied, "But, after all, it is said, they were more noble, because they searched the scriptures whether these things were so," it was answered, that this was Jews searching Jewish scriptures; but that now that God had established gifts in the church, and raised up teachers, all that was changed. When the Plymouth system had reached this point, I judge it was high time to talk about popery. The truth is, it had ripened out of Plymouth more than the cautious leaders in Plymouth would put forward there; and I put the brethren on guard against the system. My attention had really in this been drawn to facts elsewhere, and not to Mr. Newton, as many brethren know. If Mr. Newton's conscience tells him that he was the guilty person, I shall not dispute it; for I believe, and have no doubt he was the source of it, but not a single word is said about it in the tract which is in answer to Mr. D., but the contrary: and that is the question here. Mr. Newton's statement in the "Defence" is not true. I printed no charge against him. I was really thinking of something else much more important than charging him—the safety of saints against an evil system which was ripening elsewhere. As to insinuations, I do not think anybody will charge me with its being my way. Mr. Newton's easy way of avoiding them would be to face the saints, and have it all out before himself. He has

certainly thus far succeeded in putting one into a difficult position. One must let him go on, doing every kind of mischief, without taking notice of it, or speak of it behind his back; for as to coming fairly forward, he cannot be got to do it. If he thinks, that when saints see infinite mischief doing, they are not to speak what they think about it, he is mistaken. Or if he thinks his denial of it will be of any avail, when they know that it has been going on, he is mistaken in that too. Hundreds of saints are not to be exposed to subtle evil, because the person implicated in it chooses to complain of its being charged upon him when he denies it. I admit the difficulty is greater; that it is harder to walk in the fear of God, and not to step out of a perfectly just path. When one is dealing with such a course, one has to watch oneself the more as to the means used in convicting those guilty of it. But faith, which will always feel our own unworthiness, and not dare to walk out of the covert of God, will find the way, because it trusts God, who will bring every secret work into judgment, whether in our own consciences or otherwise, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and take care of His beloved people.

As to the fourth charge—that is, the second I really made— the statement of the fact will be sufficient.

Mr. Newton was charged with making a sect at Plymouth, of course extending it if he could. But everybody knows that Plymouth was the central scene of operations. His own statement (I give Mr. R.’s account of it, which will not be suspected: my own was identical, save the form of the last few words) was this:—

He said he was making a focus of Plymouth, and seeking to establish union in testimony against the teaching of brethren (that is, those opposed to his views of course); and that wherever he could get influence in Devonshire, Somerset, and Cornwall, he should do the same thing. This, I need not say, at once arrested attention. Mr. H. said, it was difficult to work with him after this. Others demanded that brethren should declare whether they meant to act on this. Mr. Y. and A.P., who had been to Newton, declared they need say nothing, as Mr. N. had avowed all about which they had remonstrated with him. Mr. D. tells him in private, going out, that he ought to explain himself, or his meaning would be mistaken. He refused, saying it was plain enough. Interviews are had, etc., etc., on these words. I stopped dead at them. I felt that God had acted, and brought the matter out to fight; but I allowed myself to be over-persuaded by brethren, in particular by Mr. R., who begged me, as so much good had been done, to wait and see, and not press it farther, or it might make a rupture with Newton. I acquiesced. After some time, a report of the meeting comes out by Mr. Newton, “because an open and explicit statement is deeply important at such an hour as this.” His “Defence” says of this report, “these words are stronger than those I am said to have used”; that there is no reason, in a word, to charge any want of truth on the statement. I now give the statement of the report.

“I desire to produce in the minds of the dear brethren everywhere the same strong sense that pervades my own of the evil of this system: and this is one object of my labour everywhere; at the same time my hostility is against a system, not against individuals.” Now this is sad and painful enough, I admit. But on the point of

making a sect at Plymouth, he declares he will act in testimony against a certain system of doctrine everywhere. I should grieve at such a course. He would act so; he would desire that others should have the same sense of the evil as he had. Be it so. I ask any honest man in the world, is this the same thing when making a sect is spoken of, in judging the state of Plymouth, as saying that he was making a focus of Plymouth, and seeking to have union in testimony against the teaching of other brethren, which words were what arrested everybody's attention and judgment at the time, even the only ones discussed, and which are wholly omitted? There is not a word about a focus at Plymouth; not a word about union in testimony. He would work hard against a doctrine. I may regret, but cannot help it: but in coming forward to circulate an open and explicit statement, is it fair to omit the whole statement which arrested every mind, and substitute another for it? Was it not really a covering up what had thus openly come out,106 and putting forward what was more convenient to put forward before the minds of others? It is urged that, I was told I was free to urge my own views as much. What comfort is that to me? I do not ask to do it. But, supposing it were so, what has that to do with making a focus of Plymouth, and getting union in testimony against the teaching of other brethren?

There then it is. There is Mr. Newton's defence. There is what Mr. R. states to be the reasons of his, R—s, M., and M—s, arriving at the conclusion that they are perfectly satisfied that Mr. N. was entirely free from every charge. If I know my own heart, I desire more earnestly than any of them he were. But this is not the question now. I desire to add no farther grievance. I should never have

touched the subject again, but that I found incessant subtle engines at work in influencing, and I am satisfied, bringing under the enemy's influence, every weak-minded saint. I have since then repeated confirmation of it. And I therefore say (now that we have Mr. R.'s "Reasons," and Mr. Newton's "Defence," on which they rest) you can judge for yourselves as well as Mr. R. or any one else. God has taken care of that, in spite of all their efforts to keep things under a bushel; and taken care of it, I pray you to note, for it marks God's hand, by their own act in bringing it before you. I repeat my judgment therefore, now that the means of judging are before you, that the two matters I charged at Plymouth, as one unfair, the other untrue, are such as I then thought them. The addition to the tract is not a fair thing, and the account of the April meeting is not a true account. It concealed and changed the whole important point, which God had brought to an avowal at that meeting. And note here, the facts are not denied. Every one can judge for himself of their honesty. Our judgments, beloved brethren, sometimes, nay always, prove our own state as much, and more than that of which we judge. They may be unjust. They may be sound. They may be righteous, and not charitable. They may be the true righteousness of God, and zeal for Him, in contrast with false appearances of charity. God will judge every one of us in all this. To Him we have to commend ourselves. The facts are now before you.

There yet remain but few points more that I am aware of, for I have refrained from any new matter, though, were it a mere matter of discipline, I should insist on other facts connected with it being considered. It is stated (page 16), on the authority of Lord C, "that many

of the brethren engaged in this investigation came to the Lord's table at Ebrington Street, after their investigation was concluded, for the express object of shewing what their judgment was. You have, perhaps, observed that in his 'Narrative of Facts,' our brother Darby affirms, or implies [which?] otherwise, but yet the fact is as we here state it." Now this is all dishonest mystification. I must be forgiven speaking plainly. Would it not have been well to have said where I have affirmed or implied it? This they take care not to do. The reader will "have, perhaps observed "it; if not, he will have taken for granted, that these four tell the truth. Now I might have some difficulty in charging my memory with everything in the "Narrative"; but I have some clue here, because Lord C. came to me and urged this point, which I suppose therefore must be the same. I say then, that in what Lord C. has referred to (and I know of no other passage which touches on the subject, save one in page 78, to the same effect, incidentally), I have neither affirmed nor implied anything of the kind. I have stated, that McA., Sir A.C., P—r, C, W., did not break bread any longer. I have positively excepted those who were partisans of Mr. Newton, and expressed uncertainty as to Mr. N—r. I have no doubt that Messrs. R., M—s, R—s, M., and Lord C, might then and would at any time have done so, though the latter would not now on the ground of sectarianism and clericalism. Mr. R. had agreed to stand up during the investigation, and declare he was satisfied. Another of the inquiring brethren said, if he did, he should stand up and say he was not; and Mr. Newton then got him not to do it. So that, instead of denying that many did, I have (in the way of excepting them from others) rather said they would. What they did, I know nothing about. I have given no reasons for

those not doing so who would not. It is in no way connected with the charges of untruth. I mention, at the starting-point of my account of their inquiry into the whole matter, that, as a present fact, when the matter was over, none but Mr. Newton's partisans would break bread. And that is the fact. I shall add another startling one here. Not one of the original labourers at Plymouth but has been driven away by Mr. Newton. Not one of them would break bread there now; I mean H., Capt. H., W., Sir A.C., and myself. I might add, as some of the earliest taking part, R—e, S—s, L—n, R.H.

The four who pretend to be guides and elders here are all new men. Mr. C—w is of the longest standing; but, however amiable a brother as he really is, no one ever dreamt of his being a guide till now. S. was not converted for years after we met. B. and D. joined from a Baptist church years after we met at Plymouth. To return, then; the statement in the "Reasons" is untrue (see page 66 of the "Narrative"). I will turn now to what is said in the "Narrative," and Lord C.'s authority, and I shall relate his interview. He came to me, I thank God, with more friendliness than heretofore, though of course blaming me, and I was very glad to see him. He declared he had been distressed, but had got quite happy on taking up Matthew 18, and meant to bring me before the church. Well, I had had a good dose of all these things; but however I said, of course he could do what he thought right. He called on me to retract certain things in the "Narrative." Two were mere misunderstandings—one a mere mis-stopping, and the other easily explained. The others I declined retracting, though willing to explain anything, and not doubting additional circumstances could be added. He said he should go,

and bring others. He came with Mr. G—h. I told him then, his acting on Matthew could not be sustained, he was not the person wronged, and the real difference was obvious. If I refused to retract to Mr. N., who said he was wronged, and then to two or three more, Mr. N. must then go before the church, which was just what he would not do. Mr. G—h also told him it did not apply. He said he had given up doing it, they would not hear him before. I said, I was ready to answer them anything. In result, Mr. G—h told him, that he had confirmed all he had impugned, save the letter of one passage—that was, the words “any longer,” in page 66107 of the “Narrative.” Lord C. admitted that they ceased breaking bread before they left Plymouth, but said they had, one Sunday after the investigation. I said, Mr. McA. certainly did not; Mr. W. certainly did not; Sir A.C. did break bread one Sunday, for I remembered he had said, he would not (I have his letter, which I looked at since), and then took one Sunday to consider before acting so decidedly, that Mr. P—r told me before he left, he could not break bread in Ebrington Street any longer, yet was not prepared to set up a new table, and so he should leave. And Mr. C. wrote to me to the same effect, and in fact would not. He happened to be laid up, but meant to go off. That as to the words “any longer “being set aside by their taking a Sunday to consider, etc., he might of course make any use of it he pleased, as he confessed they ceased to do so before they left Plymouth. All his other objections resulted in confirming my statements. 108 Further, it is stated, that there were meetings of the saints to inform them respecting these painful charges; and this is held to be a judgment by the church. Well, reader, there were. Every Monday evening, for a length of time, there were tea-meetings by invitation, the object

not being even avowed in instances where it was desired to have people who might not have wished knowingly to come, while, being by invitation, of course those could not go who could have met the statements. Mr. Newton was questioned, these persons say; and he answered too of course. And what then? Sir A.C.'s statements being in print could not be avoided, and they were boldly stated to be false.

I have now gone through the "Defence," as to the two charges of November, 1845; and I recall to the saints, that the "Reasons" and "Defence" do not touch anything beyond, nor enter at all upon the body of the statements in the "Narrative." Others could enter much more largely, if they were willing to take the burden, into the statements in these "Reasons."

I have been able to give enough, I suppose, to satisfy such as might be troubled by them, and to enable them to judge what their weight is.

Part 3 The Principles Involved.

An important general principle yet remains. In page 12 of the "Reasons," we find the following: "It is well known that we have always refused to acknowledge that the scripture recognises the whole body of assembled saints, as invested with authority and capacity to examine witnesses and debate109 their verdict. This the church does, we believe, through those of its members capacitated by God for such service. It is in the sense just defined, that we have always denied that the congregated church is a deliberative assembly. Thus we have always maintained a testimony against the principles of the dissenters. If therefore from the period of our first gathering together in this place until now, we

have steadily and invariably acted on this principle, can it be expected that we should depart from it in this matter?" It is evident this is of all importance.

And first, let me recall the fact, already noticed, that these four persons (who are quietly telling us what they did from the beginning) were not there in the beginning. Mr. S. was not converted till years after; and Mr. B. and Mr. D. joined years after; Mr. C—w earlier, but a considerable time after, and he, for a very long time certainly, did not "addict himself to the ministry." That is quite a new thing. So that "we" may pass with those who know nothing of Plymouth; but with me, who was there before the beginning and at it and after it, their putting themselves in such a place bears a very strange aspect. And there is another thing somewhat strange.

These four were the persons charged, not indeed with the particular points of untruth—but they were involved in all that which was connected with them, led to them, and followed them, and as to which these two charges of honesty were merely collateral. If the reader is not sure of this, I beg him to refer to page 1 of the "Reasons": "The main bulk of the charges affect us as much as they do him"; nay, as to the whole case, they say more, "We are, and we wish to be, closely identified with our brother in his present position." They spoke too of the accusations, personal and others, as being made against them all, in their first letter to the four brethren who invited them to the London meeting, which was held in April last; alleging these accusations as a ground for not coming up and joining in it. And the fact is, at the time in which in these "Reasons" they profess to have been inquiring—that is, as we have seen, while the brethren were down at Plymouth to do so—these four appeared

before them as associated with Mr. N. If I am not misinformed, he did not and would not appear without them. This inquiry included the charges of untruth. Is it not a little singular that persons, as to the bulk of the things charged, implicated as much as Mr. N.—and, as to all of them, then associated and now closely identified with him— should be the persons who were solemnly to investigate these very charges, so as to bind the church of God that it could not even debate its verdict? And let the reader note who it was that asked them. They state, and Mr. N. confirms it in letters already given, that he did. Everybody knows, that with the exception of certain particular untruths, they were involved as accessories in the charges; nay, as to the letter on which one of the charges was made, one of them, Mr. C—w, had got it written to himself, and got it printed (having been at the April meeting too, of which it gave an account); and Mr. D. declared that he got Mr. Newton to put the addition complained of in the charge as to the other printed letter; and that they had gone down to Mr. R—e's, and had it added while the letter was in the press.

Are not these strange persons to pronounce a verdict on the case, which the church cannot even debate? Would any worldly man recognize such a proceeding? What would an upright worldly man say of those engaged in it? All I can say is, I sorrow to the heart's core for some of them: I trust as a Christian for all. Where was Mr. H.? Where were R—e, S—s, R.H., or other brethren needless to name, who had certainly as much competency as some of them, and even addicted themselves to the ministry?

But now as to the principle. I deny unqualifiedly that such was the method from the beginning; and I was

conversant with it a long time before even Mr. Newton himself; who, though there indeed in the vacation and taking part, remained a fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, a considerable time—I cannot be precise as to how long. It is quite true that verdicts were not always, nay, very seldom debated, never debated that I know of. There was most happy confidence in those labouring; and, the Spirit of God working in them and the body happily, their judgment commended itself habitually to the consciences of all; and the cases of discipline were simple. But such a thought never was entertained (I cannot answer for Mr. N.) as imposing a verdict on the body, which it could not debate.

And here I would indeed remark, that Mr. Newton avowed to me, both alone, and as it has been recalled since to me, in the presence of Mr. Edward W—d of Kendal, that his principles were entirely changed as to those very points of ministry, rule, and government.110 How then can those who now adopt his present ones have had those of the body from the beginning? But the fact is, the labouring brethren did habitually inquire, for to them the cases were constantly brought; and they used to meet on Friday; and all this seems very blameless and desirable. But they always communicated the result of their inquiries to the body, and their convictions, or the conclusion they came to; but as to imposing it as an undebatable verdict, it is wholly false.

I remember two cases of discipline. In one, a brother rose, and said he thought there had not been proper inquiry, and that there was a feeling against the person. The brother who communicated the case said, he thought the brother who rose could hardly be acquainted with the facts and say so. The latter at once

felt himself alone in the meeting (as indeed, the case was a dreadful one, and most patiently investigated), and he sat down at once. In another case, a godly grave brother said, there was a want of clear information on one part of the case, or a deficiency of it, which could be supplied, and the case was suspended and nothing done. I repeat, the imposition of a verdict was never thought of. General acquiescence was true in fact; and it is happy when it is so. Indeed, most cases are known and simple, and have only to be communicated to the body, and there can be no question with any, if they believe the testimony of those who have taken it up. At Plymouth, those who laboured had confidence in the Lord, and in the body, and acted towards it with confidence, and hence the body had confidence in them. That this may have been abused by Mr. N. to the assumption of unscriptural authority, when he had driven away the counterpoise of others, is very likely, and, to my mind, an undoubted fact.

Further, I recognize that guides, elders if you please in principle, can inform and clear up the consciences of a body of Christians. No doubt, if by reason of use they have their senses exercised to discern good and evil, and are deeply acquainted with God’s ways in the scriptures and with the human heart, it is just their service in such case, and, I believe, God’s order; and saints will be always thankful for it, as far as I have seen. One may have spiritual discernment to suggest what all may have spirituality enough to see is right when suggested, but never would themselves have thought of. An engineer makes a road of which every waggoner understands as well as he the goodness when it is made, though he could not have made it. But it is by no means necessarily

a teacher that does this. I know brethren who never teach, whose spiritual judgment I would far rather have than that of any teachers I know. It used to be the effort, I well remember, to insist strongly against the absorption of all gift into the teacher and teaching, as may be seen in the “Christian Witness” —a book Mr. N. justly designated for his purposes the most mischievous book that ever was written. But to impose a verdict which cannot be debated is the most monstrous thing that ever was heard of. It is pure unmasked popery—the clergy dictating to the conscience of the church, which can only register and give their weight to its decrees. Is the conscience of the church to be disposed of thus by others, be they ever so wise? A thing may be urged on the church, insisted on; let it be that rebuke be given; but it is always to bring the conscience of the church up to the right level. This Paul did with Corinth, where, note, elders never appear at all; but he never acts for them without it. “You have proved yourselves clear in this matter.” This is the principle the apostle goes on. No doubt he could guide and rebuke them too, and tell them that he had judged the case already; but to impose a verdict on their consciences111 they could not debate, not an apostle even attempts. How could that be proving themselves clear? It is monstrous. No one who reads scripture can question, however weak we may be now, that there were guides, leaders, who watched for souls as accountable to do it, men of reputation, and at that time appointed elders. But it is a very different thing to govern, or rule, or guide the church, which is scriptural, and to govern instead of and for the church, which is popish (and this is the claim these principles very distinctly set up), and then call the scriptural principles democracy. And even so the apostle declares he was as a

nursing mother with the saints. And the government of the church is not a setting of points right, but of souls right, and therefore nothing is done unless the conscience of the church is carried into the act. It is evident that the apostle did bring the whole church round to separate from evil which he had already judged himself. Had he not done it, the Corinthians would not have been set right at all, they would have remained associated with the incestuous person. Had their consciences not heeded his appeal, he might in the exercise of apostolic authority have used severer means, and come with a rod. But he is anxious to shew, that whom they forgave he forgave; and if he forgave, it was for their sakes, so that they might act together, and Satan get no advantage over them by dividing them from him about a point of discipline.112 And now as to the dissenters' principle. I do not doubt many dear conscientious saints, from whom we might learn much, are amongst them. But the principle here alluded to, I believe should be utterly and entirely rejected, for the same reason that I reject that here proposed, namely, that the presence of the Spirit in the body is not owned by it. Among the dissenters they vote, and though there may be happy unanimity, and the Lord guide them, as I doubt not He often may, yet they do vote on the questions, and a majority determines the matter. Now it is quite evident a minority may be the most spiritual. In the case of Corinth all, as far as appears in public, were gone wrong, and allowed, and were puffed up about, evil. A majority, judging as such, cannot be said to have the Holy Ghost guiding them, because they are a majority.113 This is quite manifest. It is a mere human principle, such as the world is obliged to act on, because it has no other way of getting out of its difficulties. But

the church of God has. It has the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost. The dissenting principle (for I doubt not in practice they are often guided by the Spirit according to the grace of the gospel), their principle, I say, denied this presence and guidance; they acted on another. The brethren believed this guidance of God could be reckoned upon. Hence they denied the necessity of the other human extreme—the popish one of a clergy settling the matter among themselves, and announcing it publicly, and the church having nothing to do but add its weight by its acts to a decision pronounced by the authority of others, which they were bound to receive implicitly, and as a conclusion arrived at for them, which could not be debated.

The brethren denied the necessity of this alternative. They affirmed that the presence of the Spirit of God was in the church, and that He would guide them in the faithful love of Christ to a right mind; that it might require, especially in the present state of things, patience, humble waiting upon God in the sense of weakness, a working out as in the absence of apostolic power, with fear and trembling; but they believed that it could be because God worked in them to will and to do. They did not deny in the least that there were those among them, who through greater spiritual wisdom and maturity could help and guide them in this—it would have been quarrelling with their own mercies; nor would they refuse the help and godly assistance of any brother of spiritual attainments and wisdom from elsewhere—it would have been resisting the unity of the Spirit and body, and God’s authority in the church, and the common comfort of the saints, the increase of God by what every joint supplied. They might not see clearly all

at once, and they would have to wait in any given case; but they believed in the faithfulness of the Lord to guide them. Their being obliged to wait might shew them the failure of their own state of conscience in spiritual power and do them good. Now the principle of these Plymouth leaders denies all this. It declares positively and openly here, that this is the alternative, either the dissenting principle of debating, voting, and majorities, or a verdict imposed by the clergy without any debate at all. That is, they entirely deny the guidance of the body by the Holy Ghost—His practical presence there—the very point as to this, which the brethren were called out of God to bear witness to, alike against the dissenting and popish principles.

It is vain for them to say that they do not deny it. We have, not the honest confession of it in terms, it is true, but we have the thing itself, and in their own statement. The guides pass the verdict; the body are to register it without a debate. The judgment of their consciences is in the hands of a self-appointed clergy. I can well suppose this reply to the plain and evident truth as to the state of the case: “We do not deny the presence of the Spirit in the body. But, God having put this office into the hands of those who have addicted themselves to the ministry, the proof of the Spirit being in the body is their submission114 to the judgment of those whom God has placed over them. And thus the verdict is the verdict of the body by the Spirit.” This is what is claimed (page 12), “This the church does: it debates its verdict, we believe, through those of its members capacitated by God for such service.” Now this is exactly popery. The verdict there is alleged to be the verdict of the church, and the body are called upon [“required “] to act, and do

act, as a body upon it. But it is arrived at by the clergy. It is in vain to say that it is presented, on these new principles, to the body when arrived at, which the Roman clergy do not. Even admitting this, the body cannot debate it. In this particular case, in tea-meetings in private,115 they were allowed to question Mr. Newton. And this is called in to screen the flagrancy of the principle. The exclusive nature of the meetings is too barefaced to call it the action of the church. Were it so, the principle is wholly abandoned. The church question and examine Mr. Newton; and suppose someone had said, “Well, now we should like to hear the other side too; let us call Mr. Darby, Mr. H., and Mr. R—e, and Mr. S—s.” “Oh no,” is the answer, “the church cannot hear witnesses, and debate its verdict.” Would not any honest man in the world be ashamed to be associated with such a transaction? Would not any spiritual one have revolted against calling such a thing the acting of the church of God, as an insult against God Himself? I have been obliged to notice this, because otherwise it would have been alleged that it was brought before the saints in the right way. Now, either they were forced to hear one side only, and there was liberty only for that, or they would hear witnesses; and this is what is refused them. Besides, after all, they must not debate their verdict. They must take what is given them. For, supposing that they are dissatisfied with the verdict stated, what can they do? Debate it before they make it theirs? No, this is positively refused. Examine witnesses? No, this is denied them. What then? Submit, or leave.116 The answer will be, “But God is with His church; and He will guide the leaders into a right judgment, and they will only propose clear evident cases.” That is, the clergy are not only to be guides but infallible guides, for they have come to the

conclusion, which is to be taken to be by the leading of God Himself. If the verdict be undebateable, it certainly ought to be infallible.

Is debate117 to be desired then? It is just this alternative which is denied. The conscience of the church must be satisfied, for it to act for God and before God. If it is not, the conscience of the body is not clear. It may be gracious to do some act not yet done. It may be right, at the suggestion of some, nay, one godly brother, to prosecute the inquiry farther by the persons who originally inquired, as I have seen done at Plymouth. God is in the assembly without having any debate at all.118 The Holy Ghost may there suggest some step not yet thought of, the neglect of which would destroy the weight of the judgment, even if a right one. It is specially when speaking of discipline, and looking to the Lord for producing the unity of mind of two or three, that the Lord says, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

The result was not produced when I was down at Plymouth. Assuming that the evil existed, the conscience of the body was not brought to judge it. This may have been from two causes— want of spiritual power in me in acting on the consciences of the saints, or a denial of the principles on which their consciences could act. Now I do not pretend there was no want of spiritual power in me; I do not doubt there was. But while I concealed for months (till the saints demanded an account from me) the personal charges against Mr. Newton, I brought before the whole body, and pressed on their conscience, what involved the principles and the godly action of the whole body, and which was avowedly required. They would not stir. My having done so was said to be a

dissenting principle. I judged therefore, that the principles of the gathering were gone and denied; and I left without saying a word of Mr. N.'s personal evil119 (and this is now unworthily, I think, turned by some to my reproach). Sir A.C. has confirmed, in the plainest manner, the fact that they were denied. Others bore testimony of it then to me, whatever silence they may keep now. Lord C. fully admits it now; and it is at last put beyond all controversy by the printed avowal of the leaders themselves.

Those who have been where I have been lately may have seen, in a very trying case, a body of brethren, without any debate (and yet, when it was felt necessary that every conscience should have full exercise for itself) act in full patience and grace, and defer to the feelings of a very small minority who desired an act120 which (though the judgment of all the rest might have proved greater strength in the Spirit, if it had carried all with it, yet) was rightly deferred to as that feeling existed, and will never be regretted, I believe, by one. Under the circumstances God's guidance was in it, and entire and happy unanimity preserved. They have seen, on a subsequent evening (when, as I undoubtedly judge,121 Satan made a seemingly overpowering effort to upset all they were doing, and hinder, by distracting and speaking them down, their acting on what they had been led to), that the same brethren, after listening to all those who came thus to interrupt them from other places (proving they rejected none), could adhere, as led and guided of God, with firmness to that which they had been led to by Him; and could prove, when thus put to the severest test, with little or nothing really to help them from without, that God's blessed presence in their weakness

could give patience and grace, and deference to the weakest within, and resist the noisiest and most clamorous122 from without: nor was there the slightest idea of rejecting the help, and assistance, and spiritual wisdom, of those whose experience and faithfulness they trusted in, but the glad acceptance of it; as such as bore more or less that character acted just in setting the matter before their conscience. I allude (that there may be no mistake) more particularly, though not exclusively, to Mr. D—n here, who, though now at Reading, had laboured for years among them, and was now in London, brought up by another in reference to this.123 I have now, in three parts, recorded briefly the facts and correspondence which took place. I have shewn that the "Reasons" and "Defence," which were sent up as proving an acquittal of the charges, so as to preclude farther inquiry, do not touch at all, nor treat of, the body of those in the "Narrative," which were in question here: 124 the transactions at Plymouth, which they allege as conclusive, not having reference to the greater part of them. I have given, as to those which were investigated at Plymouth, an answer to the defence set up—a thing I could never do before, as it was never printed; and the rather, as the certificate of acquittal given by Mr. R., in his own name and that of Messrs. R—s, M—s, and M., is professedly based entirely on this "Defence," and desires its publication, that others may be satisfied by it, as "affording," they say, "the reasons of our arriving at the conclusion above stated."

You have thus the grounds on which they came to it; and you can judge how far the "Defence" is of any force as to these, the two charges therein treated of.125 The acquittal by these brethren in letters given in the

“Reasons,” is merely their estimate of the validity of this “Defence,” which you have. As to the other charges in the “Narrative,” besides these two, no answer is attempted to be given whatever.

I have taken up, lastly, the great principle of church discipline now avowed in a tangible shape. A vast body of facts as to the general course at Plymouth are not entered on here. It would have been repeating the “Narrative.” But you have an account, as far as was called for by the “Reasons,” of what related to the alleged investigation and acquittal both by the church of God and the brethren from afar, and these are the other grounds alleged to preclude inquiry. It will still be remembered that these relate only to the two charges made and inquired into at Plymouth, and two alleged charges which I do not admit to be charges at all, and not to any others. I may, in so long a document, drawn up in two or three days, have omitted some point, but I do not think I have any material one. I must leave, to those who read this, the judgment which it becomes them to give upon a document such as the “Reasons,” when they have read this examination of it.

Charity demands that I should make this one remark. As regards the individuals (whatever may be demanded as to what I may call official relations), I repeat, I have no doubt that a proper, positive, work of Satan has been going on, with far deeper principles and power than anything that has come out in public evidence even as to sectarianism.126 Under this, I doubt not, whoever the human instrument, conscious or unconscious, may be, those, whom I believe to be beloved children of God, have fallen, and I do not attribute to them as individuals as deliberate acts of sin what they have so done. This

makes me more determined in the stand I make—I have no terms with what is going on—but more reluctant, and even to refuse to attribute to them as properly a matter of evil conscience what they have thus been led into.

God, I believe, has directed you, beloved brethren, in London, in acting in clearing yourselves—in acting in the sphere in which you were responsible to Him. There you were bound in love to the saints to act to make a barrier. It may require much spiritual competency to discern between those who are ensnared and those who are guilty in this matter. Many even of the most active instruments have already been delivered. Others may be, and shine out again as dear children, and, I trust, servants of God. We have to wait, and, while decided and faithful in our sphere, not to step beyond it; not in anything to act beyond the light which God has given us for duty, passive or active. There we have to be firm and earnest if called on. I believe people will be blessed according to their decision, and insecure in proportion to their hesitation; though we may hope the help of our God as to such, if it be in humbleness of heart and uprightness.

Further, let us not suppose, if there be such a power of the enemy, that we can cope with it out of the path of duty, and adventuring ourselves under its influence, when God does not call us there. In His ways we have all security against it; it cannot touch us: out of them, we are sure to fall into the temptation as Peter did. Honesty of intention is no security here. I have seen this in Irvingism; I have seen it, I judge, in this case. I distrust the constant desire to get people to Plymouth. I have known scarce one who inquired beyond the first half-hour, or who inquired beyond one side, who had

volunteered to do it; though God kept a few little ones brought there unwittingly. If the judgment I have formed of these “Reasons” is just, they must be wicked people, or blinded people. Now I do not believe as to several of them (I speak generally of those more or less active in it), that they are wicked people. I feel certain then that there is a direct influence of the enemy, and I warn solemnly the saints against it. I think I can discern in many cases how and why several have fallen under it. It might seem presumptuous in me to state it, and I refrain, though free to do it when charity calls for it, if permitted for their good. I am sure if I and you, reader, have been spared this, or perhaps worse, it is sovereign grace alone which has kept us; and, perhaps our carelessness has helped on the evil; but God is good and faithful. I am thankful for having the conviction I have stated above, because it enables me to maintain in my heart unhindered love towards several persons whom, otherwise, I really should not know what to think of, and to hope for others too. But it should evidently make one firmer as to the stand one makes, and one’s determination in it. We have all to be thankful for being kept, for very abundant mercy in this matter, and to humble ourselves, and myself above all, for little power in being able to keep out the evil, or to deliver others from it. While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares. Let us look to our God, and He will help us to the end of the sorrow, and restore the fellowship of many who are separated by it. I am sure my feeling is (well may I say it!) that He has been most good to us in it.

I have only to add (while repeating that I dare say inaccuracies of detail may be discovered, as would be to be expected in a narrative reaching over near a year and

a half of anxious work) that, after the sifting given by recent circumstances, the “Reasons,” the “Defence,” and all the rest, I have nothing at all, that I know of, to retract. The only definite attempt to impugn has resulted in distinct confirmation. The “Reasons” would add serious—very serious—ground for additional charges; but these I refrain from making. I think them considerably the worst thing that has yet come out. The reader can, on several points, judge of the matter himself, when he has examined the answer to the “Reasons”; but there are many, if they spoke out, who could answer the detail far more fully than myself.

Supplement Notes on the “Correspondence” and “Remonstrance.”

The detail of facts already given is the best answer to the “Remonstrance.” I do not therefore go into it at large here. A very few remarks will be needed. The total absence of conscience is so marked in the following passage, that I note it as helping to judge the whole paper: “You consider his refusal to meet a request of yours a sin sufficient to warrant excommunication.” Passion alone can be alleged as any answer to a charge of want of conscience in such a passage as this. They call the letter of the 20th of November “Your first letter of summons.” They must be perfectly aware (for Mr. Newton had answered them both) that, besides Dr. C.’s correspondence, two letters had been addressed to Mr. Newton, asking him to meet the saints in Rawstorne Street before this. This, called the first, resulted from the interview at Dr. C.’s and was not from Rawstorne Street. What is called the second here was consequent

upon their repeated refusals, a final act of the whole body.

A few words as to the general contents of these documents will enable the reader to form an estimate of their character. It purports to be a correspondence relating to a refusal to meet certain citations which are presented as summoning Mr. N. from Plymouth up to London, and a certain letter as the first of them. Now what are the facts? It is true to the letter that this is the correspondence relating to the refusal. And this was the first letter written to Plymouth. But was this the beginning of correspondence? What about the proposal refused? Mr. Newton had been in London, and offered to satisfy brethren. A long correspondence—nay two, with two different parties—had taken place in consequence. All this is entirely suppressed. The first letter here alludes to an interview indeed, and therefore seems very fair; but correspondences had taken place about the proposal refused, and about meeting to consider it. And how came this letter to be written to Plymouth which is produced now, as citing Mr. N. from thence to London? At his own suggestion on leaving London, that they at Plymouth might consider it; and hence the reference in Mr. D—n's letter, who thought it useless, but deferred to Messrs. H. and C, who judged that, not having the presence of mind to reject the proposal of Mr. N. at the time as they ought to have done, it might seem unfair not to act upon it afterwards. And this letter, written at his suggestion after the conclusion of what passed in London, is treated as the first, and as a citation from Plymouth up to London. But further: another letter, making a different proposal from Mr. D—n's, was written by Dr. C. in consequence of the same suggestion. This

also is suppressed, though the answer referred to the reply to Mr. D—n's.

Further, under colour of its arriving only when they were finishing theirs, a letter of December 13127 is placed in the correspondence after theirs of December 15, as if it closed the correspondence: it did not, however. There was an answer: this answer I shall here give.

"London, December 22, 1846.

"Dear Brethren,

"We write to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated December 15; and we beg to say that many of its statements are so entirely untrue, and its perversions regarding the course of action in question so very sad, that, for ourselves, we do not think it would be the path of godly wisdom to read it to the saints at Rawstorne Street. We have also submitted it to the brethren here who are watching and caring for the saints, and they, for the same reasons we have assigned, have counselled us to decline reading it. In addition to your letter a communication has been received from Mr. T. by the same post, in which also we are jointly concerned, and, we may add, that our remarks above, relative to the document received from yourselves, apply in a much stronger degree to his communication. We feel persuaded that if he had been better informed on the facts about which he has written, such statements and allegations as his letter contains could never have been written.

"We remain, dear brethren,

"Yours in Christian regard,

“William Henry D—n.

“Henry G—h.

“To Messrs. C—w, Newton, S., B., and D.”

It may be well to add that the printed correspondence did not arrive in town for a fortnight after the date of this letter, so that there was ample time for its insertion. The real truth was that the conduct of the five above named had produced entire distrust; and hence the briefness of the reply. But the “Correspondence “and “Remonstrance “were so very bad as to draw forth from Messrs. D—n and G—h a letter, which I have since seen, of a very different character; that is, couched in terms of severity quite unusual with either, and declining, from their estimate of the proceedings of these five, any further correspondence. This, from its date, could not have found a place in the Plymouth publication.128 The one just read belonged to it, and hence I have added it here.

There are two or three points in the “Reasons” it may be advisable not to leave unnoticed.

To say that silence (p. 4) was the ordinary mode of acting in ordinary cases of unfounded accusation is surely monstrous: I mean, the pretence that they acted on this ground, when there had been repeated meetings of fifteen brethren about matters out of which this arose. Mr. H. had refused ministering; I had left communion; Messrs. H. and N—r had gone and told Mr. N. his account was untrue; ten brethren were there from a distance for investigation; some two hundred or so, though not having formally separated, had ceased going to the Lord’s table; and these four (who, if you will believe them, ought to govern the consciences of the

congregation without a debate) feel, after a public statement to three hundred impugning Mr. N.'s moral character, that they had nothing to do. The pretension indeed of these four to be in this position is quite sufficient to make any statement after it possible.

Next it is said Mr. Newton had in such things the confidence of the whole body. As to those without, I say nothing: people must ask those without. But this I affirm, he had not in such things the confidence of the whole body. The fact was this: very many took all he said in statement or doctrine;129 the majority exercised no conscience at all. But there were intelligent, godly, independent minds, who were long and thoroughly dissatisfied "in such things": and this the signers of these "Reasons" know as well as I do.

(P. 7) "The fact that the great majority of those in communion were fully satisfied … is, it appears to us, a public and sufficient expression of the judgment of the church in this question."

"Remonstrance" (p. 5). "4. It must be the universal act of the whole church, so that no question could arise in the conscience of any godly saint as to the propriety and necessity of the sentence."

"If valid at all, this act is the result of the Holy Spirit's presence in the body, preserving holiness in its midst. It is because God refuses to have a defiled temple—it is at His command—it is through His power that the evil person is put away. Where His Spirit acts, there must be unanimity" Is it not singular that a majority appears to them to be a public and sufficient expression of the judgment of the church in the "Reasons"? And that "where the Spirit acts there must be unanimity "in the

“Remonstrance”? Or is there any real principle at all, when one principle is taken to clear themselves, and another to condemn Rawstorne Street? At Ebrington Street all who originally laboured (and some two hundred more) have left; but there a majority suffices. Here, where there really was extraordinary unanimity, it must be absolute for the Spirit to have acted. Both their principles are wrong; but he who professes two for his convenience has none. But to do this in so solemn a matter as God’s presence, is such trifling with the subject as, if not judged, will be judged of the Lord in those who do not.

(P. 12.) The impartiality of the tribunal at Ebrington Street I pass over. It was there the accused themselves.

(P. 18.) Mr. N. in the MS. letter referred to, after urging very strongly the ruinous character of certain teaching, and stating that if it was once admitted “the foundations of Christianity were gone,” says, “that with respect to such passages we have a right to expect a clear unhesitating answer from all who teach in the church.” He now declares, “I had no conception that it ever would or could be interpreted to mean that I wished none to be received as teachers who held the system of interpretation therein objected to.” And what did he mean? Did he mean that he did wish that teaching which subverted the foundations of Christianity should continue, and that the teachers of the doctrine should be received? Were the saints to get a clear unhesitating answer that a person was teaching what subverted the foundations of Christianity, and, after having got it, to receive such as teachers? Is there any sense in that? It has been attempted to be said that these letters universally circulated in MS. were not so bad; that they

merely stated that those doctrines led to these results when pushed to their legitimate consequences, etc. This is not the case. The statement is, “if it be once admitted [that is, the interpretation of Matthew 24 contrary to Mr. N.’s], the foundations of Christianity are gone.” Why, in his account of severe expressions, has he omitted this from the same passage? Why another, that we deny all the gospels? “And thus this passage, and with it the whole gospel, and all the gospels, are swept away as not properly belonging to the church.” That we denied the gospels was carefully instilled into the poor and persons of the Established Church. Tracts were sold at the tract shop, declaring it might be easily shewn we subverted the first elements of Christianity.

But it was easy to settle things with most of the brethren who went down. I was not allowed to be present. Such an investigation as that, I do not doubt, will always be desired, let it have been decided by the church publicly, as alleged, twenty times. If someone, having the facts in his mind, be not there to check the statements, any may be made, denied, explained, and gone, before their character is sifted.

Lastly, it must not be supposed that this “Remonstrance” was really addressed to Rawstorne Street. A very few days after it arrived there, and before any answer was sent, it was on sale at the tract shop in London.

I would now add a few words as to a general principle, or point of practice, of some importance, in the actual path of the gathered saints.

One would have thought that if a person were seriously and credibly charged with evil, and he refused, when called on, to satisfy the conscience of the church of God,

it would have been sufficiently simple to the mind of every one that he could not come to the table till it was cleared Up. Such a course was certainly plainly understood and acted upon, till prejudice as to persons interfered with moral understanding. The truth is, the person has himself practically refused to hear the church. Put the contrary case: a person is credibly charged with thieving, or with murder, or with drunkenness, and instances are alleged. The church take it up, feeling that it must be investigated. This is refused. It is alleged that the party's conscience is to be respected, and that it is against his conscience to be judged by the church. If every one could say this, it is very clear there is an end of all discipline. A person has only to plead conscience as to any mode of investigation, and every kind of sinner can maintain his place at the Lord's table in spite of the church of God. Such a principle is monstrous upon the face of it. There may be cases so clear as, for example, a person caught in the fact of sin—that no inquiry is called for, unless to discriminate as to the circumstances, how far they are to be dealt with in compassion, or with fear; or the church may be satisfied of the guilt of the party without his appearing, or in spite of his denial of it, and act on that guilt.130 But further, if the case be not so clear, or be denied, the church of God is entitled, nay bound, to use every means, not in themselves unrighteous, so that it may have a just and holy conscience in acting. No doubt it has to act in grace, and with consideration, in this; but it is bound to act for God in truth. It may be able to judge without parties and witnesses meeting: if not, it is bound to have them. The refusal of the party accused is really of no weight at all, save against himself. The offer of the party accused to give his own account of the

matter, and the plea that this should satisfy the church of God, is too great an outrage on common decency of dealing between man and man (not to speak of the holier judgment of the church of God) to be listened to. But, further, it may become impossible to excommunicate such a person for his guilt. The church, by a just feeling, may refuse, in given circumstances, to conclude absolutely that he is guilty, without hearing him; but he refuses to come.

It cannot therefore receive him, till he either comes before them, or the matter is fully investigated, or cleared up. The act in such a case amounts to this: “You must come, if at all, through an investigation, to the table.” Now this is what has been done. The church is bound to be satisfied where such charges lie. They have said, “Satisfy us.” It is replied, “No.” Now it is clear that if the party were proved innocent in any other way, to the satisfaction of the conscience of the body so acting, the barrier is gone.131 And this is what has been said: “they feel precluded meeting you at the table of the Lord, till the matters in question have been fairly and fully investigated.” This, as has been shewn, they never have been: the greatest part of them were in no way whatever inquired into.

Take, in the case before us, what is declared in the “Remonstrance” to be necessary for excommunication. “The sin must have been palpably and distinctly proved against the individual.” A person, by refusing to appear, makes it not possible in many cases to do this in a satisfactory way. The church does not therefore excommunicate the party as proved to be guilty. But it maintains, as it is bound to do, in God’s name, its title, its obligation, to judge sin and the sinner, when the case

is brought before it (otherwise it is partaker in it) and declares he can come on no other terms than that which it is bound to, namely, the maintenance of the holiness of the Lord's table in the Lord's name.

This then is what has been done. There has not been an excommunication upon proved guilt, but there has been, when the occasion arose, the maintenance of that judgment of evil by the church, without which it ceases to exist as the church of God at all. And I now solemnly declare—though I never did while it might have looked like a threat, or like pressing the point, or using personal influence, which I should account a sin—that had Rawstorne Street not done so, I should have left Rawstorne Street as I left Ebrington Street. They acted —and I bless God for it—happily, freely, and under the Lord's guidance: but the question had come evidently to a solemn point, in which God would direct the state of things one way or another; and my mind was made up. Most thankful I am that the very opposite of such a step was called for. Poor and feeble as the brethren may have been, God was with them: and He whose strength is made perfect in weakness has vindicated His own ways.

In saying this, I have no wish to wrong Ebrington Street, wherp I know there are many dear saints, nor to flatter Rawstorne Street. Every individual there might have gone wrong as an individual had they had to act: I only speak of their public position. God has guided them as a body: for this they are debtors, not to be exalted in themselves.

There is not a doubt, in the case before us, that a very large body had such convictions as to Mr. N. as would have precluded them from breaking bread with him on

much fuller grounds than the one on which they acted as a body. The eyes of many were opened by what they had themselves witnessed in London: but they would not step beyond what they had (of God) before them as a body of saints; and it has, and will have, its weight. Already it has. For a length of time those at Plymouth could not be got to print anything, though they circulated it in private. They alleged this was grace. What has become of this grace? God is with the church, with His poor saints, when they act humbly and faithfully before Him. He has contrasted the path of Ebrington Street and that of Rawstorne Street. The latter has patiently, peacefully, cleared itself from partaking in evil. And what is the condition of Ebrington Street? It has for its exclusive guides five persons, whose communications have really lost them, at any rate for the moment, the moral respect of spiritual, informed, and unprejudiced brethren elsewhere, whatever affection or compassion they may feel for the individuals, or however they may think some of them to be merely misled and not misleading. And these five persons avowedly claim in print the right of judging every case that arises, without the saints (whatever they may think) being at liberty to debate the verdict which may have been announced to them. The applicability of that passage, “Ye suffer if a man beat you, if a man take of you, if a man bring you into bondage,” has constantly struck me in this case.

I pressed this matter on their consciences as a body at Ebrington Street. No one stirred: it was treated as a dissenting movement on my part. The church consequently has now been openly declared not to be a judicial assembly, and the verdict passed by four persons

—Messrs. C—w, S., B., and D.—concludes the whole assembly, without the possibility of calling it in question. This is now avowed by them. Whether the body at Ebrington Street acquiesce in it I know not. One thing is certain; if they leave it where it is, they are bound by this principle. It has been published plainly enough. Be their conscience ever so troubled, they are not capacitated of God to inquire more into the matter. Sorry I should be to have my conscience so bound by any men. Nor are those who assume such a place here such as would commend such a principle to me. The principles we have been discussing at the opening of these remarks apply directly to Mr. Newton's case. He was accused, to state it in few words, of clericalism, sectarianism, and untruth. Of the two first, and consequently of subverting the very principles on which brethren met, even some of his best friends declare he is guilty; of the latter, many godly persons also. He refuses to satisfy the saints. They are bound not to receive him till he clears it up. As to a poor saint no one would have hesitated an instant. Let it be said that he is an elder: more than two or three grave persons think that he is guilty.

I do not think sectarianism the main point, though an important one: and by sectarianism is here meant having actually made a sect of Plymouth, that is, of Ebrington Street. Not to speak of deeper principles evidently involved, the broad fact that the claim is now openly put forth, that four persons who think proper to claim the ministry among themselves can form a judgment among themselves of every case, and can impose this on the church as binding and conclusive judgment, is of yet greater moral importance, and

involves much deeper consequences. In letters not published, not to speak of well-known teachings, the same thing is fully claimed as to ministry, even for a single minister. I have seen one with a long and subtle preface, condemning all the early course at Plymouth, as if it were modest self-condemnation, and seeming to own the Holy Ghost in gift, but assuming the regulation into a single minister's hands, so that not a hymn should be given out, nor a chapter read, nor any one pray, till parties had the minister's allowance on his ascertaining their qualifications.

This then is the state of Ebrington Street. The two things which drove from the Establishment on one side and from Dissent on the other are unitedly established there: one of them avowedly, and the other recognised by every impartial mind. How brethren can expect a person of any principle to remain there is very strange. Why should they have left systems where a thousand ties kept them, because one of these principles was found, and remain where both are established in the face of clearer light—and this, where it has been done, not openly and honestly, but by means which would establish unity at the expense of straightforwardness, and make the establishment of authority sanction every evil, if it be a means to it? And such is the brief picture of genuine clericalism in every place. A man who keeps another's conscience by authority will soon be found to have very little of his own. We have all to watch against it. An attempt to establish it will never find me as an associate in the work.

And now, my brethren, one word more. The case, under God's wonderful hand, has been sufficiently brought forward to put it on the conscience of the brethren at

large, through the quiet conduct, followed as a matter of duty, of some brethren in London. I have not acted myself in the matter, save as needed for my own conscience, in leaving, or as bound by circumstances. I have remained here in London, as subject to the brethren's judgment, when called upon to do so. I have acted as the servant of the brethren involved in quiet faithfulness in the case, so far as to make it plain as far as the published documents required it; I mean in this publication. I now retire again to take my own position in respect of it. There is, I judge, quite sufficient before brethren, to have their conscience clear as to the path they are to walk in. In respect to the matter itself my path would be a decided one; in my judgment of myself a humble one becomes me. Both lead me to the same way before the Lord. Brethren, I believe, have to get clear of a snare of Satan. I am not aware that I have any more service to perform in this respect which the Lord would have me to do. If there be, I should not, I trust, shrink from it. Had I been more spiritual and faithful, perhaps there might: actually I do not think there is. As regards my conscience I shall always treat it as a work of Satan: doubtless demanding patience as regards those unawares caught, but not allowing an instant's compromise with even the slightest acquiescence in it. I leave in the Lord's hands the path of the brethren concerning it, happy to walk with them where it is open to me to do so, and they allow me; the Spirit having its just power, and I holding fast the principles which I have avowed to them here.

For my own part, while conscious in this affair of no fault nor want of charity (I do not say no want of power), I have ever found that dealing with the sin of others

awakens my conscience to all my own before God; and while, through mercy, enjoying that mercy unclouded, the very thought of want of power itself, and the whole course of the matter, has served most healthfully to sift my own soul, and to cause it to repass before God all that may have contributed to it, and discover to me all my own failures. Here I have found abundant cause for humiliation, though yet more for admiring and owning and adoring the faithfulness and grace of God. As between me and the brethren who judge my path in this particular matter, I can appeal, without a shade of distrust in my heart, to the judgment of One above us both; I shall not accuse them in it; I await the grace and work of God.

The sifting we have all received will, if we are spared, bring us together again in spiritual energy and power, according as we bow to it and let it have its perfect work in ourselves. If we balance the unjustifiable charge of others with what God has given us, we shall soon find our own repose in peace as to anything which may be even unjustly charged upon us.

As completing this account, I add, at the desire of the brethren, the final answer to the last communication from Plymouth:—

“London, January 4th, 1847.

“Dear Brethren,

“It is only right and courteous to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of December to the saints at Rawstorne Street, though brethren labouring there have decided not to read it publicly, on the ground (amongst other reasons) of its not being a truthful statement of

the matters on which it treats, and which are now before the saints.

“We can assure you it is a very painful and humbling thing to be constrained to communicate such an expression of the minds of brethren in the Lord, and much more so, to be obliged to express our own conviction that this last letter (to say nothing of former ones that had passed through our hands) has not been written in good faith, much less in Christian simplicity.

“In the first place, you know that Mr. Newton has not been excommunicated by the brethren in Rawstorne Street; and therefore what you have said professedly in so solemn a manner about excommunication could not have had weight with your own minds any more than with ours.

“But, if Mr. N. was serious in what he wrote, he was excommunicated as long since as March 20th, 1846, before anything was thought of at Rawstorne Street; for he thus wrote: ‘We have been excommunicated by certain brethren’; and consequently all the effects of excommunication on which you dilate so largely were in action then without any reference whatever to what has since transpired.

“But, beside this, it is well known to you that Mr. Newton gave, as a reason for declining to meet Mr. Darby after he had retired from Ebrington Street, that he was an excommunicated person; and therefore all his relations to him as a Christian brother had ceased. Now you will pardon us, dear brethren, if, in the face of these things, we express our belief that Mr. Newton did not think that he and others with him were excommunicated as long back as the 20th of March, although he said so;

and that he did not think at an earlier period Mr. Darby was excommunicated, though he said so; and that you do not think that Mr. Newton has been excommunicated by the saints at Rawstorne Street, though you have said so. Under such an impression, you will not wonder at our saying we do not desire a continuance of the present correspondence. It is too painful a thing to continue it in its present form. It is on the ground above stated that we have forborne to touch on other things which called for remark in your letter. If we have unduly identified you with Mr. Newton, it is because you have made us feel that what he thinks you think, and so of his acts. With unfeigned sorrow of heart, we remain, "Yours in Christian regard, (Signed) "W. H. D—N.

"Henry G—h.

"To Messrs. S., B., D., and C—w.

"P.S. This letter has been delayed a day or two accidentally since it was written."

A letter, consequent on this, has been written by a considerable number of brethren, including those to whom letters recommending persons as in communion are habitually communicated, declining any longer receiving such letters from Messrs. C—w, S., B., and D.; but expressing at the same time their anxious desire that it should be understood that it would be their joy to receive, in any way, any Christian known as such from thence as from elsewhere. I have not been able to get an exact copy of the letter; and hence I merely give its substance.

While these pages were in my possession for correcting the press, the letter of Mr. T. was put into my hands in print. I do not think it necessary to answer so violent an

attack on the whole body of the saints at Rawstorne Street. The letter itself will be its best answer to every well-judging mind. I have only to remind the reader that it is to this document that the letter of Messrs. D—n and G—h (suppressed in the Plymouth correspondence, but given above) refers, where it says, that the declaration of being “in many of its statements entirely untrue, and its perversions as to the course of action very sad,” applies to Mr. T.’s letter more strongly than to the answer of the four which it accompanied. This statement of Messrs. D—n and G—h has been fully adopted by a considerable number of brethren present, in the letter declining to receive testimonials from Messrs. C—w, S., B., and D.: and to this, of whatever weight it may be, I beg to add my most unequivocal testimony.

There is a renewed attempt to get rid of the “Narrative of Facts “as in question at Rawstorne Street, where every one knows it was what occupied the saints. But this, though having the advantage of preceding documents, is doubly lame, from being so late in the business; because, in the “Reasons” published by the Plymouth leaders themselves, the charges in the “Narrative of Facts “are stated in the first page to be the subject in question. The statement of Appendix A will, I suppose, be answered by Mr. H—d and Dr. C, as that which they know to be wholly untrue.

I have only here to add, on Mr. G—h’s part, that the statement that “the former of these meetings originated in a request, on Mr. G—h’s part, that Mr. Newton would meet Dr. C”, is entirely false.

As to Appendix B, the charges were not mentioned, because the brethren acted on Mr. Newton’s refusal to

go into them. They did not go into the charges against Mr. Newton, nor did they hear reasons for refusing to answer them; but the “Narrative” was repeatedly referred to as the subject in question. The fact is, it had been pressed some time before on the conscience of the whole body, to the regret of many, by a brother one Sunday morning after worship was over, when neither Mr. W. nor myself was there, and done without communication with any, that no appearance of influence might exist. I have already answered the attempt renewed here to mislead as to the charges. The “Reasons” themselves refer to the charges in the “Narrative.”

As to Appendix C, Mr. T. has undertaken to give a minute account of what passed at meetings at which he was not present. That account, I affirm, in most respects, to be totally false; for instance, Sir A.C’s suppressed letter was neither offered nor refused. This I state, not only on my own authority, but I am confirmed by every person present at the meeting whom I have met; unless indeed it were included under the general expression of “Papers proving Mr. N.’s innocence,” offered by Mr. W—n, as already stated in the published account of what passed. But that is a separate item in Mr. T.’s account.

On recurring to Appendix C, I perceive that one would be led to suppose that Mr. T. meant that his brother-in-law (Mr. F. P—x) offered it. Mr. P—x asked me, had I not agreed to submit to the judgment of the ten who went down; which I positively denied. But he most certainly proffered no paper nor any letter from Mr. Newton. Whether he had directions from Plymouth to do so, which he thought it no use to follow when I denied an agreement to submit, I cannot tell. I do not think he will

accuse me of any want of courtesy in my reply to him, for I had no notion but that he was acting with kindly feeling, very natural towards a friend and relative; and I so expressed myself. Nor will I suppose that he has made this statement to Mr. T. If he has done either, I am sorry for him. As far as I was concerned, his conduct at the meeting (though painful as to position for so young a man) only made me feel for him.

All the three who have been led to put themselves forward here will find their names fully given in the authentic account as objecting to what took place. Mr. B —e was away from London at the final meeting. It is a happy feeling when attacks on statements in a painful matter corroborate and confirm them all. It may be well to notice one other circumstance on the part of the brethren at Rawstorne Street. They were fully informed of the refusal, as stated in their letter, of Mr. Newton to meet them, to satisfy their consciences. They do not speak of being fully informed of the reasons for refusing. But, further, the brethren were most fully informed of the existence of the “Reasons,” which was communicated to the brethren, and the propriety of reading them considered. But they declined doing so. One ground is evident: the going into the whole matter at Plymouth in the absence of Mr. Newton and the witnesses of the facts. Moreover I hold very plainly that, if a thing was wrong to be done, no reasons ought to be listened to for doing it.

It will be observed that the three who sign the preface to Mr. T.’s letter do not, in the smallest degree, verify the truth of the statements contained in it. I have the best possible reason for saying this.

The reader may remark that the acquittal insisted on in London is now “a defective paper, which could not be called a formal verdict … it was so inaccurately worded!”

Finally, the body of Mr. T.’s statements are so very bad, that I can only hope that they are the result of the blinding of passion, and not want of principle. I decline therefore entering into further detail.

68 Lord C, however, would not now break bread at Ebrington Street himself.

69 The above is Mr. G—h’s own statement, corrected from his lips.

70 The proposal of Mr. Newton was made after a lecture to saints attending Rawstorne Street, at the house of those who attended there, and to one of those who always meet there. Of course, persons attending other gatherings besides Rawstorne Street may have been and doubtless were there; though the house where the meeting was held is in that immediate neighbourhood.

71 This refers to what is mentioned above, which resulted in the meeting at Dr. C.’s house.

72 Read, “not having been”; but, of course, I copy the original.

73 This is not in any way the case. Founded or unfounded, there are many charges which affect Mr. Newton alone.

74 The following is Mr. D—n’s reply to a note of Mr. C—w’s referring to the reasons for not meeting the saints. The note itself is given first.

“Plymouth, 26th Nov., 1846.

“Dear Brother in the Lord,

“We hoped to be able to send the letter which we are now writing to you, with an accompanying paper, by this day’s post, but we cannot get it done in time; so I write a line to say that we purpose forwarding it by an early coach to-morrow: and it will thus, we hope, reach Reading by the express train which leaves Exeter at 12 o’clock.

“I remain, your affectionate brother in the Lord,

“Joseph C—w.”

“40, Southampton Street, Reading,

Nov. 27, 1846.

“Dear Brother,

“On my return from London this evening I found your letter of yesterday, and at the first moment after the lecture I sit down to acknowledge the receipt of it. I need hardly say, as you are acquainted with the contents of my note to Mr. Newton, I was a good deal surprised to receive a letter in reply from Mr. S. and afterwards one from yourself. Under other circumstances, of course, it would have afforded me nothing but pleasure to hear from either of you. I have not yet received the papers you speak of; but I suppose they may reach me to-morrow, however unavailable in my hands for the purpose for which I suppose they are sent. Indeed I have already acted on Mr. S.’s note as definitive to my own mind, on the only point about which I communicated with Mr. Newton. He tells me that he and others have counselled Mr. Newton to decline my proposal; and this I communicated to the saints at Rawstorne Street (as I did his refusal to meet the request of ten brethren who

had written to him on the preceding Thursday evening), expressing at the same time most fully my thoughts and judgment about such a course. I now leave the saints there to act further in the matter as the Lord may give them wisdom and grace. In entering upon this matter, which I did at the request of dear Dr. C, it was my determination by the Lord's grace to act simply if I could not act wisely: so that Mr. Newton may judge my surprise and disappointment at the way in which he has treated my letter. He might have remonstrated against it if he had thought fit; but at least he should not have supposed I would express a purpose as strongly as I knew how to-day, and then act upon the very opposite to-morrow. All I can say is, if he or the brethren thought fit to send reasons at all, it ought to have been evident to them that I was not the person to whose hands they should be committed. My letter was a sufficient warning as to that. I can quite understand the assigning of reasons against a person's being condemned unheard, or against partiality in judgment: but I see no place for reasons why a person who has been charged with guilt should not answer at all. At my declining, therefore, to read any reasons that may come to me to the saints at Rawstorne Street, you must not be grieved, as it is only declining in act what I had already done by letter. I might speak of the sorrow of my heart in this matter, but this is known to the Lord.

"Yours, affectionately, in Christ,

"W. H. D—n.

"To Mr. C—w.

“P.S.—I add a line before posting this, to say the parcel has arrived. I cannot add more, if I would secure to-day’s post.”

75 It was felt desirable not to connect the inquiry with the worship meetings again in this matter; indeed many sisters complained of being dragged into it after worship; and the brothers met to consider the matter, before mentioning it at the general meeting, as they had in other instances which presented difficulty in which the consciences of all were concerned. It was not without or against the wish of those who labour among them; but quite the contrary. In many cases those who do so have felt able to present the matter at once to the body, as being very simple: in other cases, where it involved in a more anxious way the consciences of all, this previous communication to all has been made. The whole facts of this case had been communicated already to the congregation—brethren and sisters—at the two previous Thursday meetings by Mr. D—n.

76 The impression on Dr. C.’s mind had been, that Mr. N. had expressed his readiness to meet the saints, individually or collectively, and accordingly he pressed his seeing brethren. The following is the letter in answer to Dr. C.:—

77 Referring to his presenting himself at the table.

78 Mr. R. H—d had urged at the meeting, that Mr. N. could not reject the competency of the persons, for he had offered to meet and satisfy saints, and that all they wanted was that he should do so in the presence of those concerned. Mr. T. pressed for some scripture for accuser and accused meeting face to face.

79 Dr. C. confirmed the account given by Mr. D—n, as above, of Mr. N.'s offer, Dr. C.'s saying that he deemed it necessary, and Mr. Newton's answer turning it aside. Mr. B—er asked, if he had pressed it again, after Mr. N.'s turning it aside; Dr. C. said, Yes, but he had got nothing by it.

80 Nothing else indeed is alleged save the fact of investigation by the four signers of the "Reasons," who present themselves as being the persons who addicted themselves at Plymouth to the ministry of the saints. On this two questions arise. Axe they the persons who stand, and stand alone in this place as the persons to whom the conscience of the church is to be entrusted (they deny that the body itself can inquire)? Are they really those who exclusively could assume the place in which, without supposing a possibility of question by any, they set themselves up here? and secondly, if they are, did they really make such inquiry as they pretend? This I shall examine farther on. For the present I refer to the acquittals themselves, which Mr. Newton professes to have already received previously. I have stated these in the "Narrative" already. Whatever could be said in the "Narrative" in this way for Mr. N., all he has said here of acquittals given by others, I have stated there. (See pp. 74, 79, and 80.) Their value we will inquire into here. If anything could place my "Narrative" above suspicion it is this defence. For all that is alleged here of testimony in Mr. Newton's favour is found there already.

81 You would suppose, reader, I dare say, that this "Defence" referred to the contents of the "Narrative." Not at all. It was written nearly a year before the "Narrative" came out, and alludes to only two of the charges contained in it. The word "these" in paragraph

3 of page 1 of the “Reasons” refers to the charges in the “Narrative.” But” these “in “Now as to these” in paragraph 4, which would be supposed to be the same, refers only to those alluded to in the meeting at Plymouth in 1845, and not to those in the “Narrative.” The unsuspecting reader thinks that they are the same, and that he has in the “Defence” an answer to the charges in the “Narrative,” whereas about a quarter of them only are referred to. The others had not then been made, the “Defence” having been written nearly a year before the charges in the “Narrative” came out. The reader must judge for himself of Such a procedure.

82 Indeed only two of those found in the “Reasons” appear as charges in the “Narrative.” Four are alleged to have been made in 1845. As to two of them (which I disown however as charges) so far from being acquitted, one of the reasons for which Mr. N. got the paper (now alleged to be an acquittal by the ten brethren) suppressed was, that he was not cleared of these two. Of course these two do not appear as charges in the “Narrative,” for I have never allowed them to be such. So that it is only two out of the charges mentioned in the “Reasons,” which appear amongst those found in the “Narrative” from which Mr. N. is said to be acquitted.

83 The words “veracity,” etc., seem to carry on the connection with the first part: (through the phrase “last mentioned “which seems to distinguish them from questions on “ministry,” etc.), but there has been quietly slipped in “March, 1845, etc., etc.”; so that “these charges” after this passage, only mean the charges made in 1845, not those in the “Narrative”; and “none others” now apply not to all those of the “Narrative,” but confine the attention of the reader exclusively to the

charges made in 1845 at Plymouth; whereas in the beginning of what I have quoted, the like expressions refer to the whole of the charges in the “Narrative,” which the unsuspecting reader supposes, consequently, he is dealing with all through. See the “Reasons.”

84 Except the last “these,” as explained in a previous note.

85 From the effect this produces on my own mind, as to those who could concoct such a statement as that contained in these reasons, I feel bound to say, not for the purpose of charging one, but of clearing others, that I am satisfied that Messrs. S. and C—w are incapable of it, are mere victims and instruments in this, and never would have done such a thing of themselves; and further, that there is but one of all the four, who is really concerned in it as originating it, and that is Mr. D. This of course is merely my judgment. Every one will heed it or not as they please, but I felt bound to say that (sadly as they have been dragged in) I do not believe Mr. S. or C—w would of themselves have been capable of it. Nor do I charge Mr. B. with it. But as they have signed it, of course I must leave it here on their common responsibility.

86 This was not a volunteer charge; it was in reply to a note of Mr. Newton, admitting that “his manner had been marked with so much distance, when we first met.” Mine certainly had not. Three brethren had come down to ask me subsequently what I came to Plymouth for. Mr. Newton states on their report, that we should go on in separate paths, but uniting in all that we can in love. In answer to this I stated my complaint to him, whereupon he withdrew, in his reply, all the kindness expressed in

his first. My note had accepted and returned the kindness, and stated “with sorrow of heart” the complaint I had to make; declaring that “as to difference of interpretation on points of scripture,” objections could be stated if needed, but that when the need did not exist, I felt “a measure of difference comparatively immaterial, and but an exercise of grace.” I quote this now, merely as a proof that the way the matter is stated here, is entirely incorrect.

87 These events were about five years ago, since which time these letters have been circulated. At that time I had, at the instance of brethren, remonstrated with Mr. Newton about them, but he persevered. As this matter is referred to in the “Defence,” I shall state the circumstances, and give Miss J.’s account to me, which differs in its moral bearing from Mr. N.’s. I was invited to spend the evening at a married sister’s of Miss J., which I accepted, as for common edification. When there, I found a large meeting, to my great surprise, exclusively of sisters. Brethren who came were sent away unknown to me. Miss J. said to me, You will speak to us on such prophetic points (those contained in the MS. letters). I was rather disgusted, and replied, Whatever the Lord may lead me to. Finding however their minds bent upon this, I thought well to let it go on, and presented the difficulties I had in receiving their views, ascertaining clearly myself that they had learned them from man and not God. Miss J., in my interview with her, after the meeting in 1845, told me she had met Mr. N. in Frankfort Street after the meeting at her sister’s, and told him there were difficulties raised she should like to be satisfied about. Could Mr. N. furnish her with answers to them? Mr. N. thereupon furnished

her with my letter to him containing the different objections, and shewed her how much she might copy, and gave her his answers. These objections and answers form the Appendix. Miss J.'s account of the copy books, which I first suggested to her however did not satisfy me, but as I attached no importance to it, I left it as it was, and published it at the end of the next thing I printed.

88 This has been publicly preached in the streets.

89 Note here in passing the startling proposition, that an investigation by Messrs. C—w, B., S., and D. (who themselves in these or other documents declare too that they were accused with Mr. N.), to the exclusion of Mr. H. and all else, was the solemn, final, and conclusive investigation of the church of God.

90 This is not true. It was a proposal "to meet four nominated by him," and there is nothing said about the church; the words are, "and report on the charges." On Mr. N.'s principles it could not be to the church as thereon judging it. Indeed, as appears in a subsequent letter, there was no thought of the church. They say, "We also differ from you entirely in thinking this a question of conscience to be referred only to the church of God. We regard it as a matter of fact, a simple question of evidence to be best dealt with by a few competent persons." This is just what I felt was the object, and to which I could not agree. In the same letter also, they say, "a given number of persons, one half to be named by yourself, the other by him." It will be at once seen by the letters given farther on, how this attempt to withdraw it from the church acted on my mind.

91 On a particular occasion related in the “Narrative,” Mr. N. had mentioned those whom God had raised up to exercise authority in the church; they were himself, H., S., and B. D. and C—w were not mentioned.

92 This shews that ten days had elapsed from my statement, and about a fortnight from Mr. H.’s explanation; during which no step whatever was taken by those who “felt that such accusations must be instantly dealt with,” and then, as we have seen, it was not they, but Mr. Newton took it up with other persons. As to Mr. H., steps were taken; that is, S—s and R—e having proposed to the assembly after Mr. H.’s statement, that they should meet to know what could be done to hinder Mr. H.’s ceasing to minister, every engine was set in motion to hinder brethren coming, and not one of those here named was there. This further shews that Mr. Newton did not take his step when he heard of it: he had heard of it ten days before.

93 He is the author of it. It consists of his answers to extracts of my letter which he gives.

94 This refers to the meeting of fifteen in April previous, the account of which I alleged to be incorrect.

95 I had pressed them on Mr. H. and Mr. S. privately months before. Mr. H. (and Mr. N—r) had spoken to Mr. N. as to one, and he went on with it. Mr. N. declined intercourse with me at the time. It is well to remark, that I had no more to do with these untruths then than any one else. My having made a stand afterwards may now make me responsible for shewing that I had reason to do so.

96 I had shewn the original proposal to Mr. H. and Mr. McA., with whom I happened to drink tea at Mr. H.’s

that day, who both thought (as every other saint I met about it afterwards) that I ought not to act on it. They had been present, and H. said, “What is the good of eight inquiring now for us, when we were at the meeting in question with eleven more (that is, at the April meeting, the account of which I said was untrue)?” but H. said, “Take care you do not seem to avoid an investigation.” I shewed them therefore my answer, and they said there could be no mistake as to it.

97 If it is miserable to read through such a course of things I beg the reader to consider what it was to go through it. I do not charge the individuals here. I have been long convinced (and declared it) of a direct delusive influence of Satan at Plymouth.

98 This letter was circulated everywhere, because it stated a vast number of dreadful errors into which Air. M—s had been led by listening to brethren who differed from Mr. Newton’s views. I understand Mr. M—s is changed a good deal in this respect, but I have no certain information. While at Plymouth, and for some time after, no one spoke so strongly as to Mr. Newton’s tyranny in hindering people’s ministry.

99 They also state they investigated in company with them.

100 That is, the circumstances connected with it. The paper itself never came out, having been suppressed at the time.

101 I pretend to give no more than my own judgment as to it, from all that passed then and since.

102 Let me notice a little here two things to the saint who reads this. First, what was going on. A verdict is

drawn up (now alleged by Mr. Newton to be an acquittal of him by all) and signed by some of those inquiring, and then submitted to Mr. Newton for his judgment on it. [I do not know that Sir A.C. joined in this.] He rejects it as not good enough for him, and it is withdrawn! I am not impugning the integrity of the persons concerned; I have no more doubt of it than of my own. But any one will feel that it must have been a tolerable trial to have seen what I had been anxiously seeking to serve God in get on this kind of ground. Did they ever think of submitting anything to me? Never a moment, and they were quite right. I complain nothing of this. And now see, secondly, the good of trusting God. These brethren never troubled themselves about me in the matter. They were anxious to get rid of the charges of untruth, in order to deal with the sectarianism they met with; and prepared to swamp the other question as an encumbrance, and quiet me, without consulting me, by some general expressions, at the same time Sir A.C. quieting his own conscience by demanding, as he has publicly stated he did, an open investigation. All this I knew nothing of, good or bad, till afterwards, nor indeed of anything that passed. One would have thought it a fine opportunity for Mr. Newton to quash the charges and all inquiry. These brethren were anxious to get rid of them (indeed they told me so twenty times, that they stood altogether in the way). God would not allow it, and employs Mr. Newton himself to suppress it. They would have gone as far as ever they could to clear him, in order to get rid of the question: God steps in, and the very person they were going to clear He employs to set aside all their plan. How wonderful are His ways!

103 It is well that the reader should be aware that these, as well as Mr. W—r, were brought down by Mr. Newton and his friends to stand by him in this matter.

104 “Reasons,” page 2. “Secret suppression of certain MS. letters “gives Mr. N.’s account, adding “secret.” “Certain parts of them “gives Miss H.’s. Aware of the two accounts not tallying, they have inserted both with an “or.”

105 It was however in the tea-meetings, held on Monday evenings, and on other occasions, after this “Defence” was read, and the brethren gone, that the charge of altering the letters, after denial of having done so, was made. A curious reason was given to satisfy the minds of those who attended as to the Irish brethren never coming to Plymouth. They were informed, that the enemies of Plymouth had told them that the saints at Plymouth were an idle newspaper-reading people, and it was no wonder therefore they had not come there.

106 It was what he was seeking, and he thought he had arrived at his end; and hence, when I came down, his first act was to hold a meeting of the leaders in private to get them to sign a paper, denouncing me as a heretic. It was not this declaration which convinced me of it; but it was the avowal of it.

107 [These and similar references apply to the pages of the “Narrative” in this volume, and not to the original tract.]

108 This interview with Lord C, it will be seen, meets the statement in page 10 of the “Reasons.”

109 The force of this word “debate” will be considered farther on.

110 It has been stated to me that Mr. S. declared that, had the principles on these points been what they were at first, he would not have stayed. I have referred in the “Narrative” to an intelligent member of Ebrington Street, who declared that ten years ago Mr. N. urged on him the principles which now I am urging, and Mr. N. resisting; but that he never received them, but joined Ebrington Street as a sect, and stayed in it as such.

111 I shall here give an extract of a letter of Mr. N.’s, intended for the perusal of others, and read publicly in a gathering of saints. “It may however be well to inform you of the outline of circumstances that followed on Mr. Darby’s personal accusations of me. When I heard of their having been publicly made in the meeting at Ebrington Street, I felt that it was open to the brethren watching over the saints to interfere, if they pleased, in their church capacity. If there was a case of discipline against me, it was quite open to them, after investigation, to bring it before the church, and require that I should be withdrawn from or excommunicated.” The nicest casuist could not draw a line between this and the daily conduct of the popish priesthood in Ireland.

112 It may be said this is what failed of being done at Plymouth. I have noticed this farther on.

113 It is worthy of note that this is the ground taken in the “Reasons.” These are their words, page 7: “And the fact that the great majority of those then in communion were fully satisfied, that the judgment their brethren had formed was a sound one; and have from that hour to this regarded our brother Newton with unaltered affection and confidence is, it appears to us, a public and

sufficient expression of the judgment of the church on this question." The truth is, even unanimity is not in itself a proof of the mind of God's Spirit. At Corinth they were, till roused by the testimony of that Spirit by the apostle, unanimous in letting the incestuous person go on. Nor would two or three evidently carnal persons rightly hinder the body in acting in any given case. Were it so, two or three undetected accomplices in sin might hinder the bounden judgment of the church of God in the case of murder or incest. The apostle declares, having in readiness to avenge all disobedience when your "obedience is accomplished": that is, when the full work of the Spirit had had its way, he would treat the others still resisting as disobedient to the Spirit, negativing the doctrine of unanimity as well as of a majority, on which those who sign the "Reasons" profess here to have acted. The truth is, the body must answer to God for following the guidance of the Spirit in these cases. Those who do, God will justify. If the body do not, God will not sanction their act. We have not the apostle's power, it is true, but we have the promise of God by His Spirit to help and certainly guide us if we wait upon Him. God must be ultimately the judge.

In the case before us they had the most slender ground to go upon. All those who originally laboured at Plymouth decline to break bread at Ebrington Street; and some 150 or 200 left, unable to endure the state of things any longer. Four persons, who came amongst them comparatively recently, declare that they, being supported by a "great majority," have in their own act a public and sufficient judgment of the church of God. I press the question of principle on these plain facts on brethren's consciences. It might seem inconsistent to

base the judgment of the church on a majority; and yet maintain the principles of popery. But the fact is so, and very simple. They assert as a doctrine, that the elders in their church capacity are to debate the verdict, and that the church cannot. But as a fact, though in doing this, and by the means they used for it, they drove away all the original labourers still at Plymouth, and some 200 others; they did keep the majority, of whom many were thoroughly imbued with their principles or under their influence, and some did not know what to do; and then they as a fact claim the acquiescence of this majority as the judgment of the church. There is no consistency in evil. They seek much to distract the minds of brethren from their subversion of principle j but time will open the eyes of those whose eye is single towards God.

114 I say submission, not accordance, because if they cannot call it in question, it is idle to call it accordance. Paul leads the body to act, however decided he was, by divine light. “Do not ye judge them that are within?” And again note, that there is no question of elders in 1 Corinthians at all. Paul addresses himself to the body. I doubt not he did it of God, to guard this very point, and shew the conscience of the body, the state of that conscience, to be the very point, the real matter in question. And here a very grave question arises:—Is not every one in Ebrington Street answerable for whatever evil has been there which is not put away? I clearly judge they are. I pressed this on them in speaking to them before I left.

115 I beg a particular comparison here of die above extract from p. 12 of the “Reasons,” with the following, from p. 10:— “The church here therefore has not only itself searched into and judged of this matter, but,” etc.

And, “It has been gone into before the Lord, and by His church, both that portion of it meeting in Ebrington Street,” etc. They declare positively the church has itself searched into it, when the leaders have announced their verdict. It is bound up in what it cannot question. Private meetings were held (public are refused), in which certain things were read for, and answers given by the accused party: but inquiry, or other testimony, is positively, on principle, refused. And then the church is declared to have itself searched. What were Mr. R. and Lord C. but witnesses on one side, if they were anything? Again, p. 5:— “It soon became evident… that it would be absolutely necessary to inform the saints of all we knew and thought on the subject.” Now, this is given in (what is presented as the judgment of the guides on a full investigation, though it was really no such thing) a letter of Mr. S., countersigned by the three others, set up as a definite verdict of acquittal by the guides, to be received by the body. Any one can see it was no such thing; but it is now given as such.

116 In fact, many at these tea-meetings were so satisfied of false statements or evil principles, that not one took place but led to the secession of some half-dozen persons; the most, taking all that was told them for truth, or quieted in some way, stayed where they were.

117 The word debate is just used as alarming a quiet godly conscientious mind—innocent in the hands of the leaders where it is assumed to be a godly spiritual weighing of the matter, and implying a discussion in the case of the assembly; but, guides or assembly, the godly weighing together before God what is His will where our conscience is concerned, is debate neither in one nor the other.

118 As a fact, it may be well to notice, that there was a good deal of debate, on subjects involving a mixture of discipline and principle, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles—debate which Paul (for so God ordered it for larger purposes of His wisdom and grace) himself could not terminate.

119 I stated generally there was evil and unrighteousness unconfessed and unjudged. This, while including Mr. N. without naming him, was by no means confined to him; nor was it, as to him, confined to charges of untruth.

120 Or rather act on the suggestion of a brother from another gathering, after the consciences of two or three who felt difficulty were satisfied, and the same act was proposed as an act of grace and as giving scriptural weight to their dealings.

121 Six brethren, from different and some very distant places, friends of Mr. Newton, or of his principles, came and kept the brethren till near twelve o'clock at night, with the avowed desire and object of hindering their acting on what they had patiently resolved on previously, but had waited ten days, hoping another appeal might have effect, if coming from the whole gathering. Only one of these six had been at any previous meeting. [There was besides present, at that meeting, one brother from Plymouth, but now of the gathering, who objected. One who is of Moravian principles, though judging the evil at Plymouth, thought the mode wrong from the beginning. See Part I.] Now I do not believe these six had the least concerted among themselves their appearance that evening. Nobody suspected it. It was a hand behind moved the springs: first, the enemy, I

believe, to destroy; but, behind that, I believe, God, to approve and vindicate the cardinal principle— that the church must judge evil if it comes before it, or that it ceases to be the church before Him, must prove itself clear—and to shew Himself with them in it however weak. This God has done in mercy in the midst of our weakness: a far more important thing than any individual case.

122 I do not speak of all as clamorous. As to several, there was nothing to object to in manner.

123 Mr. W., though there, from circumstances, took comparatively no active, part in it.

124 I press this point, because it is the tact of those who labour to discredit the saints in London to make it appear, first, that Mr. N. was cited to London. He was not. He was in London. Even then the brethren took no step. He proposed to satisfy brethren. They said, when it was communicated to them by Dr. C, “If we let this pass, it will be as if he was ready to clear himself, and we would not hear him”; and they thereupon took it up. Secondly, the “Reasons” seek to make it appear that the saints in London applied themselves to the charges in question at Plymouth in 1845: as to which Mr. N.’s friends think they can allege a previous examination. This is wholly without foundation— an unworthy attempt. The brethren referred to the whole case, “considering before the Lord the unhappy circumstances that have arisen among us.” Mr. Newton brought it in his answer to the two charges at Plymouth; no one at London did.

125 I say two, because it is only the two last which were really charges. Making the existence of the Appendix a charge is ridiculous; and, in fact, it does exist.

126 I judge the sectarianism itself to have been merely a means resulting from the effort to get rid of every one who could have hindered the coming in of far deeper principles of evil in doctrine and walk, which were sought to be established.

127 The date of this is omitted in the Table of Contents, where it would attract attention: it is the only one that is.

128 The brethren D—n and G—h thinking it desirable that all should appeal, it is printed at the close of this.

129 It was said by a most active sister that, if Mr. N. taught what she could not find in the Bible, she should believe it on this ground—that, he being a teacher raised up of God, she should suppose he had found it, though she had not.

130 Innocence would not be a reason for not satisfying the conscience of the church.

131 Though reproof might be called for, and just humiliation, for so refusing.

What Investigation has There Been at Plymouth

If there be one thing more painful than holding those you care for to be guilty of any evil, it is being called upon to do anything which proves them so. I have this consolation that in writing this I do not volunteer. It is well known that the congregation at Rawstorne Street, after many previous steps being taken, declined to receive Mr. Newton at the Lord's table until a satisfactory clearing up of certain charges: their act being grounded on his refusal to satisfy their consciences or to meet them for the purpose. Three brethren, not of Rawstorne Street, who met Mr. Newton on the subject (who did not ask him to meet the saints in Rawstorne Street, but who urged him as he had offered to satisfy brethren to do so in the presence of those concerned, such as myself and others, urging that he could not object to the tribunal as he had offered to satisfy brethren, and all they asked was his doing it in the presence of those concerned in the matters), received a like refusal of their proposals. Mr. Newton's friends have printed and circulated reasons for not meeting the saints in Rawstorne Street: reasons which apply in part to any investigation whatever, in part to the principle on which it should be carried on.

These "Reasons" then I proceed as briefly as possible to answer, feeling that it is due to the consciences of the saints. And I shall confine myself to reasons which apply to any investigation. I have written at large on them in general elsewhere.

The reasons amount to this. The matter has been investigated, and that doubly, and Mr. Newton received an acquittal, and that, besides personal testimonies, by the church of God. And this is the form of the latter. Four persons say they have inquired, and that their acquittal having been communicated to the saints is to be held to be final as the decision of the church of God in the matter. These four persons are Messrs. S., C—w, B., and D.

I shall consider the validity of this under three heads:

The persons who acquit;

The fact of investigation by them, and what they say they investigated;

And the manner of it, which will introduce collaterally the other alleged acquittal.

As to the persons who acquit. It is alleged they were the persons recognized as addicted to the ministry, practically therefore the known guides or elders of the congregation, above all question of partiality, party-spirit, or bias from circumstances, having no concern in it but truth, competent to settle the consciences of the congregation. This is clear. They say (p. 12), “This the church does, we believe, through those of its members capacitated by God for such service.” This would evidently be called for, or it would be a revolting use of the name of the church of God and of the case of His people. Now the fact is, these four were the known partisans and instruments of Mr. Newton; they were and are, as every one knows at Plymouth, his instruments in carrying on his plans. I do not hesitate to say that, had Mr. D. professed to be at that time what he professes himself to have been owned to be, it would have only

excited the indignation or utter discomfort of even Mr. Newton's own friends.132 At that time they could hardly bear his speaking even. As to dear C—w, though I doubt not beloved by many and justly, the idea of his being a responsible guide, or being the person to settle the conscience of the body in a grave matter, is the very last thing that would have entered into anybody's head. Nobody really would have tolerated (unless as submitting to some power they could not resist) the thought of either being in such a place—not even Mr. Newton's friends. As to other spiritual persons, their judgment would have gone and did go very much farther indeed. But one thing is certain, they were Mr. Newton's known instruments.

There was one who was universally looked up to as pastor, who visited and was trusted and beloved, Mr. H. How comes it his name does not appear? Is not this singular in so solemn and public an act as this investigation? There were others, as R.H., S—s, R—e, who used to take a part in what went on. How came Mr. Newton to select the four who were to act in this solemn investigation? Mr. N. did not perhaps recognize the others I have just named; but were those whom he thought proper to recognize133 the proper persons for him to refer his own case to? Indeed Messrs. D. and C—w he did not venture to name on another occasion when he declared who had authority in the gathering; Mr. H. he then did. It may be said Mr. H. was not then ministering. But is not this a serious fact? Why not mention it? Why was he not? The real fact is that, three days before the charges were made, he had declined further ministry because the conduct of Mr. Newton and the chief of these four was so very bad. And Messrs. R—

e and S—s had begged the saints to assemble to know what was to be done to hinder their losing Mr. H. (Mr. R. H. had previously left disgusted). At that very assembly the charges were made.

And then about a fortnight after, Mr. Newton put, it is said, into the hands of these four as the persons regarded by all as the guides of the body, the investigation of his conduct. Further, these four themselves declare to the reader here, that they were implicated in the great bulk of the charges made: not indeed in these particular untruths which were alleged to be told to screen Mr. N. from the other charges, but in the bulk of those which they were about. Did this fit them for binding the church of God by their investigation? Further, the letter whose truth was in question was written at Mr. C—w's request by Mr. Newton, and published or circulated by Mr. C—w. Mr. D. declared that it was at his suggestion Mr. Newton made the additions which constituted the other charge. Further, in the letter of the five134 in answer to the invitation to London they all declare that they in common were charged, and exculpate themselves together from these very charges, veracity and all, which in their "Reasons" they profess to have solemnly examined, as independent persons, Mr. Newton's guilt in, so as to bind the church of God by their decision.

Further, when Mr. Newton was examined by the brethren who came down they appeared regularly135 with him. And this was at the very time they profess to have been making their independent inquiry. I am told he declared he would not appear without them. Are these the persons who are to make and conclude this solemn inquiry so as to bind the church of God?136 At

Plymouth they are and were the known and notorious partisans of Mr. Newton, though Mr. S. was shaken for a moment by what took place. I dare say Mr. Newton asked them to inquire into the matter. But what will others say to such an inquiry?

But did they indeed inquire? It is the first time any one ever heard of such an inquiry by these elders—this only scriptural mode. What is the fact stated in the "Reasons"? "The first step towards such an inquiry was taken by Mr. Newton himself" (p. 3). And what was this? He nominated137 four other persons to investigate the case. Is not this a singular step towards such an inquiry? They ascertain, they say, that two were not facts. Next, as to the other two charges, the only ones I admit to have made then, their assertion is that they were themselves "as thoroughly acquainted as our brother Darby himself could be with" them. And they felt they had nothing to lay before the saints: that is, they knew it of themselves and did nothing. They had been brought by Mr. Newton as his friends to the meeting which gave rise to one charge; and the other rested on a printed document which, it is true, any one can judge of, that can compare it with the MS.

But is it not a strange inquiry to have thorough acquaintance oneself and report nothing? They never came to me. They never came to Mr. H. who had been to Mr. Newton about his untruth, and urged him to suppress the letter, nor to any one else concerned; and subsequently the two facts were admitted. Every one can judge of their value; at least a man's opinion acquainted with the circumstances will prove his estimate of what is honest and honourable and very little else. They state indeed, that they had, in company with

the ten saints who came from a distance, an opportunity of again and again sifting all that could be said on it. Does this look like persons who made an independent investigation? Now this is moreover wholly untrue: they made no such investigation in company. They came with Air. Newton when he was examined; but that is all the company they had unless with those of the ten who were Mr. N.'s avowed partisans. They never were near me with them nor Mr. H., nor I believe, any independent witness whatever. They were known to be charged as accessories.

Indeed had they come alone to me with the pretensions of the guides of the church, their pretensions would have very briefly settled the question. There was not an independent person in Plymouth to whom some of them would have ventured to have hinted such a thing. It is important to remember that the period during which they profess to have made the investigation was exactly that during which the ten brethren were occupied in it, to three of whom and one who I suppose does not profess to guide the church Mr. N. had entrusted the investigation. It is true I left the Lord to order all this matter, and kept quiet; but it is at least singular that I should have been at Plymouth and never heard of a solemn investigation into my charges, which investigation began by its being put by the accused into four other hands than these and ended, being founded on the internal conviction of the four inquirers, with the uselessness of making any report at all.

And now I beg attention to what professes to be the report which in consequence of agitation was thought proper to be issued at a later period as the result of the inquiry. No joint paper issued from the ten inquirers

from a distance. This made people restless. They wondered, if Mr. Newton was so clear of the charges, they could not come to a simple conclusion that he was so. Several of the inquirers had left. Mr. S. was the one, as every one knows at Plymouth, whose family (and I gladly add person) was respected in the town, and who was esteemed by the saints. I believe he has fallen into a deplorable snare of Satan; I think I see how, though I could not expect him to receive any judgment from me now. But he was respected. I think his position was his misfortune: God, I trust, and am sure, will turn it to good sooner or later. He then was individually put forward. He signs a letter in his own name as having by himself come to the conclusion, and offers individually to give information to any; and the three others—one, as we have seen, the person who printed and circulated the accused letter, and the other suggested the questioned addition—back up his individual testimony by cheerfully giving their joint one. Is this the declaration of the result of a solemn joint inquiry as elders and guides of the congregation in their official capacity?

It is added to this that “meetings of the saints in communion were convened at which full information was given,” and Mr. Newton was questioned. What is the fact as to this? There were tea meetings held by invitation every Monday for (I suppose) six weeks, to quiet the minds of those who were dissatisfied (some 150 had left and were meeting in peace, and every tea meeting brought some more out). At these meetings Sir A.C.’s statements, as well as mine, were declared to be false. The reader can easily suppose who were invited, and who were not questioned nor questioners.

This closes by the following, “Now we press very particularly on your regard the fact that this matter has been therefore investigated by the church here, and investigated on the same principles as all such cases are investigated among us, only in a much more searching, protracted, and formal manner.” Perhaps there is more truth in this than in the rest; but it tells a strange tale, though I believe a true one, as to Ebrington Street discipline. But it is a notable example of a verdict debated by those capacitated of God for it, by which the church is to be bound without debate, and which is to be received as closing a case with which the church has dealt.

And now as to the things investigated, page 1 of “Reasons” begins with the main bulk of charges contained in a recent “Narrative of Facts” The investigating ministers were implicated in the main bulk of the charges brought by me; “the only exception138 is in the case of the charges of personal untruthfulness. Of these specific charges our brother Newton is the only object. Now as to these it might be quite sufficient for us to refer you to his own paper, entitled ‘A Defence,’ etc., a copy of which accompanies this paper.” You would suppose these last were the charges of the “Narrative.” Not at all; they are a very small part of them indeed. The inquiry at Plymouth had attracted attention, and people naturally conclude that all this statement about investigation and acquittal treated of in the “Reasons” and Mr. Newton’s “Defence,” refer to the charges which have given occasion to these “Reasons,” and that Mr. N. having been acquitted of them it is unjust to try him again on them. The reader will be surprised to hear that this is not at all the case.

The fact is this, I was called on to give my reasons to the saints why I seceded. In doing this I was obliged to state two particular things as to Mr. Newton, because they had made me cease ministering three months before I left; but I carefully avoided mentioning anything that did not lead to my leaving, and hence mentioned only two things as charges. This roused Mr. Newton, and these charges were inquired into. Lately finding the same course pursued elsewhere which produced such misery at Plymouth, and by the same means, I felt bound to give a narrative of what had passed at Plymouth, and in this six or seven failings of the same kind appear, that is, four or five more graver than the two I had already mentioned. This awakened the attention of many brethren, and, Mr. Newton going up to town and saying one object he had was to satisfy brethren's minds as to these charges, they met this proposal and urged him on the one hand to meet the saints at Rawstorne Street, while on the other, other brethren to whom the matter had been referred—recognized guides—urged that he should meet me and others concerned and have it all cleared up. He refused both, and printed and circulated these "Reasons" for refusing to meet the saints in Rawstorne Street, alleging as it is seen that he had been acquitted: and, to make this available, the "Defence" written in 1845 and read to the brethren then as an answer to the two charges made at that time (I leave out the first two which I disown as charges; I have entered into this elsewhere) is produced as if it were a reply to the charges of the "Narrative" written in 1846, about a year after the "Defence"; which last does not and could not allude to the great bodv of charges in the "Narrative."

And now mark the means. In the sentences in page 1 of the “Reasons” to which I have referred, paragraph 1 speaks of the charges contained in the “Narrative.” Paragraph 3 excepts the other four from “the charges of personal untruthfulness.” Of these specific charges, our brother Newton is the only object. Now as to these the four refer to the “Defence,” and say they have been investigated. One would think “these “were the same as “specific charges”; and the specific charges are certainly those contained in the “Narrative”: but no. They are far enough in paragraph 4 from paragraph 1 to have dropped the “Narrative,” the mind of the reader is occupied (and will be in the tract) with the notorious inquiry at Plymouth, and he fixes on this, quite unconscious that the “these” in paragraph 4 treated of in the “Defence” refer only to a very small part of the “specific charges” in the “Narrative,” of which Mr. N. is thus supposed to be acquitted. The charges of the “Narrative” which were the subject in 1846 are conveniently swamped in the “Defence” of 1845, which did not refer to much more than a quarter of these, and morally a still smaller proportion.

In page 2 they have got farther, and say now we understand your letter to refer only to these last-mentioned charges, that is, of 1845 (assumed to be in general those against Mr. N.’s veracity) and they say they have been already investigated (p. 4) (having paraded them in a materially changed and in part falsified state too), though they begin in page 1 by professing to take up the charges contained in the “Narrative of Facts.”

Now as to the manner of bringing out the acquittal, which leads me to the other alleged one. It is asserted

that all the brethren who came acquitted Mr. Newton. The fact is this, after several had gone, Sir A.C. drew up a paper (signed subsequently by four others) going as far as ever they could in clearing Mr. Newton. This verdict was presented to Mr. N. to see if he would be satisfied with it. This was a strange procedure if it was a direct definite result of a solemn investigation. Mr. Newton declared that he was ruined if it came out and that he would go to Canada. And the statement was withdrawn at his instance. I thought it far the best thing in appearance for him that had taken place, and I stated its existence in the "Narrative" to have my account above blame. Now this statement, rejected by Mr. N. as unfair and ruinous, is that which is said to be the acquittal by these inquirers! It is moreover a singular fact that the person who drew it up published immediately afterwards a tract declaring in italics, "That anything like an open investigation of the charges was positively refused." I perfectly understand this transaction from letters and statements to myself, but it would not become me to explain it here. There is no imputation on any one's uprightness.139 God took care it should come to nothing. But a statement proposed to Mr. Newton, and rejected by him as ruining him and therefore withdrawn, can hardly be now alleged as a solemn acquittal by the ten brethren, five only having signed it, whatever it stated: the person who drew it up having declared subsequently that anything like an open investigation of the charges was positively refused. There I leave that matter. When Mr. Newton had got rid of this by threatening to go to Canada if it came out, then the statement of Mr. S. and the added note of the three was produced, saying that as the brethren had come to no result they had drawn a paper up, and were

going to give it out, entirely clearing Mr. N.; and this withdrawn acquittal, and the clearing which supplanted it, is the complete acquittal of impartial brethren and the solemn judgment of the church of God concurring in declaring the charges unfounded!

The fact is, that nothing more damaged the cause of Mr. N. at Plymouth, or so much, as this very paper, though it is possible some may have been influenced by Mr. S.'s name. And he well knows he got no honour by it. One of the signers of the previous supposed acquittal got his eyes opened by it too. People naturally said these known partisans of Mr. Newton would not have been obliged to clear him thus if other acquittal had not been wanting.

I here close my remarks. I have not touched on the "Defence"; I have read it, I had heard it read before. I have examined anew the two charges I made. I say it with sorrow—I have nothing to retract at all. I have entered at large into my reasons elsewhere and gone into many more facts in a larger statement connecte4 with what passed in Rawstorne Street, and discussion of the church principle avowed in these reasons. I write these few pages for brethren more immediately concerned and unable from ignorance of the facts to estimate the force of the "Reasons."

I have only to add that there was no foundation whatever for the statement as to Hackney. One brother wrote a private note inquiring, supposing a gathering were to propose such a thing or if such another thing were done, would Mr. N. be induced to consent? The brethren at Hackney made no proposition or communication whatever, nor did any one in their name.

The last paragraph may naturally attract. I have only to say, before the rupture, confession and a day of fasting was urged and peremptorily refused. Plymouth should not be made a plague spot of, was the answer; and when ashamed to be refused longer, many can remember what was given out and what passed at it, the bold appeal to God to be strengthened to maintain their position. When Mr. C—n was here, he declared it was useless to attempt to get Mr. Newton to have any humiliation about Plymouth, and they must have it for the church in general.

Finally, I here avow that, if such things as I have gone through are to be tolerated in the church of God, brethren must seek others than me to be associated with them in their walk and labour. I say this as no unseemly threat but for the necessary unburdening of my conscience. I believe that God dwells in His church, and that it is an open and intolerable mockery of Him to speak of the solemn judgment of the church in such conduct as this; such a degradation and prostitution of the name of that which ought to carry the holiness and power of God with it as the vessel of the Spirit, is not to be borne with. These “Reasons” are to my mind a worse sin than the untruth they are meant to cover. I am a poor sinner, the chief of sinners; I have no hope for myself but grace. But I do not see that it is grace to abandon the church to evil such as I believe this to be. This is not the place to parade my feelings: God will judge in a day that is to come, who has had most of such as He approves of (though I am sure I am most poor in His sight). But I love the church of God better than I do any individual. I think I ought to do so.

Further, as to the four who sign this (whose paper, and not Mr. Newton's conduct, I examine here), I am sure some of them are mere misled instruments, though I cannot say blameless in it. I believe one alone to be the author of it, and (whatever grace may call for, and in it we are called to be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect, and we have a double reason for this as ourselves sinners) he must expect I should act upon the ground of that which I believe.

I again press upon the reader that this is no volunteer of mine. The brethren in London felt unable, especially in the absence of Mr. Newton, to enter into the merits of the case. They declined to receive him till he cleared it up. The four chose to circulate and publish their reasons for his refusal to do so, and sent these by post to all the saints they could, and gave them away at the tract shop in London. They cannot complain of the publicity of the matter.

In result, the alleged acquittals are, first, a testimony of four persons who declare elsewhere they were jointly accused with the person acquitted: and secondly, a paper suppressed by Mr. Newton, because it ruined him.

132 I dare say it may be different now that the party is formed; I speak of what every one knew to be the case then.

133 I beg attention to this, as the principle when Mr. N.'s views become fully known is exceedingly important as well as the propriety of it.

134 That is, these four and Mr. Newton.

135 On one occasion, I am informed, Mr. D. was wanting.

136 The following is Sir A.C.’s remark on this point in his published tract: “Who are the rulers in this case first to investigate and then to lay the evidence before the body? They are the principal persons charged with the things complained of,” though it is not really evidence but their decision.

137 They never were nominated though I supposed these four might be. Nor is it said in the letter to me to report to the church, as stated in the “Reasons,” but merely report. This with Mr. N.’s views is a most material difference. It did not mean “to the church.” I urged in my reply that it ought to come before it. The answer was, it was not “a question of conscience to be referred only to the church of God,” but “a simple question of evidence to be best dealt with by a few competent persons.”

138 This professedly refers to paragraph 1, which speaks of the “Narrative.”

139 I do not know after all as it merely clears up Sir A.C.’s act in presenting it to Mr. N. that I am wrong in saying that I have no doubt the original object was to get rid of the charges in order to inquire into the sectarianism. I do not speak of that of all that signed it.

Summary Of The Meetings In London, February, 1847

Introduction

The following account of the meeting which took place in Rawstorne Street, in February, 1847, is evidently not written for brethren dwelling in London, unless they choose to have a record of what took place, as the matter contained in it passed in their presence, and there is no need to recall it to them. It is an account which was actually sent elsewhere, where there was need of it. I give it as it really was, my account of what passed. For my own sake I have however shewn it to many present, so as to make sure that there should not be any material inaccuracy. I am aware that many will object to its being published now. They must allow me to act on my own judgment as to that. Many saw no need in, and blamed me for, many things of the urgency of which they are now convinced. What was necessary for the brethren in London may be necessary for brethren elsewhere. What was said publicly there, can with equal reason be presented to other consciences. The affectation which pretends to more charity than others possess does anything but commend itself to my conscience or judgment. I avow frankly to those who pretend to it, I do not give credit to their pretensions, nor does the pretension do credit to them. Many would wish the question to be confined to principles and doctrines. Though these are becoming daily plainer, I do not agree with them, and this is my reason. I am perfectly satisfied that the persons here in question, over whom I deeply sorrow, are direct instruments of

Satan; that their work is the work of a seducing spirit, to which many may, and several have, given heed. I repeat, of a seducing spirit, of a devil. They are subverting and undermining the truth of God, being unsound on the Person of Christ, on the sufferings of Christ, on justification, on the position and calling of the church, and as to its hope. I know this both by what has been published, by what I have heard myself, and by what others have heard. Every kind of extravagant statement140 calculated to unsettle the soul as to all truth— preached up as deep knowledge, and the whole structure of truth diligently and assiduously undermined. Many souls may be puzzled by this. It may be and is denied, if detected after being taught; all the subtlety and craft of Satan may be in play, and is, to disseminate and at the same time to conceal it. It is the character of heresy to be brought in privily. Every one the least acquainted with the facts of the case knows it is so here. And in general such cases are accompanied by attractive or imposing natural qualities, some of the instruments may be even Christians walking in the flesh. Such was the case in Irvingism. It is not the gift of every one to detect such subtleties, and to be uninfluenced by natural qualities which attract. But God is faithful not to permit His feeblest children to be tempted above that they are able, but will with the temptation give a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it. He gives proofs of Satan’s power, obvious to every soul which does not choose delusion and a lie. Satan is the father of lies, and when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own. God has not permitted it to be otherwise here. I repeat distinctly (and I have additional evidence since I said it before), I do not know one who has embraced systematically this system, that has not fallen into open and systematic

untruth; some of them persons, I gladly add, as incapable of it as any of us, as to their habits as men. But if Satan be using them in the flesh, what can be expected? Why, that the simplest and most unpractised would commit themselves the most. And so it has been.

Now the simplest can understand that falsehood, deliberate falsehood, is not of God. In my judgment, where the matter is brought forward and at work, where the doctrine of Satan is at work, it would be sin and unfaithfulness to withhold the proofs that it is of Satan. It is true this will not be done when it is not called for by the service of God. It only occupies the mind with evil. If some prefer acquiescence in Satan's work to delivering God's people from it, and call that charity, I do not. I have had no scruple in printing for the saints this account. What has been said publicly, before some hundreds, those who have said it are answerable for, morally before all. What grace required to be communicated in London, for the deliverance of saints, is available for the deliverance of others elsewhere. I have omitted the notes of two speeches, one my own, because they did not refer to facts, but merely discussed principles which are not my object here.

I shall add at the close, some remarks141 on two other points, to one of which I have already alluded, for which the present publication furnishes the occasion. We shall find in the examination there entered into, another characteristic mark of Satan, namely, borrowing recognised and blessed truths and using them, perverted in their application or as the means of introducing something, beyond which is not suspected, to subvert foundation truth. I have only to add, as a principle of scripture, if it be a work of the enemy,

“Cursed be the man that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully.”

Mr. D—n, after prayer had been made, opened it by stating in general that it was for satisfying the minds of brethren who might desire it as to what had passed and that the statements made might not rest on the testimony of Mr. Darby, but that they might have the facts from the mouths of those concerned in them—that brethren had kindly come and would answer any questions.

A brother, named M—ws said, as questions might be put, he begged to ask these brethren who had come, what scripture they founded their separation on, and that they would give the particular text. After some delay, no person rising, Mr. Darby rose and said, that as that concerned him as much as the brethren present from a distance, being a principle not a fact, he would answer it, and with very simple passages. “Cease to do evil.” “Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you”—passages that once were thought weighty. He was surprised that it was needful to quote scriptures among brethren now, to prove that it was right to separate from evil.

T.S—s, R.S—s, and Francis L—n, cited different facts to shew that the principles were subverted. Mr. S—s having declared that every honest person in the assembly (at Plymouth) knew that the principles were changed, Mr. A—e took him up and asked whether he meant to say that all who did not admit the principles were changed, were dishonest people. Mr. S—s explained. Mr. F.L—n said, that every one knew quite

well that they were, that those outside the gathering all knew it, and reproached them openly with having given up the principles they professed; and he said boldly, that every honest man in the assembly knew very well they were changed. Mr. S—s confirmed his previous statement.

Mr. H. said he had come up because he felt that in avoiding confederacy they were in danger of injuring brotherly confidence, and that he was glad to meet the brethren and cultivate this; and that he felt bound to give brethren, at any time, one or many, his reasons for leaving Ebrington Street. That he felt it was humbling to himself to do so, as he had been decidedly helping on the evil, and had to accuse himself of want of spiritual discernment, in not seeing that growing up which had caused the trouble; that Mr. W.H.D—n had warned him four years before of clericalism, and he had repudiated the charge. There was an esoteric teaching, as well as a public one, of which he was quite unaware j that it had required the whole weight of the party system to fall on his own head, before he was aroused from the delusion into which he had fallen, for he was quite satisfied they were blinded by delusive power; that he had very much rather any one he cared for was in the Establishment than in Ebrington Street; that the system which was carried on there was the ruin of the public morals of the saints (he did not speak of their private conduct); that there was the pretence really of impeccability and infallibility; that what they held was the truth; that every effort to have any humiliation or fasting had been rejected because nothing was wrong. Mr. H. then entered into a statement of facts, shewing what had led to his relinquishing the ministry there, and

subsequently, when there was no remedy, communion itself. He declared that he was surprised and shocked at the statements in the “Reasons”; that they had destroyed his moral respect for those who had signed them. How could four persons pretend to speak of the principles they had acted on from the beginning, when as to S., he had been converted six or seven years after they began, and Messrs. D. and B. joined also many years after their meeting? As to some of them being persons recognized as guides in the assembly, it was monstrous, he must say unblushing impertinence, etc.

Capt. W. then rose and said, that we surely had enough of this, and that he avowed he rose to change the whole character of the meeting.142 He admitted the evil, but said Mr. Darby ought to have driven it out.

Mr. Darby replied to the principles, and said that Capt. W.’s statements shewed he was ignorant of the facts, and proceeded to reason on these two points.

Sir. A.C. said, he was not surprised at Mr. Darby’s saying he did not trust the brethren, for there had been the greatest want of energy as to the evil. He was quite certain that the power of Satan had stupefied them. He spoke as one who was conscious of having been under this stupefaction, and was yet hardly delivered from it; that, as to the “Reasons” given for not coming to Rawstorne Street, the statement there given was so entirely false, so utterly untrue, that not only he would not break bread with those who signed them, but he could not, much as he loved some of them, as an honest man, as a Christian man, sit down in the same room with them: he could no more own them in the church than the fornicators and adulterers of whom the word spoke.

Next, as to the paper which has been called a verdict of acquittal, Air. T. had recognized that it was no verdict of acquittal, and could not be taken as one. Mr. T. said indeed, that it was so inaccurately worded. The fact was, it was most carefully worded not to be one, and the question left carefully open for investigation by the body. The truth was, they were not in a position to give any. Mr. Newton had refused to make any communication whatever, until they had engaged not to meddle in the affairs of Plymouth. They had been bound by himself to pronounce no decision, but merely inform themselves. They saw Mr. Newton, and his friends twice, and Mr. Darby once, and he felt now they had been quite wrong in not communicating Mr. N.'s defence to Mr. Darby, that he might have given his answer, but they merely questioned each as well as Mr. H. He had originally gone down with reluctance. Lord C. had said to him, when urging going down—Were they to let Darby go on breaking up the meeting? That they must go and put a stop to his proceedings. Such a statement was very uncomfortable to go down with, on an inquiry as to the merits; however he went.

After a lapse of time, he had assembled the ten from a distance, as the time was consuming in desultory visits, and they were doing nothing in common. Mr. N. and his four friends proposed they should meet them, and confer on the state of things—which he had positively refused, and Mr. N. and his friends with him appeared to answer together any questions they had to put. Mr. H. they saw apart. When he objected to the conference proposed, they were not allowed to meet in Ebrington Street, and they had some difficulty in knowing where to meet, but at last did at Lord C.'s. When Mr. R. proposed

to say in Ebrington Street they were satisfied, he said, if he did, he should rise and say he was not. That the brethren having separated, and many being gone, and as stated in the document, every kind of report being rife as to the charges—that Mr. Newton had two wives, and he knew not what, and much excitement prevailing, he felt it a matter of kindness (he now saw how unwise he was) to relieve Mr. Newton as to this. As to the charges, of the things charged there was no kind of doubt; they could not be called in question by any: the matter was added to the letter, and the account in the C—w letter on the testimony of all present was not a true account of the April meeting. It omitted the most essential part. But he had been persuaded by the statements of Mr. Newton, that he had no evil intention in these misstatements. On the suggestion of R. the word ‘entirely’ was put in, and he drew up, and had the letter printed, the four having added their signatures as concurring. However the act was wholly his. Three days afterwards he would not have signed it as to intention. As to this alone there was any expression whatever, and, though he was not here to accuse Mr. N., he must say that in those three days from what came to his knowledge, and certainly now, he would not say so. It was however suppressed, and he felt humbled at ever having done it. But he had most carefully left open the investigation by the body, and called upon them subsequently too to carry it on, pressed it on Mr. Newton himself, who declared that he never would suffer it; that if he, Sir A.C., gathered them, none of Mr. N.’s friends would go, and it should be a party meeting. He had done what he could not now do, and, he believed, ought not then to have done, to relieve Mr. Newton from the reports of every kind afloat; but verdict

on the case there was none, nor meant to be, nor allowed to be, even by Mr. Newton himself. As regarded what Capt. W. had said, both as to the course Mr. Darby had pursued, and the means which might have been employed, it shewed his entire ignorance of the facts, because besides the efforts made by Mr. Darby for many months the means were impossible to be employed, as the intervention of others was positively refused, and the body of the saints not allowed to assemble.

Mr. McA. said that what was to his mind most clear was the direct power and work of Satan already referred to. He had never felt such terror in all his life from any thing moral or physical as when, in communion with God, he had his eye opened to see the work and power of Satan, on the brink of which he was standing. He had been rather disposed to agree with Mr. Newton, till, on going down to Plymouth, he found very decidedly that a party, and not the interests of the church of God at all, were Mr. Newton's object. As to what Capt. W. said, he must say it proved him entirely unacquainted with the facts of the case. He had spoken of Mr. Darby's finding evil, and after a while separating; he forgot that he had gone on many months seeking to rouse the conscience of individuals and the body, and, he judged, had shewn great patience. (Capt. W. rose, and said, Very great patience.) That as to the pamphlets published, he, however painful they might be, was very thankful for them: they had been the means of bringing the matter out into the light, and every one of the brethren had reason to be very thankful for them. In conclusion, he urged the saints to have nothing whatever to say to it, as a distinct delusive work of the enemy which they could not tamper with in any way, without the utmost danger

to themselves. As far as his connection with the facts went, he confirmed the declaration of others as to the entire untruthfulness of the “Reasons”; but he had left very early in the matter, being convinced of the evil, and had only refrained from urging Mr. Darby to go on and act because he thought he was going fast enough.

Mr. N—r said he also had to speak and warn others against tampering with this matter, as a work of Satan. He had done so, he had fallen in a considerable measure into it, he had tampered with it, read the “Thoughts on the Apocalypse,” and been led by them; and he was now perfectly conscious of the delusion of Satan which had been upon his soul. It was Popery; the real pretension to infallibility; the same means used. If any one knew what was published of “Priests, women and families,” it was just that. Many knew what a spiritual director was. Now that was precisely what went on. No books were allowed to be read, but the approved ones and the like. No one could know the system that went on at Plymouth, but one who had been there, and gone through it; and hence he felt too how Capt. W.’s statements shewed his entire want of information as to facts.

Mr. A—le having asked a question of Sir A.C., and it being now ten o’clock, the meeting was closed, and the questions might be answered to-morrow.

The next day, after the brethren had met, and, as there were brethren from elsewhere, had had tea together in the room, A—le said he was quite satisfied, and had no further question to put, and at first the meeting took the form of worship and service. A sister (Miss C), through Mr. D—n, said she had not found it convenient to come

the preceding evening, and therefore begged Sir A.C. to state, whether there had been an investigation.

Sir A.C. went, in a desultory way, over some of the ground he had gone over the preceding evening, and said, as to the charges made, there was no question whatever of the truth of them: that was not in question. What had been said applied only to intention.

Capt. H. said, As to the facts then you, in point of fact, found him guilty, only expressing your opinion at the time as to motives. Sir A.C. said Yes. At the end of the meeting he explained, lest this should be mistaken, that he had at the time meant to go as far as he could in clearing Mr. Newton. Mr. McA. rose and said, that as to the charges made, he confirmed, of his own knowledge, that as to the C—w letter. Mr. N—r confirmed too the truth of them. As regarded the two first-named charges, he confirmed the statement, that they had never been made as such. The words were, as stated (he was present at the meeting), that the first thing that made Mr. D. uncomfortable was the said MS. Sir A.C. said he was aware this had been stated at the time, as Mr. N. now said; but they had told Mr. N. of it, and he declared he had good information that they were made as charges. As to the charges being true, they could not be called in question. Mr. H. stated the same. Someone suggested that supposing, as appeared, the facts were true as stated by Mr. Darby, there might have been no intention to mislead by them. Mr. H. said, he did not understand this kind of reasoning: we must take care in making excuses, not to shake the very foundations of right and wrong, and accustom one’s self to deceit; that for his part he did not understand the argument of want of intention. Mr. Newton had been told that his account

was not just, and alleged it was not his intention to mislead by it. But if so, after he had been informed as he had been by himself, that his account was not true (for the fact was, the statement which arrested the attention of the meeting in April, and gave occasion to discussion and his own objection, was left out), Mr. N. would, when so informed, have ceased to circulate it; whereas he went on and continued circulating the paper himself, so that he could not acquit him of the intention. If an officer of the army, or an attorney, had done what Mr. N. had done, he would have been turned out, or struck off the rolls. It was not well to accustom the soul to these things.

Mr. E.S—r rose and said, he thought sufficient had passed on these points; he felt cavilling at words a very unwholesome thing, when the broad facts were plain to every one, and he felt very strongly that we must take care and not undo and destroy in the souls of the saints the plain uprightness of truth and integrity, and accustom them to special pleading to excuse evil when the plain facts are there.

Sir A.C. then spoke as to the desirable path for the saints, that it was not a restless path of hostility and human effort, but waiting upon God, which would be the resource against this work of Satan.

Mr. McA. concurred in this, but he still called on the saints to remember that, though their minds there were all cleared up, and, in a measure, unanimous on the subject, the conflict was not over: Satan would pursue the work still, and was doing so assiduously; that it was by secret, underhand means, circulation of letters secretly, papers of notes and the like, not communicated

to those who could judge of them; that he urged the utmost decision, and that saints should have nothing to say to this underhand work: while peaceful and waiting upon God, to be as decided as possible to have nothing to say to it, and in unqualified and decided opposition to it whenever it came before them.

Sir A.C. then declared that the statement that he had broken bread in testimony that the charges were unfounded, was entirely untrue: it was quite the contrary. Mr. N—r rose also and said, that as to him too it was entirely untrue; that on the contrary he had resolved not to break bread any more there and had said so, but left before the Sunday came. Sir A.C. on a question being put, on the meetings closing, as to the four having made any investigation, said in reply (but it did not come before the meeting), that there was no need to give any testimony to it, as they had contradicted it in the “Reasons” themselves and said that they acted on their own knowledge, having as much on the subject as Mr. Darby. The meeting was then closed.

There was one at Tottenham at which it farther came out that Mr. N. had told Mr. D—k, when he went down to Plymouth, in the midst of these affairs, and would not see Mr. Darby, that he (Mr. N.) had six or seven names ready to leave and begin on a new foundation entirely; and that Mr. N. had told Mr. D—k that he (Mr. D—k) should act on the principles, but that he need not avow them; the exact date of this last did not appear that I know.

The following has been omitted, by mistake, in its place.

Mr. Henry Y. said, that he had (before Mr. Darby's arrival) been to Mr. H. to press that the principles were subverted, and, the day Mr. Darby arrived, to Mr. Newton. He had urged the fact of the keeping away of brethren. Mr. Newton declared that he had pretty well succeeded in producing unanimity of teaching in agreement with himself in Ebrington Street, and he did not wish to see it disturbed, and expressed his determination to carry on this system. Mr. Y. read an extract from a letter of Mr. Darby to Mr. Newton, fourteen years ago, warning against the danger to which brethren were exposed, and saying that what has happened would, or else they would become a testimony to help on the evil estate of the church, if they ever fell into the course which in fact had been pursued, and urging vigilance that Satan might not bring it in unawares. Mr. A.P. confirmed, in a few words, the fact of the determination taken by Mr. N. to carry through the exclusive sectarian system.

Sir A.C. said in closing, that the tract, "What Investigation has there been at Plymouth?" was the true account of the matter.

140 Thus it has been taught that it will be as much a matter of sorrow to Christ to give up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15), as to have come down into this world of sin. None have a conception, if they have not themselves seen or heard them, of the extraordinary and outrageous statements put forth, shewing Christ to be sacrificed to a notion, to the credit of a system. The difficulty is, that while carefully propagated, Mr. Newton not having put his name, on their being shewn to be frightful they are denied. This has been the case with the notes on the sufferings of Christ, when Mr. N. has

been applied to in private. I leave every righteous mind to judge of the unprincipled iniquity of such a system. In the Lord's mercy he has been forced to publish in his own name. Notes of Mr. Newton's Lectures, carefully drawn up, are circulated with the strictest injunctions not to shew them to others than those to whom they are confided. This was the case with regard to the paper on the sufferings of Christ, since published by Mr. H., than which, for those who can judge of its bearing, it is hard to conceive anything more diabolically wicked. Mr. N. has since published a tract on the sufferings of Christ, pretended by some of his followers to have no reference to Mr. H.'s publication, though the first sentence proves such a statement false. In this of course, such passages as those in the secret notes, which must rouse the sorrow, indignation, and disgust of every one not yet blinded by Satan, are avoided. But the second tract, from its deliberate and careful character, seeking to gloss over the statements of the first, proves, I judge, a great deal more than the first; either a deliberate purpose of subverting the whole foundation of the eternal truth of the gospel, or a total and complete absence of all spiritual knowledge of the very kernel or essence of that truth. I say more than the former, because carefully written to justify and guard his views, referring to what had passed as to the former without a word to withdraw or condemn what ought to revolt the heart of every saint as to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is easy to say he will not answer: he will answer to God if he will not to man. I shall take notice of it farther on, and I entreat the reader to weigh what I have said in this note. I have well weighed it before printing it.

141 These having, though merely hasty notes, for as to me at least promptitude was more important than what was elaborate, extended farther than I thought, I print them as distinct parts.

142 The discussion on the principles and the reply is omitted.

To The Brethren At Rawstorne Street

Beloved Brethren,

Our beloved brother G—e having most kindly come down to me to communicate the accusation brought against me by our brother Lord C, I write a few words that I may not seem to be silent to you, though I could hardly be expected at this distance to be able to be present to state, as I should gladly do, all my path in this matter from beginning to end.

Had not indeed our brother come down, I should have known nothing of it. I have a letter from Lord C. by the same mail this morning in which he says nothing of it. I suppose he had not made up his mind when he wrote. Our brother G—e was anxious I should go up with him; but I have from the beginning declined doing anything whatever in self-justification: it seems to me the path God has marked out in His word. There is such a thing as committing oneself to Him who judgeth righteously. The word speaks of Christ's committing himself to Him who judges righteously, and poor and imperfect as I feel myself when I name that blessed name, I feel that I can so commit it, and that it is the happiest way to do so. Now I feel that my going up would have the character of justifying myself. Besides I am sure the Lord is acting, and I am content to leave it entirely to Him.

Our brother W. is amongst you, and I suppose will be able to acquaint you sufficiently with the facts, though he may be ignorant of some of the earlier ones.

I cannot feel sorry that the matter has been brought before you, though it be a very sorrowful one. If you at

any time require me to come up for your own satisfaction in consequence of not being clear as to the facts, or as to my own conduct, I shall come up at any time at once with the Lord’s help.

I am quite prepared to come before you all, and to state everything from beginning to end. I say nothing here of its being done when I was 200 miles off, for in truth I believe the Lord orders all these things, directly or indirectly.

I have only now to add as to the facts, first, that (though I do not doubt that the teaching has contributed to the result, as was natural) it is no difference in prophecy in the least which has caused me to act as I have done. I had known that difference these ten or twelve years. Further, as to the present state of things. Since even Mr. W. left this, both teaching and facts have made a progress (and I believe in virtue of our acting faithfully and in leaving), which has left no doubt as to the matter, and I have no doubt will progressively make plain and clear the principles which have been maintained and acted on here; so that I have no fear for any single-eyed Christian saint, nor that they will in time justify the path they cannot perhaps now quite understand.

But further, beloved brethren, the Lord has set so plain and clear a sanction, not to be mistaken by our souls, to the path we have gone in—our deliverance and recovery of the presence and approbation of God has been so sensible, beyond anything we at all looked for, to those who have faithfully come out that I do not believe the judgment of all the brethren in England would bring those who have tasted it back again: certainly not me, while the grace of God kept me in my soul in the sense

of it. We acted because we were convinced it was right, and our deliverance and enjoyment has sealed it to our souls. And the character of the work and sifting too in our souls has been so plain that the finger of God is more apparent to me than I can tell you here. I have no doubt (and it is in many respects a comfort to me because it accounts for many an unaccountable act), that there is a decided though I trust very partial power of delusion over the minds of many. Time or another day when every man shall have praise of God will shew whether I am right.

In fine, my brethren, I trust that the explanations that may be given may be sufficient for you. If they are not, I am ready at any moment to give you my answer before those that accuse me. But nothing could induce me, while my soul retains through grace its spiritual understanding and power, to return from the presence of God and His approval, as I enjoy it now, to the darkness and I believe evil which caused it, from which I am come deliberately out, and of which as it had grown up, I never was in spirit, and this I have felt, though it was not so ripened, and that at least three years ago. You ought to be aware that the brethren McA., and Sir A.C., R.H., and H. who are not here with us, could not break bread in Ebrington Street more than myself.

I do not know that they would be prepared to do what we have done. We have anxiously abstained from pressing any one; indeed our feeling has been quite the contrary, fearing any should act without a clear conscience in faith. (Mr. P—r and Mr. C. could not break bread in Ebrington Street either, and were not prepared to do it elsewhere, and therefore left. I do not mention this to justify any one in doing it, but that it is due to you

that you should know it.) We consulted no one but the Lord in our doing so, because it is not merely Mr. W.'s case nor mine you would have to judge, but whether brethren (some of whom had been deprived of the Lord's supper for weeks on grounds which hindered many such brethren as I have named from going to Ebrington Street, and who could not leave Plymouth as they did) should be deprived of the Lord's supper for ever. I do not say this for myself, I am ready to go into all the facts before you whenever you call upon me; I say it for our poorer brethren who are bound to Plymouth.

May the precious grace of God be with you, brethren, individually, and may the Lord give you a right judgment in all things, giving you the power of His Spirit in your souls.

Your affectionate brother,

J.N.D.

For myself I am thankful that the matter has come before you. I have long desired to see you, and been kept here. No one can mistake now the ground I have taken. I should in any case have seen you with joy, but it was well that in your own minds you should be clear in receiving me, labouring among you in mutual faith and the common joy of the Holy Ghost in you and in me, the only source of blessing.

Letter On The Confession Of Error By Some

Beloved Brethren,

Most if not all of you are aware of the existence of certain papers, such as the “Narrative of Facts,” and “Account of Proceedings in Rawstorne Street,” which I have circulated relative to the circumstances which have taken place at Plymouth, and—containing certain charges against different brethren. There was also a “Summary of Proceedings at Rawstorne Street,” which however has not been on sale for some time, and a part also of a notice of the retractation by Mr. Newton which referred to the same subjects, the last144 urging that the confession of error did not set aside the original charges. These with the abridged account, “What Investigation has there been at Plymouth?” are all I recollect which contain or insist on the charges made against the brethren who for a long time supported Mr. Newton, but have now ceased to do so. I write to apprise you that, as regards the brethren who have acknowledged the evil in which they were involved, all these papers are entirely withdrawn, and I do so in order to give the fullest efficacy to the act of withdrawal. If anything remains which has escaped me in other tracts, I beg it to be understood as equally withdrawn as to them. The evil being given up, I withdraw all charges as against them.

And in saying this, beloved brethren, you will of yourselves understand me that, as regards these brethren who have acknowledged the evil, the whole matter is entirely buried and set aside. When God

forgives, He remembers no more; and though it be not a question of my forgiving, for I take it as no wrong done to myself, yet as on confession God forgives, so our part is then to act in full love. I desire also further to explain some points respecting it. I have withdrawn the tracts from sale because (as far as confession has been made) I desire to give the plainest testimony of my putting it all aside. It is this which makes some explanation necessary; because, where confession has not been made, all remains as it stood.145 Further I wish it to be distinctly understood that my judgment of the evil is entirely unchanged unless it be to think still worse and worse of it. But so far as others have judged it too, I consider them as free from it as I am. If in anything even I found any evil influence remaining unconsciously where sincere confession has been made, it would not remain in my mind as a charge, but as any other evil in myself to be corrected.

Brethren at large will excuse me for saying that, so far from judging more lightly of the evil, I think the moral tone of their judgment has not yet been brought to judge it as they ought, and I fear and feel anxious as to their own position before God in this respect. I judge they owed it to God, and that it was want of moral tone on their part—their not judging it much more simply, and I fear the Lord may yet have it in a measure as a controversy with them. They ought to have forgotten persons more for the Lord’s sake in the matter. I do not speak now of the brethren who have confessed it, but of others. Of course there are exceptions. I beg to press this on their consciences. Further, as to the time of withdrawal, up to the Bath meeting it would have been out of the question withdrawing anything.

On the confession of doctrinal error I had proposed, trusting the Lord was working, to go through the matters charged with those concerned in them, and, as I hoped all would be satisfactory, say so and leave it. This all did not agree to, and an opportunity was claimed of proving my charges unfounded and false. That was no time for me to withdraw them; it would have been unworthy of any one to do so. The Bath meeting was accordingly held, where my statements were thoroughly sifted for two days in the presence of brethren from various parts, and everything that could be thought of in them, by those who objected to them, sought to be invalidated. Those who were present know that the attempt entirely failed. My statements were fully substantiated. After what passed there, I am entitled to consider them as indisputable in everything affecting the substance. Only I add that, if any one shew any personalities in the “Narrative” so often accused as written in a bad spirit, I shall gladly retract them, no matter against whom: while indignation against the evil I do not.

Any supposition of withdrawing on my side these papers because other parties had withdrawn theirs, as if it was a personal question and controversy, I repudiate altogether, or concession on one side met by concession on the other, and (I am bound to add) so did Mr. S. It would be in my judgment an immorality in a question of right or wrong. Further, I do not admit that, having a matter to prove, I made the worst of things. I did nothing of the kind. On the contrary I omitted everything that made against individuals if it did not bear on the general point. I refused all through to search out any evil. I acted on what the Lord thought fit

to bring before me. A long course of small circumstances often proved more than anything what was going on. I was quite aware of the difficulty this put in my way. I faced it with my eyes open because I trusted God, and never allowed myself to put in any evil that merely dishonoured persons without bearing on the public facts in question. Further, without pretending to have been perfect in manner or in anything, I never had any other motive whatever in publishing the “Narrative” but the good of the church of God; had I, I surely should not have done it. I was as fully aware as I am now of all it would bring upon me. I did so because it was attempted to introduce the Plymouth evil system into a district where there were a large body of newly converted souls; and, as it was thus active, I felt the saints must know what it was. A considerable time had elapsed after matters had closed at Plymouth.

And I beg to repeat that instead of approving or acquiescing in the judgment of those who would speak of concession, or retracting when others retract, I judge such a thought as proceeding from a very deplorable state of mind and low tone of moral judgment, though perhaps in some cases from want of courage. But on the other hand I beg to say or repeat that as regards those who have confessed the evil, they are as free in my mind from every charge as I am myself, and I should meet them everywhere and at all times on this ground. I consider the whole thing entirely at an end, and I thank God for it with all my heart and rejoice more than I can say to receive them in cordial brotherly love; and I beg as to the past to recall as a relief to their hearts and others, how often even in what is now withdrawn I referred to Satan’s power as taking away the imputation

of evil motives, and even mentioned some by name as esteeming them just as honest as myself, however deluded. So I did and so I do. I do not doubt God has seen other things in me for which He has mixed trial, and so far chastisement (however tenderly, which it surely has been in every way), with this; but in this matter I am conscious of no motive and no principle but one, and can honestly affirm I have never had one unkind or vindictive feeling towards a single person.

I have contended against evil and Satan's work with all my best energies. I shall with God's help continue to do so wherever I meet it with the same or increasing decision. I have recently informed the brethren of Bethesda Chapel in Bristol, that I should not go there as they deliberately received those who have been engaged in the evil and have not renounced it. I rejoice with my whole heart and shall still do so as to others when any are delivered from it.

Further, as to the time of withdrawing the tracts, after the Bath meeting it is well known I was in Dublin at another, which left no time for thinking of this point. Subsequently, though urgently occupied, I did; but it was uncertain whether there would not be a meeting at Plymouth for those who have left Ebrington Street lately, and Mr. H. fell dangerously ill, and I thought it better to wait and let all this have its full course on one hand, and on the other I preferred fully weighing the whole position in which things were. I was in conflict with the power of the enemy in this matter, and I felt I ought to do nothing rashly which would compromise matters. It was a serious thing, and my withdrawal of any charges against some was complicated with the position of others who had not confessed. And I was perfectly

settled in my mind that it should not have even the appearance of withdrawing my paper because others had withdrawn theirs, as a personal matter. It never was such nor will be, the Lord helping on my part. I felt it ought to be done as a matter of spontaneous unreserved grace, which in us is but justice so to speak when the occasion for it arrives. I have come to the conclusion of withdrawing all from sale that they may not be outstanding against those who have confessed. Those who possess the tracts will consider all contained in them to be wholly void as regards such.

This leaves the facts and moral judgment on them untouched as regards those still in the evil or who have not confessed it: save that, after what has passed, they are doubly warned. Anything which is a duty to God as regards them can be equally done when called for, though the tracts are now withdrawn. But in saying this I am anxious that it should be fully understood that I do not mean by it to modify in any way the complete and total withdrawal of the papers as regards the beloved brethren who have acknowledged in simplicity the evil. What I do in this, I do as thoroughly as possible.

J.N.D.

144 I have withdrawn this tract from sale as containing charges all of which I now bury. The great body of the tract (which is a discussion of Mr. N.’s “Statement and Acknowledgment of Error”) is maintained in its full force, and I should use as heretofore.

145 Having been forced to look over many of the tracts in consequence of inquiries made of me by persons whose minds were opening, I feel the character of the facts demand that this should be understood very

distinctly; but in saying so I wish it of course equally to be understood that it would be my joy to be able to withdraw everything as to all. It is merely their standing out against the confession and holding fast to the evil which maintains any charge.

Letter Of Acknowledgment As To Plymouth

London, November 23, 1853.

Beloved Brethren,

Now that excitement and discussion are over, I desire to state, feeling that God leads me to it, the one point in which, in my own judgment, I may have erred in the Plymouth matter, and in which, in my own mind, I have not the consciousness that I was led of the Spirit of God. I do not mean that any one more spiritual might not have done better, nor do I mean to refer to any general want of spirituality or holiness which might have occasioned the weakness which allowed the evil to arise, or failed to meet it. I speak of the historical facts, in one of which I have felt I might have acted otherwise, and which now, to have my conscience entirely clear before my brethren as well as before God, I desire to mention.

Those on which I have been attacked by others have never reached my conscience at all, as having any ground whatever so as to affect me before God. It was this:—Mr. H. was absent at the time I left Ebrington Street. He had, and so had I, the greatest dread of anything that might seem a confederacy or party; so that we acted quite independently one of another. Before he finally left Ebrington Street, he found it to be in such a state that he refused to minister any longer. I think it was while he was absent that he announced this, but I am not sure. However, he did take this step, and before he left the meeting. Just before his return I left it. Now what I judge might have been done by me was, to await

the effect of his resigning ministry there. I cannot now say whether I knew of it when I left or not (and in fact his doing so produced no effect whatever) but leaving before his return (just about when he refused to minister), the effect it might have produced I could not act upon, supposing I did not know it; still, if guided of the Lord in that point, I might still have been there, the effect of which I cannot tell.

I have sometimes said that the only point on which I had not the consciousness of having God with me was one others knew nothing of, but I never felt led to enter upon it until now. Brethren were occupied with other points and excited; and the attacks made on me, as I have said, never touched my conscience or judgment at all. It was not their pressing staying in Ebrington Street that affected me: God forbid I should have done so if it remained what it was! God, I doubt not, set it wholly aside because of what it was, and so far sanctioned my path, and His judgment suffices. In all the rest of my path there, I exercised as far as I know, unwearied patience in the midst of evil, seeking their good: but the feeling of avoiding confederacy, and acting each for oneself, which indeed H. was very jealous of, may have hindered my waiting to see the effect of H.'s movement. I cannot now recollect whether I knew of his act; but God knew of it, and, if guided of Him in this point, I should have had the benefit of His knowledge.

As to the evil to be dealt with, of that I have no enfeebled feeling now. My apprehension of it then was not wrong. But I state for His glory and my own conscience' sake, where I could not securely say I was acting in the Spirit, or that the flesh had no part. I add

nothing as to subsequent matters. My judgment as to Bethesda is unchanged.

Affectionately yours,

J.N.D.

P.S.—It may be well to add that, as regards my own path, weeks before I left I had put the difficulty that pressed upon me before the whole body of saints, and then waited many weeks to see if they would take it up; but they did nothing. And one wrote to Mr. H. to say that I had brought it before them, but that nobody paid any attention to it. After my leaving, and Mr. H.’s return when he met all the saints, I met all that would come at their request; but a very large number were diligently prevented attending.

My letter refers to the single point of the possibility of the effect of Mr. H.’s refusing to minister. It did produce none; but I had left before that was seen.

Indifference To Christ: Or Bethesdaism

Extracted from a Private Letter

As to indifferentism, take a case: Socinian blasphemies against Christ are concerned. If you insist on walking in communion, helping others to go there, though not holding Socinian views and believing them to be a denial of Christ, you thereby maintain constant regular communion with them, not for yourself only but for all Christians; for, as it is no personal right, there must be equal liberty for all with yourself. Thus general communion with Socinians as a body should be an allowed path in the church of God. It is no question of opinion or way of dealing with the evil, but of the existence and standing of the church of God, which is nothing, or the pillar and ground of the truth as to Christ. The question is as to the church's path: is it to acquiesce in principle in all her members having communion with the deniers of the Lord and her too? This is indifferentism as to Christ.

When one asks for scripture for not being allowed to walk if he please—it is his opinion—in communion with those who deny the Lord, insensibility to Christ's glory is there, unable as I may be to convince you of it, I am clear enough to act on it before the Lord. We are so entirely opposed in first principles as to what Christ is, that further inquiry is needless. I have no thought of walking with those who think the church means communion with blasphemies against Christ. If the application of the principle to Bethesda, because they are Christians, is challenged, let it be noted that the

other principle (namely, that it is a question of an opinion as to a line of conduct) is false as a general one. It is a question of the ground the church of God Stands on: only it is urged that we have no right to apply to Bethesda, the true principle that the church of God ought not to allow universal communion with blasphemy. The question then is, whether in this particular case the principle is rightly applied; not whether individuals are saints, but the public walk of the church.

Now the public conduct of Bethesda has been indifference to blasphemies against Christ as the ground of communion, voted by the whole body and signed by the labouring brethren. They recite some of the blasphemies, so that they knew them to be such, receive persons who came from, and declare they are and will continue to be in communion with, the bodies where these blasphemies are taught and were formed by and for the teacher and defender of them. I will not inquire of them whether they hold them or not. In point of fact some, if not all, did hold them and were active in propagating them. Their teachers declare that, if these principles are not accepted, they will not minister any more, and the body vote them right. They do this in spite of remonstrance on every side, where the blasphemies were confessed and known, defended by their author, and confessed by those delivered.

The real question then is: Is the church of God to accept communion with blasphemers of Christ as a principle, and whether individuals are to be allowed to impose on the church their judgment and walk, which affirm it should do so? Bethesda has as a body declared that her principles are that, when she knows blasphemies are in question, she will in spite of all Christians receive those

involved in them. You choose in your private opinion to justify, that is, to identify yourself with her, and dare the church to reject you. My answer is, you are in the worst kind of sin—worse than any act of sin when you do it deliberately, as you avow. Do you require scripture to shew the church should not receive blasphemers of Christ's Person? Bethesda has done so deliberately and in principle. You think right to identify yourself with Bethesda; that is, you will sin, you claim the liberty to sin if you have not done it, and require the church to admit you with this claim (that is, to put her sanction upon your sin by receiving you knowingly into her communion). The church is guilty of it if she does, and ceases to be a church at all, for the church of God is not the deliberate sanction of sin. It is true that many had become so lax, that common action was in certain cases impracticable, and individual faithfulness was called for and the reproach that always accompanies it incurred.

If scripture be soberly required to prove that saints should not be indifferent to blasphemies in their public walk, "Cease to do evil," would be enough; "From such turn away," "Him that bringeth not this doctrine, receive not into your house." Can I in spirit more effectually sustain and help such doctrines than by receiving into communion those who are in them and support them, and actively in spite of remonstrance on all sides? Bethesda has done this.

Mr. M. declared that Mr. J.L.H. had done a work of darkness, and maintained to the full their letter which justified their reception when he well knew what the doctrine was. All I did was to write and visit them till he refused to receive me as a brother. J.E.B. and R.C. went in vain. They preferred thirty or forty brethren leaving

them to breaking with these blasphemers when they knew them. Now no brother has a right to force God's church, for that is the real matter, to acquiesce in such a course. We had broken with these persons as blasphemers: do you need scripture to prove that right? Bethesda receives them, thereby saying, you shall be in communion with them. I say, No, I shall not, and I will not go to you more than to Compton Street. You shall not force me to communion with sin because you choose to receive it into your bosom. You deliberately say, I am one with Bethesda, and you will force the church to be in communion with them; for if I receive you I receive all; and if so, why not go there and put my name and vote to their act? I refuse to acquiesce.

You speak of your opinion and mine. Am I, is the church, to be in deliberate communion with the denial of Christ? If unable to convince others of sin, I will not walk in it, but cast myself on the Lord without fear, and take a fresh start in the principles I always held and acted on, that Christ and blasphemies against Christ were never meant to be together, and the church. It is an opinion I must act upon. I suppose nothing. It is or at least was deliberately decided at Bethesda, that blasphemies should be admitted. I call this indifferentism to Christ. What other name could I call it? Some weighty reason is needed for such a separation, and it is but fair dealing to say what it is. You identify yourself with this avowedly; for communion is identification with the ground of the meeting. Hence you are guilty of the same sin. You talk of rejecting the doctrine; but if there is any difference, this makes the matter worse, because you know the evil of it, and help it on by receiving it into communion. You can hardly require scripture to prove that church

communion does not mean that Christ and blasphemy of Him should be together in principle, even if the people be Christians. But this is the deliberate conduct and status of Bethesda. You will say they deny it: I do not ask them, because they have signed, voted, and acted on it.

I have no doubt that in Thyatira is the Spirit's picture of popery. Do you think people should continue in that? I do not enter into the Seven Churches, because adducing such passages of obscure interpretation to judge the path of plain separation from plain iniquity, is at once condemnation of those who do so, but as you do, I ask you this: do you think you should remain in Laodicea to be spued out of Christ's mouth? It proves too much and therefore nothing. You must not be surprised if others decline principles which lead to such a course.

Bethesda has received blasphemers and laid it down as a principle; and they are according to scripture partakers of their evil deeds, as are others who boast themselves clear. It is, I think, the grossest indifference to the honour of Christ I ever met with. That is no light word. It is the pith and gravamen of the whole matter. You would force me into acting on your principle and Bethesda's. I see too clearly what the meaning and effect of my act would be to hesitate a moment, however I may grieve. I may walk alone, I am not the first. I began alone, but will not join in what I believe and see is slighting the Lord. It is the principle of indifference to the doctrine of Christ that such blasphemies are to be uninquired into, so that communion with them is legitimate; that is, that the church of God is not the pillar and ground of your truth. Once accept that (and accepting you is accepting it), and the whole standing of the church is gone.

Let the question be fairly put and inquired into: Has or has not Christ been blasphemed, and the blasphemy deliberately smothered up, and thus Christ slighted and dishonoured? If the answer be, Yes, do you mean to say that I ought to go on in communion with this?

The Church Which Is His Body

A Letter on A.R.D.’s Few Thoughts as to the Position of Saints Gathered in the Name of the Lord My dear Brother, Somebody has sent me A.R.D.’s tract. It produces upon me the painful effect of one who has learned a great many truths, but has not the centre which binds them together: they have not been inwrought into his conscience to meet the need of his soul. It is a speculation, but a speculation upon holy things. It may meet acceptance where the mind shrinks from a faithful walk, or perhaps puzzle those who are ignorant of scripture, but much more those who are afraid of subjecting themselves to the bonds of truth. But one soberly exercised in scripture must be surprised at such a production, or a clear mind with such a mass of contradiction. It is arbitrary in its statements, which do not even hang together, and slovenly to the last degree even in small things.

In the first paragraph, “the assembly” is the only expression to be used; in the second, “a temporary purpose” is “to be fulfilled by the church.” And here is one of the eggs of “the nest of errors” in the word [“church “]. Is this “the one body of Christ risen and ascended”? No; in that sense “the assembly has no true position on earth at all,” yet we are told a purpose was “to be fulfilled by the church pending its completion,” that is, of course, the completion of the body of Christ composed of the all of paragraph one. The members were to “constitute a manifest assembly on earth.” “It is in this character it”—what?— “is spoken of in 1 Timothy 3:15, as the house of God.” It must be the church, the

body (not complete, of course), which is thus the house. Thus a temporary purpose was to be fulfilled by the true body of Christ (that is, the part which is on earth), that of being the house of God. It was the church, the body, applied to a temporary purpose on earth, where it has no true position at all. Yet it is already in this paragraph the “professing church.”

Now on this point the tract turns; and, if we keep it in mind, the consequences will be found, the natural consequences of this confusion, though inconsistent with it. Already in this same paragraph, in a phrase excessively loose in expression, we are told that “as to their responsibilities, the members of the body together on earth, or in any particular assembly, are looked at as the body,” 1 Cor. 12. First then the body is the instrument for fulfilling the temporary purpose of a manifest assembly on earth; and secondly, as to their responsibilities, the members on earth are looked at as the body. Now the whole tract is to shew that the assembly on earth is the only unity we have to do with (though apostasy has for us set this aside), and to distinguish it carefully from the body. And, secondly, already the members on earth, as to their responsibilities, are looked at as the body, though that body, as the body of Christ, has no true position on earth at all. What its responsibilities are, if it has no true position, I am at a loss to know.

I shall be told the first paragraph speaks of an “aspect” of the assembly. Well, and what means “looked at as the body” but its aspect as the body of Christ? No, this passage is an effort to get rid of, in seeming to allow, the force of a passage that stood terribly in the way of A.R.D. These saints are addressed as to their

responsibilities as the body; and the whole object of the tract is to shew they are not, and cannot act on any such. And A.R.D. knows very well, and (if I mistake not) has a theory formed for the occasion, that what is there spoken of “as the body” is no doubt in a certain sense a particular assembly, but withal “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I will speak of the ruin. But we have the whole church of God, a particular assembly especially in view treated in its responsibilities as the body. The assembly, in which the apostles and gifts of healing on earth were set, is treated as the body of Christ. And, note, it is so truly the church, assembly, and body on earth, that when I think of being members of Christ in heaven (for a body in heaven is never spoken of that I can remember), there can be no responsibility at all. We are perfect in Him.

As to their responsibilities then, the body is and can be only looked at on the earth; and as to their responsibilities, A.R.D. tells us they are looked at as the body—I suppose therefore are to act in these responsibilities, and to look on themselves as to their responsibilities as the body. If this be admitted (and I am taking A.R.D.’s statements), his whole tract falls to the ground unless he denies my responsibilities because of the ruin (a most antiscriptural principle, letting us off by our own wickedness); or invent some other kind of responsibility besides that which he himself tells us scripture teaches.

But I will go into a little more detail. We find that the body of Christ is spoken of abstractedly without reference to place; and this is but twice; as for example, Ephesians 1, “to the church which is his body, the

fulness of him that filleth all in all." Whenever any place is spoken of, it is invariably and exclusively spoken of as on earth. So utterly unfounded is the assertion that it has no true position on earth at all. I should not have made any difficulty as to saying the church, as in Christ, is viewed in heaven; because universally we speak of a whole as meaning all its parts. But when a great system of doctrine is founded on an expression, then its inexactitude becomes important. You have only to take a Concordance and verify what I say.

I shall now follow some of the author's statements. The assembly becomes after Pentecost contrasted with the body. This is alike arbitrary and false, but all the argument depends on it. "There are therefore two bonds that bound saints together: first, the body, or rather the one Spirit; and then the circle of the assembly" (p. 7). But this assembly on earth, we are told (p. 3), is spoken of in 1 Timothy 3:15, as the house of God, the pillar and stay of the truth." This assembly, now in apostasy, is what A.R.D. calls always "the assembly," which has its unity contrasted with the unity of the, Spirit, or "the body," which has its unity: the latter having no true position on earth, the former being now inconsistent with the unity of the Spirit (p. 8). Hence as "the body" has no real unity on earth, and "the assembly "is apostate, of course there is no unity at all.

Now I have shewn already that the body, if any place be spoken of, is always spoken of as on earth. Let me add that I defy A.R.D. to cite me a passage where "assembly" is ever spoken of (referring to the professing church, the house, and not now speaking of local assemblies)146 in any other way than as the true, vital, divinely formed and real thing. Christ builds His church. But "assembly"

or “church” is never used for anything else in scripture than what God forms it to be; I do not speak of churches, or assemblies, but of the “church” or “assembly.” It is never used but of the divinely ordained thing. They may shew departure from its right position. A.R.D. then makes the body have no true position on earth; scripture, when it speaks of a place, never speaks of it anywhere else. Individuals are united to Christ in heaven. A.R.D. speaks of the assembly as the ruined apostate thing, in contrast with the body; scripture never speaks of it but as God’s own delight, and as livingly formed of Him.

Such departures from scripture are rather serious in one who sets up to teach us what is our scriptural path on these subjects. His whole view of the matter is, in its foundations, in the teeth of scripture. This would suffice to put the whole tract away as false. But I will examine it more in detail. The excessive looseness makes it difficult to deal with.

“The members of the body together on earth … are looked at as the body; 1 Cor. 12. The assembly on earth then should be manifestly one,” p. 3. This is because “the assembly on earth, or the ‘professing church,’ as it is commonly called, was constituted according to the standard of the assembly, the body.” “Moreover it [the assembly on earth] should consist of all those on earth who are members of the body, (except of course, where any might be outside in discipline).” Now this is a mere arbitrary statement of A.R.D. That the limits of both were the same at the beginning, we may well allow; but the principle is an invention of A.R.D.; if not, let us have scripture for it, if he makes the assembly and the body

distinct, for which also he has no ground. Scripture says, “the church [assembly] which is his body.”

But to proceed: “God took care to provide all that was needful for the assembly to fit it for its place, and to accredit it in that place” (p. 4). Now we are to remember this is not the body. “Its place is here on the earth; the body has no true position there.” The gifts were not to accredit it in heaven, I suppose; if they were, then the place of the assembly on earth is in heaven. Yet, “In Ephesians 4, we have enumerated the gifts of the ascended Christ with a view to ‘the edifying’ of his body: that is, the fulfilment of the heavenly purpose as to the assembly.” Now the fitting for its place is not on earth. But (not to dwell on this confusion) where was the body, when it was edified? The convenient expression before was the assembly on earth constituted according to the standard of the assembly, the body; but now we find it is the body itself. But the truth is, unless the assembly be taken as the Epistle to the Ephesians does for the body, “the assembly which is his body,” there is not a word about the assembly here at all. It is in vain to say it ought to consist of the members of the body. It is not spoken of here; nothing is spoken of but the body. They were to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. There is one body and one Spirit. The gifts are given till we all come in the unity of the faith—that we be no more children tossed to and fro, but grow up to Him who is the Head, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Now where was this? Every one in his senses must say, on earth. Where then was the body? On earth, to be sure. Was it the one body of Christ risen and

ascended? Clearly. The gifts came down from Him there. And what is the fitness? and for what place? The whole passage speaks of earth. I have quoted the parts which shew it. The growth is on earth, the things to be secured against on earth, the responsibility on earth, the object of the ministrations on earth. No doubt we shall finally be in heaven; and all ministrations are in result in view of that. But, as I have said, the body, if spoken of as anywhere, is always spoken of as on earth when addressed, because it was on earth. It is never spoken of as in heaven, and there is (to give no other than that referred to by A.R.D. in the first paragraph, but of which he did not see the force) the plainest scriptural testimony that the body is there treated as on earth. The body is formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and of course formed on earth; and though I do not doubt that that which is the body will be in heaven, the body and heaven are never connected together, because it is formed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. The passage which now occupies us (Eph. 4:16) is as plain as possible as to this.

A.R.D. next quotes 1 Corinthians 12:28. He could not help doing so. Let us see if this is the body of Christ, “the one body of Christ risen and ascended”; and next, whether it “has no true position on earth at all.” I read, “For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body … but now are they many members, yet but one body … now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” He had spoken of the gifts (vv. 7-11) as the display of the Spirit in the various members, while the body was one, and he now

closes with a general list of them (v. 28). “And God hath set some in the church [assembly]; first apostles,” etc. Now this is clearly on earth; there are no healings in heaven. It is by the baptism of the saints into one body, in the various members of which the gifts are exercised. And note also (to do this the more completely, and bring general Christian responsibility in), the apostle includes in the beginning, “unto the church [assembly] of God which is at Corinth … with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” The distinction of the assembly and the body, and saying the body has no place on earth, is a mere fable. Responsibilities are in the body, mutual, and universal, and necessary. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.

There is a distinction between the house and the body; the former, the habitation of the Spirit; the latter united to Christ. But in the house there is not at all the same responsibility, there is in building it (1 Cor. 3); there is in public common confession of the truth, and, when a great house, individual responsibility to have done with evil in it; but all proper Christian responsibilities as such are wholly as members of the body on earth, and in connection with the unity of the body. We are members one of the other; we are to keep the unity of the Spirit. But our author tells us, “I have said that unity and purity ought to characterize the assembly.” Is the assembly here in contrast with the body? A.R.D. has said, it “ought”; but plain people want something more than “I have said” for their consciences. However he has said (p. 4), “it should admit no others” but those who are members of the body. But when I look for something from scripture in the tract, or in my own search into it, I find no more than “I have said.” But again, where has he

found that the assembly “admits”? I find nothing of it. I find Philip and many other individuals baptising others, which I suppose was admitting as far as there was any such admission. But a duty of the assembly in admitting it would be very hard to prove, still less admitting members of the body. In the first place, save Cornelius perhaps, they were not members of the body till after they were admitted. It was not then a departing from Christian iniquity, and seeking to walk with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. There was no admission by the assembly and no question at all of their being members of the body. If there be, A.R.D. has forgotten to shew us any scriptural authority. “I have said” —will hardly furnish us with sufficient authority. There is a statement in this (p. 4) too long for me to quote: “For God committed to the assembly so constituted, endowed and accredited, the responsibility of acting according to the principles revealed in the word for its guidance.” Will our author kindly point out (it is that I seek for in vain here) anything revealed in the word for the conduct of the church then in admitting those already members of the body into an assembly which was not the body?

I do not admit in the strict sense of the word that there is any apostasy of the assembly as yet. No doubt for spiritual discernment the principle of it is there, but not apostasy. But even on any ground, A.R.D. has no scripture for his distinction of Christendom and the assembly as he considers it. Judgment begins at the house of God. Laodicea, which is spued out of Christ’s mouth, is called “assembly”; Thyatira, to which the morning star and the kingdom are substituted, has the name of “assembly.” God’s building may have wood and

hay and stubble in it; God's servant may find his place with unbelievers; the branches that partook of the root and fatness of the olive tree may be removed. But it is remarkable how false principles throw mere activity of mind into confusion. No one pretends that the assembly on earth exists no longer, he tells us (p. 5); he does not mean to say that Christendom is the assembly of God, but he insists that what was once God's assembly has "degenerated into what we call Christendom."

It will be said, I understand, it is an assembly, not God's assembly. Whose then? It was so: when did it cease? Will it not be judged as such? When wood and hay and stubble had been built in it, it is still God's building, God's temple; and on God's house judgment comes, on "that servant"; and there profession is spoken of. If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel? In the great house of 2 Timothy all the vessels to dishonour and honour are —that into which the assembly has degenerated, the vessels are in that. If an assembly exists, it must be that, or they are in no assembly at all, they are not in God's assembly—have nothing to do with it. There is none such —no responsibility connected with it; or are they in another assembly which is responsible? Where is their responsibility as to any assembly if it be not God's? Man has not ceased to be a creature responsible to God because he is fallen and in that sense apostate from God. If the assembly of God has fallen, has its responsibility ceased? and if it be responsible, on what ground is it so? Is it not as God's assembly, though it has ceased to be so really in heart and way? When and how did God's assembly cease to be such as to responsibility as such on the earth?

But the reader must remember that all this distinction of "assembly" and "body," etc., is wholly without scriptural ground. Purging the house never was the duty of saints; it is all a fable, an invention of A.R.D. There is no truth in the apostasy of the assembly. It was commonly used for popery; but that is no ground to go on now, bad as that system may be. I admit we do not purge the house; I admit we do not come out of it. If it was apostate, we could not be in it at all. If it be a house, who is in it? Is it the house without the Holy Ghost in it? Who is the Master of the house where the vessels to dishonour are, and out of which we are to come? Is He the Master of an apostate house? Is it His house if it be apostate from Him? The distinction of the "assembly" and "body" is wholly unscriptural, the statement of the present apostasy of the assembly equally so.

What can I think of a tract in which I find (p. 7), "I have said that one might be a member of the body though outside the assembly," when I read in scripture "the assembly which is his body"? And all the gifts which are members of this body are described as being set in the assembly. I have discussed the grounds of the tract: in page 7 we come to its object; and, I must say, such a complete hopeless mess I never read. First, "there are therefore two bonds which bound the saints together." I suppose this means that at the first there were such. I really take in this the fairest meaning out of the sentence I can. For, it is added, these two bonds still exist. Well, two bonds which bind the saints together still exist. But here we are in a pretty case. It is first "the body," or rather the Spirit, and then "the assembly." Two bonds for unity are curious, particularly as one might be a member of one and not in the other, and in the other

without being a member of the first. But let this double unity pass. But then see where we are. It is a unity of saints, this bond of the assembly; but then not only many of the unity are not saints, at any rate not members of the body, but the assembly is apostate. So that it is unity in apostasy, the saints' unity in apostasy. That is nice, is it not? and they still exist, these bonds.

I should not in a common case have made a difficulty of the next phrase, assuming it to mean right, had it not been made much of, and the grand ground of action, "gathered to the name of the Lord." Will A.R.D. forgive me for not being content still with "I have said," and tell me where he finds this in scripture? No Christian doubts the authority of the Lord, none that Jesus is Lord: it is a distinctive character of such to call Him Lord. But it is a title, as far as I see, of authority over individuals, not a title to which people are gathered. However, if A.R.D. can shew it me from scripture, of course I should bow. But I know of no such principle in scripture.

But our tract puts me farther in the mud here. Page 7 tells me that the unity of the assembly is a bond of the saints, and that this bond still exists; but page 8, that "to manifest the unity of the assembly is inconsistent with keeping the unity of the Spirit." That is, it is so now, and it is now that the question concerns me. So that he maintains a bond of saints still existing, instituted of God, is inconsistent with the unity of the Spirit. Now the body, the only other unity (or that of the Spirit), "has no proper position on earth at all," according to A.R.D. To assert any other than these two is to make a sect, we are told; that is, to have any unity at all is impossible. Membership of a local assembly is a thought characteristic of apostasy. Poor Dissenters! all

characteristically apostate— absolutely fallen away from Christ altogether, without even suspecting it. They are to be pitied.

Then, if the assembly of God at Ephesus admitted a person, “they admitted him into the one assembly of God on earth.” You must not suppose the assembly means the body as scripture always speaks; this is A.R.D.’s assembly. Now, first, there was no such admission by assemblies at all. Next (for the confusion is complete), it was not into the unity of the body he was admitted, but of the assembly of God. Those in the assembly might have been of the body before, or never be of it. It was another bond of unity. This is another invention of A.R.D. Moreover, if false brethren had crept in, if many walked whose end was destruction—in a word, if the assembly was far gone away from the limits of the body, was it an assembly of God, or when did it cease to be so? I know A.R.D. speaks of the apostasy; but when, then, did this take place? I deny altogether that it has, when we speak strictly and truly. And if A.R.D. says it is popery, when did it take place? Is the Greek church in it? When the Protestants broke with Rome, did they continue in the apostasy, or remain in it? The whole reasoning is founded on one false statement heaped on another, so that it is hard to know where to begin.

The idea of a local assembly admitting a person into an assembly of God on earth which was not the body, is composed of as many unscriptural statements as it has notions in the sentence. But this is the basis of the practical part of the tract. There is no unity in the scripture, as a fact, but the unity of the body, or assembly as the body; no church admits to it—no gathering admits to it; we arrive at it by the baptism of

the Holy Ghost, which regularly comes after baptism by water. As far as it has any meaning, A.R.D.'s principle is independency. Nor does he deny it, but says he might retort that the other principle (that is, of seeking unity in the assembly now) is Popery in germ. But independency is, according to him, characteristic of apostasy (p. 7). Besides, see again what he has brought us to. Any attempt at unity is, according to him, the manifestation of the unity of the assembly (p. 8); now inconsistent with that of the Spirit; it is in principle popery. But the assembly on earth, we are told (p. 8), should be manifestly one—that is, should be manifestly popery. We are getting on nicely.

But, in all soberness, what is proposed to us is essentially Congregationalism. They admit them as members of God's one assembly on earth; they receive, they say, all Christians; only they hold that each congregation is to act on its own responsibility, and as subject to the Lord only. They would receive on a testimony from another assembly of honourable fellowship into communion with themselves: only each assembly must purge for itself, and by itself. They do not pretend to be the assembly of God, they only claim to be saints who have been baptized by the one Spirit into the one body of Christ, and who, in separation from evil, are gathered in the name of the Lord. There is not a word of the tract on this point which they would not take into their mouth. The last fines of page 10 would be just their language and practice. Nor could they profess to act in discipline towards those not gathered with them. The tract merely and simply pleads for independency, but independency without putting out for sin. And remark here that, if I only exercise discipline on those gathered

with us, the principle of strict membership is fully established.

As regards discipline, A.R.D.'s theory is equally confusion. He tells us, "the principle on which saints should act in relation to evil is to 'purge themselves' from it, and not to seek to put it out of the assembly." Of course the direction of the apostle, "Put out from among yourselves that wicked person," falls to the ground. "Before apostasy … the duty of saints was not to separate… but… to put out the evil, and keep the assembly pure." Now, they are "not to seek to put it out of the assembly" (Note to p. 6).

Now I reject the whole system as unscriptural, as already shewn. But of two things one: either they are to put it out of the gathering which is not the assembly, or they are not. If they are, then we have a voluntary association and membership as the sphere of action, which A.R.D. tells us is characteristic of apostasy; or, if not, we have membership of a voluntary association without any possibility of putting it out. We are told [in the same note] that "to make this principle an excuse for allowing evil among saints professedly gathered in the name of the Lord is simply to deny the holiness of the Lord." All very fine; but no one can deny that evil can come in, and, according to A.R.D., we never ought to seek to put it out. All we can do is to go away. That is, it is independency, with the denial of discipline. But supposing an ungodly walking member of Christ's body comes where one of these precious gatherings which must not seek to put out evil is assembled, and wishes to be of it, what is to be done now? not let him in? Here you are doing the same thing. You can shut him out—not put him out! Or are you to let him in, and then walk

out yourself, purging yourself from the evil, and leaving the poor gathering in sore danger (if it does not break up) of being in principle apostate, and bound to do so? or is evil to be excluded when it is without, where A.R.D. tells us discipline cannot be exercised, but not within, where it can? We cannot “act in discipline towards any who are not gathered with us”; it is, we are told, so far popery. (See note to p. 10.) Now clearly the person desirous of coming is not yet gathered with us; yet we shut him out. But we must not seek to put out evil when it is within.

There is, therefore, no discipline for those who are gathered, as the negativing of discipline on those not gathered might have led us to suppose. Yet we are told, “a fellow-member of the body of Christ comes in, and claims to be received at the Lord’s table!” … “Our only inquiry is whether they are members of the body of Christ” (why so, let me ask, if that is not the ground of union? There is no end to the contradictions); “and, moreover, whether they, too, are separate from evil” (p. 10). Well, here then is practically judicial discipline exercised. But if the evil is within, it must not be; the scriptural direction, “Do ye not judge them that are within?” is absolutely reversed, and the fact of being gathered, which in scripture gives the ground of judging, here absolutely deprives of it. The fact is, the whole system is a defiance of scripture, and founded on the fable of the unity and bond of the assembly, as contrasted with the body, while yet membership of the body is made the ground of union, not being of the assembly.

Scripture never speaks thus, never speaks of the assembly as contrasted with the body, but on the

contrary it always speaks of the body as on earth, always connects the corporate responsibility of saints with the unity of the body. If the Lord's supper be spoken of, we are all one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf. There is no such thought in scripture as putting out of the one assembly, as contrasted with the body. A.R.D. says all baptized persons were of the assembly. Be it so. People were never put outside baptism; they were put out of communion, separated from the gathered company. They were not baptized over again, but restored to communion, readmitted to the company of gathered saints, where unity was expressed by the Lord's supper; at least so Paul declares. The exclusion was from the body as manifested on earth, and from nothing else. A.R.D. is forced to admit that, as to their responsibilities, the members of the body together on earth, or in any particular assembly, are looked at as the body. Was not judging those within discipline in connection with their responsibilities? Well then, in putting out, the particular assembly was looked at as the body.

The truth is, the whole principle of A.R.D. is an invention of his own, a new theory, not borrowed from scripture at all, and hence every page of his system is false; while some borrowed truths only make it confusion, from his mingling them with his own false principles.

There is nothing about reconstructing the assembly. There is no assembly to reconstruct; the apostasy is not really come at all, though the principles of it may be at work. The lordship of Christ is not the ground of gathering at all. Lordship applies to individual responsibility. The lordship of the assembly is not scriptural, nor the Lord's assembly, nor the lordship of

the body. The assembly (when spoken of as a systematic truth, as A.R.D. does) is always connected with the body. If we meet, and take the Lord's supper, we must meet on the principle of the unity of the body, for we are all one body, for we are all partakers of this one loaf. This is true of all Christians. They are not, properly speaking, admitted at all. Now tests are used rightly, because we are separating from evil in the great house (p. n). But no assembly ever admitted any one, nor at the first were there any tests. But where the unity of the body is manifested, it is what it always was, and never can be anything else, having to act on the principles it always did, as it can rightly act on no other.

And A.R.D. admits the assemblies at first acted in the way he is opposed to, only he has invented his notion of the unity of the assembly to get rid of this plain scriptural truth—truth always obligatory where it can be applied. I cannot apply the rules for tongues, because there are none, nor for Timothy's own conduct, because there is no Timothy. But if tongues returned, the rules would apply. If there are saints gathered in the unity of the body, without any fabled reconstruction of the assembly at all, the rules of scripture for the conduct of such gatherings, and such one manifested body, as far as it is realized, apply. I must beg to prefer scripture to inventions of man and "I have said."

In conclusion, A.R.D.'s notion of the unity of an assembly, a bond of saints distinct from the body, is an invention of his own. Next, he is obliged to admit scripture is so plain, that the members of the body together on earth, or in any particular assembly, are looked at as the body. Hence, as to their responsibilities, they must look at themselves as such. The Lord's supper

is the formal expression of one body. There is no reconstruction of the assembly, nor any assembly such as A.R.D. speaks of to reconstruct. He is obliged to admit that the assemblies at the first acted in the unity to which he objects. If there be assemblies, they have no other principle to act on; and two or three together, if in the spirit of unity, can (thank God!) do so. Indeed, when this subject is practically treated of in 1 Corinthians, all saints are taken up together as all one, though the local assembly is made responsible in and according to this unity. There are no true assemblies but as the expression of it; and if they make themselves, as the tract desires, independent assemblies, they deny the only scriptural principle on which they can gather. They have no direction on which to act. They are a voluntary association, and in no sense, as such, an assembly of God at all, nor have they any scripture to guide them.

J.N.D.

146 These (with admirable divine wisdom, so that no thought of delay in Christ’s coming should be allowed) are, I doubt not, used as pictures of the state of the professing church in Revelation 2 and 3.

God, Not The Church, The Teacher By His Word;

Being A Letter on Dr. Manning’s Sermon.147 By a Stranger Passing through Hereford Dear Sir, Dr. Manning’s sermon, and the account of the consecration at Belmont, have been published in the Hereford Times. On the latter I make no remark. I should call it a very poor thing morally, but I dare say attractive to a curious public. But the sermon contains some principles and assertions to which I will venture to draw the attention of those who will condescend to read these lines. We must make allowance for a report, and possible mistakes. In one sentence God is put for body evidently, and doubtless there are others; but there is plenty sufficiently clear and accurate to enable us to measure the doctrines and statements of the sermon. It is hardly to be expected that the public should be well acquainted with ecclesiastical history, nor, by their knowledge of facts, be able to meet the assertions or omissions of the preacher. I cannot, where I am, have recourse to learned books, to give always precise dates or the like; but my memory suffices to deal with many of the preacher’s statements, as the word of God will with others, and of his arguments we all can judge.

Let me begin with his text, and the groundwork of his discourse. Christ stood up to read, and after reading, declared, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” That-is, He did not interpret it at all, but presented Himself as the fulfilment of it. It required no interpretation: Messiah was already the expectation of the Jews according to it. But He was the Messiah; He

declared the object of faith actually come. Either Dr. Manning's whole argument is utterly without foundation, or he puts the church in the place of Christ as the object of faith. Now the latter, which is next door to blasphemy and apostasy, is pretty much what he does. He declared, at the close of the discourse, that the Catholic church is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Now this is a statement found in the Hebrews, and spoken of the blessed Lord: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He is the immutable object of faith, and they were not to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines. But it is the one unchangeable glory of the Lord Jesus Christ which is in question; not the church, in any sense, to which the preacher, in a way akin to blasphemy, refers it.

A sober Christian will weigh this. It is the more striking in its evil character because the groundwork of the whole sermon is turning the presenting of the person of the Lord Jesus as the fulfilment of a passage into its interpretation; as to which there was no question. The beginning and end of the sermon (indeed its whole theme is that) substitute the church for Christ. The truth is, Dr. Manning's discourse puts him on both horns of the dilemma at once. There is no ground at all in the text for his argument. The Lord does not interpret but presents Himself as the fulfilment of the passage; and this discourse is akin to blasphemy by the substitution of the church for the blessed and divine Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Still I will just look into some of his facts and assertions.

The two facts on which his argument is founded I admit entirely. The apostles preached before the New Testament scriptures were written; though the church

was founded before they began to preach by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and the same Holy Ghost made the believers one and endued them with power. As regards the Gentiles, Peter expressly gave up his office to Paul (Gal. 2:9) and Barnabas; and Paul became the apostle of the Gentiles, and the one who alone insists on the unity of the body, the church. The other fact is that baptism and the Lord's supper embody some precious truths. The latter point does not affect our present inquiry. The Lord Himself instituted them, so that though recorded in the scriptures they were before the church or New Testament scriptures, or ministry of the apostles subsequent to Pentecost. The former point tells entirely against Dr. Manning's argument. The apostles, as did Stephen and Philip and probably others, preached the gospel—Peter to the Jews, Paul to the Gentiles, and Jews settled amongst them, joining Silas, Timotheus, Titus, and others with him in his service. Of others we have little or no authentic account outside Jerusalem. Doubtless late in the history they travelled in other countries, but we have no early or sure account of it.

In general we know that He who was mighty in Peter to the circumcision wrought in Paul towards the Gentiles, and the apostles agreed that that work should be Paul's. I shall be told—Yes, but afterwards they taught and watched over the church. Doubtless they did, they taught the church. But whom did the church teach? Nobody. Gifted individuals amongst them, teachers and pastors whom God had raised up, aided in their place according to the measure of the gift of Christ; but the church never taught: gifted members taught it. The church's teaching is a mere delusion; it denies ministry

and falsifies the whole idea of the church, which is the whole body of faithful people. They taught viva voce}and they taught by writings, and their writings we have. But to whom were they addressed? We have twenty-one epistles in all; three are addressed to fellow-labourers of Paul, the rest to the faithful, in one the bishops and deacons being added. The apostles taught the church, or people of God in these epistles by their inspired gifts; but the church taught no one.

But more than this. Paul assures us that after his decease the flock would not be spared, and commends them to God, and the word of His grace which was able to build them up; that already all sought their own, not the things of Jesus Christ; that in the last days perilous times would come, there would be a form of piety denying its power. He also commends the saints to the scriptures, as able to make them wise unto salvation, and to the knowing of whom we have learned things as we do when we read the writings of the apostles, and as we do not when we are told the church teaches. Dr. Manning tells us of the collected reason of Christendom. Where am I to find that? Did Paul do right when he addressed his teaching to all the saints for their own use and direction? or did he do it badly? or could someone else come and interpret it to them? They received it themselves as he wrote it to themselves. Besides, the mystery of iniquity was already at work and would go on, the apostle tells us, and there would be a falling away. But further the church did not maintain the faith. To use Jerome’s expression, the world awoke and was surprised to find itself Arian. It was merely a few hunted individuals who kept the faith; and the Pope himself, Liberius, signed a semi-Arian creed; and another,

Honorius, was condemned by a council held to be a general one by Rome itself as a heretic, and the decree confirmed by the Pope.

And where am I to find this teaching church? I must go to the priest. Is he infallibly right? No. But the bishop will watch over that. Is he infallibly right? No. But the Pope will watch over that. Is he infallibly right? It has been held so for three years; but the fact was so grossly opposed to the known history and teaching of former ages, that hundreds of thousands of Roman Catholics have left him and have established a separate body—got a bishop and a settled constitution.

Half the respectable authorities of the Roman Catholic world resisted to the utmost, protested against the way in which the council was conducted and deprived of all true liberty and now forces others to hold it. But big words take wonderful effect on people's minds. Dr. Manning talks to us of the universal or Catholic church spread over the world. But let us get at the facts? We have, say, 140 millions of Roman Catholics in the world, but some 60 or 70 millions of Greeks, the oldest churches in existence, denounce them as false in doctrine and the papal authority to be wholly unfounded; and the chief doctrinal point of difference is a dogma repelled by the Greeks, which one of the greatest popes that ever lived declared ought not to be introduced into the creed, as indeed a general council had forbidden anything to be added; and this Pope put up silver tablets in the principal church at Rome that it might not be added. Rome has added it since. Dr. Manning knows this as well as I do. But further, nearly 100 millions of Protestants are outside. So that we have more than half professing Christendom outside (what I

must say impudently calls itself) the Catholic church, a body denounced by the oldest churches, and so horribly corrupt that a very large part indeed of what was under its authority broke loose from it; and now, on the very point of infallible authority in interpretation, it is completely divided, and hundreds of thousands have left it because the vote was carried by oppression. We can understand this. Large numbers of respectable Roman Catholic prelates resisted the decree, from America, Ireland, France, Germany, etc., who presided over flocks numbering by millions; but there were crowds of prelates in Italy, some 130 in the Papal and Neapolitan states with some few millions of inhabitants, and a number of what are called bishops in partibus removable by the Pope, who made all resistance vain on the part of those who represented ten times their number. But it has cost the papacy another split off, which appeals to the ancient records and historical facts of the church such as none can deny. And note, all the professors of divinity of these seceders always taught what they hold and have acted on now. Where then was the church's teaching? And what am I to hold to be the church which teaches?—the Pope all alone, decreed to be infallible three years ago, who is certainly not the church? or is the Greek church, older than he? or the Protestants who appeal to Paul's teaching and Peter's, etc.? Where is this church?

And mark this; the question is not whether Peter and Paul and the rest did not teach the truth before the scriptures, but what is it that has preserved to us what Peter and Paul taught? The answer is, not the varying traditions of the church, but the writings of Peter and Paul themselves. They were addressed to the people,

and, save three short epistles, entirely to the Christian people. It is not that the apostle's teaching was derived from the New Testament, but it is found embodied there —recorded there. They did interpret the Old indeed, and their teaching is found in the epistles of the New, addressed to Christian men—their epistles, where else should I find them?

Dr. Manning tells us that the apostles delivered the baptismal creed in the very same syllables, the same articles, not changed in one jot or tittle from the faith once delivered to us by Jesus Christ. Where are these articles? Dr. Manning knows perfectly well that there is not one tittle of foundation for this assertion. People who believed in Jesus Christ were baptised no doubt, but there is no statement anywhere of any baptismal creed at all. Different churches had different creeds as to the form of them. The so-called apostles' creed is first found in Ruffinus, in the beginning of the fifth century. Some articles have been added. The Roman creed was pretty nearly the same. But the statement of the preacher has, as every student of ecclesiastical history knows, no foundation whatever. This faith, given in the same syllables and letters, was, says Dr. M., delivered to the apostles by Jesus Christ. Afterwards he tells us that the two (I suppose it should be three, and that it is a mistake of the reporter; if not, it is a gross blunder of Dr. Manning's) first Gospels are records of the life of our Lord, and therefore contain no principle of faith revealed on and after the day of Pentecost: itself a monstrous proposition.

Dr. Manning tells us the church alone can tell us which are the genuine scriptures. Not the church of Rome: till the fourth century she would not receive the Epistle to

the Hebrews, which she now, as other churches then did, receives as scripture. But this is an unfortunate subject for Rome. Pope Damasus employed Jerome to translate the scriptures, because the translation used in the churches was incorrect. He did so, and added a preface to his translation, commonly called the Vulgate, and that preface, called prologus galeatus, is habitually printed with the Roman Catholic editions of the Vulgate. This preface declares the books we call Apocrypha were not to be read as any foundation for faith, and they are not in the Hebrew; the Council of Trent declared them authentic inspired scripture like all the rest.

Nor is this all. Dr. Manning is bold enough to say that the church is the guardian and keeper of Holy Writ, which has been translated with a jealous and sacred care, and with every particle written with inspired hands. This too is an unfortunate statement. The Vulgate was so very incorrect through multiplied copying, that the Council of Trent, which declared the Vulgate to be the authentic scriptures, ordered a correct edition to be made. This being committed to the Pope, some learned men were employed. But the Pope Sixtus V changed their work so arbitrarily that the whole edition had to be suppressed, and five copies only of it remain, and what passes under the name of Sixtus V is not his, the title page being a fraud, but a revised edition published under a succeeding Pope with some 2,000 places changed. Now all this Dr. Manning knows perfectly well.

He tells us the faith was preached, and filled the world, before the New Testament was written. The whole revelation of Christ was known to the church, and preached by the church, for generations before the New Testament was written. Indeed! My good readers, shall I

tell you why I do not believe this? It was those who preached it thus who wrote the books. I suppose they were of the same generation as themselves.

Dr. M. tells us pretty correctly the date of the last of them all, John the Apostle. It was full ninety years, he says, before the last was written. The last of them (the Gospels) was written, he tells us, near the end of the first century. So it is generally held, if the Apocalypse was after it, which I neither affirm nor deny here, as Rome admits its being the apostle John's, the last book of scripture which was written while an apostle was alive. That is, the list of the preachers and the list of the books closed together. And now comes the question, Are their authentic writings, or traditions of their teaching from mouth to mouth for 1800 years nearly, the surest way of having what they taught? I will suppose for a moment that what he tells us is true; that the church is the keeper and guardian of Holy Writ, and that it has been faithful. (Rome, we have seen, cannot be trusted.)

It cannot be denied that the New Testament, with slight exceptions, was addressed to private Christians, and Dr. Manning tells us we have it with every syllable and letter as inspired. Is not that an excellent way of knowing what these infallible inspired teachers taught, namely, to read what they say? Let not Dr. Manning tell us that what the apostles wrote to the body of Christians he can explain better than they could. I do not the least deny the use of ministry and teaching, but I suppose an inspired apostle knew how to teach what God gave to him. "He that is of God," says John, "heareth us, and he that is not of God heareth not us." "If ye continue in that which ye have heard from the beginning, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." They tell us,

though Dr. Manning wisely says little about it, that those who lived nearer their time must know better what they taught than we at a distance. Forgive me for thinking that a better way is to read what they wrote themselves. To scripture the apostle Paul refers the faithful when the evil days should come in, not to the church. This he declares should be as corrupt as the heathen had been, but that the word of God would then be an assured guide.

Then mark here, too, how “the church taught” is slipped in for the apostles and early inspired ministers of the faith. The church did not teach. It received the truth from inspired individuals. It is only, forgive me the word, clap-trap.

Dr. Manning is proving that the word (preached I fully admit) was before the church. If people had not believed when these inspired teachers preached and there was no interpreter at all, there would have been no church at all save the 120 who met the day of Pentecost, gathered by the same means—the inspired words of Christ and His apostles. That is, unless the word of God had been received with divine faith on the ground of inspired teaching by the operation of the Holy Ghost, without any interpreter at all, the church would never have existed. And so it is now. Preachers now, whoever they are, are not a rule of faith as an apostle’s teaching was; but God may use their word, and we have inspired teaching in one way only now, the writings of the scriptures, and (speaking of the New Testament) of these inspired teachers themselves. Dr. Manning speaks of the church authenticating the scriptures. I challenge him to shew me a full list of the scriptures, or uniform lists of individuals, for 1,300 years that it existed in history. The

one we get at Trent is denied by the early fathers as to the Old Testament, to say nothing of uncertainty as to the New in their opinions. I believe God has fully secured this against infidelity, but not as Dr. Manning pretends.

There are some things so absurd in the sermon, I must suppose error in the reporter. Thus the date of John's Gospel was somewhere about ninety: therefore there could be no scriptures for the first ninety years. Probably the preacher said or meant, that there could not be a collection of the four Gospels before. That is certain, and the argument amounts to this—the four Gospels could not be collected before the four were written. No doubt all the books, having each perfect authority in itself, the piety of Christians moved them to collect them all to profit by them all; but this added nothing to their authority. Their authority rested on the inspiration of the writers who wrote each book. I believe in the perfect wisdom of God in it as a whole; but the authority of each book rests on the inspiration of its author. If it has that, the church can add none. The authority and inspiration of the writer came from Christ and the Holy Spirit, not from the church. The reception of the testimony of their blessed witnesses came from grace, and the Holy Ghost; and so it does now, and so only: The church had its existence from this only. Church, till faith was there, there was none; and if there were such in the neighbourhood, they had no power or influence over the heathen mind to make them receive the testimony; it was always, and is, the grace of God, and the operation of His blessed Spirit.

A few more evidences of the groundless assertions of Dr. Manning I will add. Baptism contains within itself the

incorporation and the records of the doctrine that sin after baptism needs to be cancelled and forgiven by the power of absolution. How so? Where is it incorporated in baptism? The Roman doctrine as to baptism is rather strange. They get forgiveness of sins when there are none, and, when there are, then it is by man's absolution and penance, if at all.

As regards confession, Dr. Manning says, "Whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven. Where is the church which practises confession as inculcated by these words?" Confession is not inculcated, that I see, in the words at all. The Catholic church, he assures us, never relaxed this practice, because it never lost its faith. Now confession to a priest was never made obligatory till 1215 years after Christ, in the Third Council of Lateran, under the Pope under whose auspices the Inquisition was established. History shews it was not in any way usually practised. There was public confession before the whole church, and sometimes voluntary confession to a presbyter, where a person was so disposed. At Constantinople a presbyter was appointed to receive it, if any one was disposed to make one. But a great scandal arising from a confession thus made, Chrysostom abolished it, and told people to confess to God. At first there was only confession before the whole church, obligatory when they were excommunicated and they stood as penitents. Voluntary confessions began soon to be made in private. At Rome it was only under Leo the Great, in the latter part of the fifth century, that offenders were relieved from public confession and allowed to confess to a priest. Could Dr. Manning be ignorant of all this?

Transubstantiation was decreed in the same Lateran Council, and never before, that is, in 1215. The word betrays itself. It is the expression of the adoption by the schoolmen of the heathen Aristotle's doctrine of substance and accidents, a kind of substratum of each being with qualities of colour, form, etc., attached. It was denied however by most famous doctors in the church, also of those days, as John Scotus Erigena, the great doctor of Charles the Bald's Court, by Ratramn or Bertram, and others, but established as an article of faith in the Third Council of Lateran. This is quite true, that the most magniloquent terms were used as to the Eucharist, and as to baptism too, when the idea of sacramental grace supplanted spiritual life in the church, as the apostles had predicted, A change was spoken of in the water, as well as in the elements of the Eucharist, the visible water was changed (metastoicheiountaf) into a certain divine and ineffable power.

But transubstantiation was not the earliest doctrine even after these high views came in, but expressly that after invocation two things were there, Christ and the bread, so much so that the fact of this double state was triumphantly used by the early fathers against the Eutychians, who denied two natures in Christ. The opposite to the Romish doctrine is positively taught on this point by the earlier fathers, and I might even say Augustine, though the strongest rhetorical expressions are used as to it. And it is difficult to think Dr. Manning could be ignorant of all this.

I close my review. I should have many points to notice, were I formally discussing the whole sermon at large. I cannot be expected in a brief paper reviewing this

sermon to discuss the whole circle of Romish doctrine. I have merely taken up prominent points and assertions in Dr. Manning's discourse, to shew how he must have counted on unacquaintedness with ecclesiastical history naturally found in a large mixed congregation, with what good faith my reader must determine.

I have not sought to deceive or mislead him. I believe in the very early corruption of Christianity, a corruption existing in the apostles' days, when the mystery of iniquity did already work, and all sought their own and not the things of Jesus Christ, as the apostle tells us. I do not doubt that Christ will have His body complete in spite of Satan's efforts; but the apostle has led us to expect that, when he laid the only true foundation, others would build wood and hay and stubble; and history has shewn that this took place.

That the church ever taught is a fable; apostles, prophets, teachers, did. What was taught "in the beginning" we have in their writings through the gracious care of our God.

Dr. Manning utters what seems praise to the English for their zeal as to the scriptures. I will therefore state the Romish rule as to them. The Index of prohibited books had been referred to a committee by the Council of Trent. In the last Session this was referred to the Pope, and the Pope sanctioned the rules they had laid down. The fourth rule declares that, if a person shall have presumed to read or to have a copy without the express permission of the parish priest or confessor, he cannot receive absolution till the Bible be given up; and a bookseller who sells or otherwise lets a person have one

is to forfeit the value to pious uses and to undergo other penalties. The permission was to be in writing.

147 The appearance of the following paper has been delayed by circumstances not under the control of the writer. He trusts it is not too late to be useful.

God, Not The Church, The Teacher By His Word;

Being Part 2 of Remarks on Dr. Manning’s Sermon at Belmont, Hereford.

Nova Liguria, February, 1874.

Preface

Dr. Manning having corrected and published his sermon delivered at Belmont, the following notice of it is added as a second part to the reply already published to what appeared in the newspapers. The immediate occasion is now somewhat remote; but the principles are of abiding importance, and Dr. Manning’s sermon is a suitable occasion to bring them under the eye of Christians.

* * * * *

Since the previous tract was written, Dr. Manning has revised the report of his sermon and had it published, so that there can be no question as to the authenticity of the statements contained in the pamphlet given out under his name. The principle is of course the same, the assertions equally unfounded, the reasons equally inconclusive. The desperate error of putting the church in the place of Christ is Dr. Manning’s error; the unbelief hidden under his statements is the unbelief of the Roman system as of Dr. Manning himself; the contemptible arguments throw back their contemptibleness on their author.

Dr. Manning begins by telling us that in the middle ages mass would have been said in the cathedral of Hereford, and lights burning in the Ladye Chapel, and this because

persons believed in the teaching of the church, that is, of the Roman clergy.

Of this there is no doubt. In the middle ages the worship of the mass existed, a flagrant denial of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice once offered, and of the authority of the word of God, which declares there is no more offering for sin, when Christ had been offered once for all. The Roman clergy were, with all the rest of the priesthood, eminently responsible for this blasphemous and vain pretension of renewing Christ's sacrifice, in which, to be of any avail, Christ (as is taught in Hebrews 9:25, 26) must often suffer. This horrible wickedness did exist, and the clergy are answerable for it. This much I admit: there would have been degradations of Christ's sacrifice as to its efficacy, and there would have been superstitious idolatrous worship of the Virgin Mary. Thus far I agree with Dr. Manning.

But what are the principles on which Dr. Manning would restore this? Let us see. "What I affirm is this," he says, "that the letter of the scripture without the voice of the church, through the perverseness of men, killeth; and that the letter of the scripture, with the living voice of that church, quickeneth" —that is, giveth life.

Now I remark first here, that the sermon and the Roman system put the church instead of Christ as the object of faith. What Christ was in the synagogue, the church is according to Dr. Manning; and he puts the church instead of the Spirit as the author and power of faith. The teaching of Dr. Manning in the first two pages (and it is the substance of the sermon's teaching) sets aside Christ and the Holy Ghost for the church. The word of God says, Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for

ever; Dr. Manning, that the church is (page 15); that as Christ stood in the synagogue with the scriptures, so the church stands now. The word of God says it is the Spirit that quickeneth, and that Christ's words are spirit and life; Dr. Manning, that the letter of scripture without the church kills, but that with the living voice of the church it quickens. It is a frightful denial of scripture truth and Christianity to set up his church on their ruin. Such is the main thesis of Dr. Manning's tract. As proof, let us examine his arguments.

He says, "It is a self-evident fact," "true, admitted by every one, and impossible to deny, that the whole revelation of Christianity was preached and believed throughout the world before the New Testament was written." "This is a fact so certain, so self-evident, that no calm honest man, who gives himself time to consider it, can for a moment doubt it."

Now to call it self-evident is simply nonsense. No such facts can be self-evident. Why, or how, is it so? It is a matter of history and testimony. The testimony of the ancient historians and fathers of the church in some respects contradict it. They state that Matthew wrote his Gospel to leave it in Palestine before he went out to preach in the world. So far from being self-evident, the writings prove that most of them were written by their authors in the course of their service. For example, the Epistle to the Romans was written professedly before ever the apostle had been there; the Corinthians also, before he had been at Rome, but after he had been at Corinth; the Thessalonians, when he had just left Thessalonica, before he had begun his work at Corinth or Rome. Matthew's Gospel, if we are to believe the authority of the fathers, was written very early indeed,

before there had been any preaching perhaps out of Palestine; John's very late indeed. It is not really the question to be settled. The question is, What place do the scriptures hold now? But the statement of Dr. Manning is neither certain nor admitted, and to say it is "self-evident" is impudent nonsense. Hard words, it may be said; but it is well to speak the truth sometimes.

But there is another point which makes the whole statement utterly irrelevant, and that as Dr. Manning's own statement shews.

The revelation was made to the apostles and prophets. The former especially went to the Jews and heathen, and preached the gospel to them. The church had nothing to say to it. If the church had pretended to have authority over the idolatrous heathen, or the unconverted Jews, they would have laughed at them, or perhaps put them in prison for their pains. It is "self-evident" that the church had no kind of authority, real or pretended, over the heathen or over the Jews. Those sent of God went and preached to them, and when the Spirit of God (wholly apart from the church, which in such case was not formed there, and had no authority over the unbelievers if it had begun to be formed) wrought through grace in the hearts of the hearers, there was faith produced, and the foundations of the church laid by the testimony being received. Dr. Manning's real meaning is that the clergy should have power in the church when it is formed, which is quite another point. We have known them too well.

But the baptized, he tells us, "received the full illumination of Christianity from the living voice of the Apostles."

This is equally unfounded. It is confounding conversion to Christ with teaching and building up. When by preaching (not by the church or its authority) heathens had been converted, then the apostles and others, as Apollos, etc., proceeded to build them up in the truth and godliness of walk; and to this especially served the Epistles, as they do for believers now. That Christianity was preached and believed throughout the world before the New Testament was written is a mere fable, for it is not done yet. If in saying so it is merely meant that the gospel was no longer confined to Palestine, but had gone out among the Gentiles before the New Testament was written, no one denies it; but it was no interpretation of the church, no work of the church, no authority of the church, which did the work or gave power to do it.

First, the church had no authority with Pagans: they recognized it in no way. Individuals sent by God carried the revelation God had given them by the Holy Ghost, and carried the revelation of Christ where it had never been, where there was no church. And Paul boasts of this, that he did carry it where it was not known, and that he had what he preached, not from the church at Jerusalem, but from the Lord Himself. In every respect he boasts of what Dr. Manning says. (Rom. 15:20; 2 Cor. 10:14, 15; Gal. 1 and 2.) And even as to the Jews, when he had preached at Berea the Jews there searched the scriptures to see if these things were so; therefore many of them believed, and they are called “noble “for doing so. But the church is nowhere referred to; the church had no authority; the church interpreted nothing: there was no church to do it. The church came into existence in each place by the labours of the apostles and others employed by God, who carried the revelation of His

grace, and wholly without the church, by the word of God and by the operations of the Spirit of God. Grace wrought with the testimony of God, and by it the church came into existence.

But it is “self-evident” that the church could not interpret among the heathen, for it was not then in existence; and, according to Dr. Manning’s own statement, the scriptures were not there to be interpreted, so that his whole argument is not worth one straw. In the case of the Jews at Berea, who had the scriptures, they studied them to see if the apostles were founded in what they said; while their church, if church it is to be called, rejected the Lord utterly, and would have hindered every one receiving Him if they could; but they searched the word for themselves, and by grace believed.

It is impossible to have anything more directly opposed to the facts and the truth than the statements of Dr. Manning. Dr. Milner, in his “End of Controversy,” is obliged to own there was special grace for the heathen, as of course the church was nothing for them. I suppose he would have us believe that there is none for Christians, or that blessing came by grace and the Holy Ghost for heathens, but does not do so for Christians.

But it is not true that the whole revelation of God was communicated to Christians on their conversion. Not that anything was concealed, but they were not able to bear it; they were babes in Christ, and the apostles were “to give them meat in due season.” It is not even true that the apostles received it all at once. Paul had revelations and communications from heaven all along his course. He tells the Corinthians that he could only

feed them with milk, not with solid food, because of their carnal condition; 1 Cor. 3:1,2. The Hebrews were blamed because there was still need to teach them the first elements; Heb. 5.

All Dr. Manning's statements are mis-statements. But I repeat, because it is the main point, that nobody denies that the apostles and others went preaching the gospel to the heathen; but this is just the proof that the church (which the heathen did not acknowledge, and which did not exist where the messengers of Christ preached) had nothing whatever to do with the matter—interpreted nothing—for there was nothing yet to interpret. Dr. Manning insists that the New Testament did not exist yet. How then could the church interpret it? What is proved by this fact is that the word is brought home to the heart by the power of the Spirit of God, and by this they are drawn into the place of blessing so as, when gathered, to become the church. But the work is done without the church.

Am I not right in saying that Dr. Manning's argumentation is contemptible? The scriptures did come after the first work, as they may now as to individual souls. The preached word works in them, and they turn to the written word for "the certainty of the things" they believed, as stated in Luke's Gospel, "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." Thus the written word gave the certainty when the instruction or the living voice had been there. It was not the instructor interpreting and giving living power to the word, but the word giving certainty as to what they had been instructed in.

Dr. Manning says (p. 8), “the divine teacher from whom the scriptures come is always in the midst of us (Christians). They love Him and interpret His writings in His presence and by His word.” There is confusion of Christ and the Spirit here, but let that pass.

We have now to deal with the question of Christians and not of heathens. Did the church stand and interpret the scriptures when they were written to the faithful?

And here I must beg my reader to note the ambiguity of this word ‘church,’ and the false meaning hidden under it by all Romanists and those who follow their principles. The church is the assembly of God upon the earth, united to its Head, and the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. This, though he would add a head on earth and a hierarchy uniting it, Dr. Manning would himself admit; at any rate it is true. How does this universal body on earth teach itself? Dr. Manning blasphemously says (p. 9), “the church is the interpretation of that book, just as Jesus Christ in the synagogue of Nazareth was the interpretation of the book of the prophet Esias in His own person.” He adds (p. 10), that Christ “claimed also to be the interpreter of the same—so now the church.” To say that the church is the interpretation of the scriptures is blasphemous nonsense, when it is put instead, and taking the place, of Christ as it is here, and distinct from being tie interpreter. It is one subject spoken of there; but the revelation of the Father in Christ, redemption, salvation, the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost are primary objects of the New Testament; and to put the church in the place of Christ, as is expressly done here, is, I repeat, blasphemous nonsense.

But my subject now is the interpreter. Now does this whole, if you please, organized body (though I should deny historically Dr. Manning's statements as to this) interpret to and for itself? That is not what is either meant or said when Romanist teachers explain themselves. They mean and say the teaching part of the church, the clergy, which teaches all the rest. "The church "sounds very fine, teaches, etc.; but it is all clap-trap. It means, the clergy teach the church; and all are to submit to them.

Well now, what was the fact as to the scriptures? Dr. Manning says, There they were like Isaiah in the hand of the blessed Lord, and the church is now, instead of Him, the interpretation and the interpreter. What was the fact? The Gospels were written for the faithful—one, immediately for a certain Theophilus, that he might know the certainty of the things he had been instructed in. He had the instruction, and this was to make all quite certain to him. There is simply no interpreting church at all.

But the case of the Epistles is if possible clearer. The apostles wrote to churches and Christians; and these persons were to receive and abide by what they wrote—to receive them as "the commandments of the Lord"; those who did not heed the words of the apostles were to be noted and avoided. That is, the scriptures were the things addressed authoritatively and immediately to the body of ordinary Christians, and they were bound to receive, and believe, and obey, and act upon them, without an interpreter or any one who might pretend to come in between the authority of that written word and their souls. The scriptures bound them by apostolic authority, bound them directly, were the addresses of

authority to the Christian people, who were bound to obey them and bow to them. In one place it is charged to be read to all the holy brethren. Any one coming in between these scriptures and the conscience of the Christian people, they receiving them, bowing to them, acting on them because they so came, would have been coming in between the apostles' (that is, divine) authority and the people who were bound to bow to them, and to receive their writings as addressed to them by that authority.

Such a case is recorded in the Third Epistle of John. This apostle wrote to the assembly, and Diotrephes stepped in to hinder the people from receiving and bowing to the epistle. John declares he will remember him arid his prating words if he comes. If I send a letter of orders to my servants, he who steps in and takes the letter and does not allow it to reach directly and as my orders to them and addressed to them, is meddling not merely with the servants' rights (though, as regards the meddler, the servants being under the obligation to follow their master's orders, they had both a right and were bound to have them themselves because they were responsible to act on them as so sent to them), but he is meddling with the master's right and wisdom in sending it. It was sent to the servants, not to the meddler, and the servants are bound to take it; it was sent to them, and they are responsible. Now this is the place an interpreting clergy take. They meddle with God's rights, and impugn God's wisdom in sending these scriptures to the Christian people. They cannot take away the responsibility of these servants; they cannot deny that the scriptures, all save a very small part, were

addressed to the Christian (of old to the Jewish) people by the inspired persons ordained of God.

It is important to see this clearly. Speaking of the Epistles, there was no church to explain; they were addressed directly to the church, no scriptures existing already as to which the church had to exercise such an office. The scriptures are the writings themselves, sent by inspired persons (that is, by God) to the persons who were to use them, exactly what they wanted; and these persons were bound to use and submit to them, and responsible for not doing so if they did not. The Epistles were the communication and divine wisdom of inspired teachers, the apostles, whom God had sent, addressed directly to the heart and conscience of the Christian people. In their very nature they were immediate addresses or treatises so to speak for all, and what concerned all. Three small epistles alone are an exception, though in these there is abundant instruction for all too. But then this is an additional proof of what I insist on. For the special servants of the Lord the apostle wrote to those servants themselves, for the people he wrote directly to the people. He had in no case the idea of putting his Epistles in the hands of one set of people to be used by them for another set. This is Dr. Manning's theory, putting to this end the church in the place of Christ in the synagogue.

Now Romanism and the clerical system have done this. These have taken the scriptures out of the hands of the Christian people, and given them what they liked; a deadly offence against God and His authority who sent them to the Christian people— heinous wickedness. And what has been the consequence? The dark ages—a state

of things in what was called the church, which no horrors of heathenism ever equalled.

Let this be clearly understood, that nothing ever equalled the wickedness of what is called the church. The proofs are easily to be had in history, and that from churchmen. Ignorance of this truth is now used as a plea by these same clergy for not giving the scriptures to those to whom God sent them. If it be alleged that the fallen and corrupt state of the church makes it now undesirable so to give it, the answer is, God has graciously provided for us in this also. He has told us when the church was become utterly corrupt, as He declared it would do, we were to turn away from all this corruption and those who were in it, and turn to the scriptures which are “able to make the man of God wise unto salvation.” In the case they now insist on, brought about by their own wickedness, those who have God’s word know they are to turn from them and to the scriptures.

What is now the result of these facts as to this part of our subject, in reply to this wicked pretension of the church, that is, the clergy, holding the scriptures in their hand as authorized interpreters, according to the system of Dr. Manning?

First, as regards the heathen, the apostles and others preached to them. The church had nothing to interpret, and the heathen owned no church. Dr. Manning’s system can have no possible application. The grace and Spirit of God did the work without any church.

As regards the Jews, there were the Old Testament scriptures, and the apostles appealed to them; but there was no church to interpret them authentically. The Jews

owned neither nor apostles, but, when they were through grace well-disposed, searched the scriptures to see if these things were so. And many believed and judged the apostles true, and became part of the church. But it is again the hearers in whom grace acts, and no thought of authoritative interpretation. As regards Christians, so far from the church being an interpreter, of the scriptures for them, these scriptures themselves are what are sent to the Christians themselves as the direct and authoritative expression of the divine mind which they were to follow. When the church should have decayed, and have fallen into ungodly ways (as at present, when this system is urged), we are told to turn away from these ungodly formalists and have recourse to the scriptures.

And this last principle is most strikingly enforced in the churches of the Apocalypse, where, when Christ is judging the state of the churches, the individual saint is called upon to hear, not what the church says, but what the Spirit says to the churches, the judgment passed upon them by the Lord. The church is the subject of the judgment, and the individual Christian is to listen, if he have ears, individually, to what Christ judges of it—is bound to hear, for Christ speaks and calls him to hear. Every fact and every instruction that God has given is. exactly the opposite of Dr. Manning’s, which is not of God, but that corrupt work of the enemy, which has set aside the authority of what God has said.

No one denies that a more spiritual gifted person can help me in spiritual life and understanding; but he cannot take away my responsibility to God flowing from, and according to, the word which He has sent to me. The Spirit does dwell in the church. But it is even to

babes in Christ that it is said, where designing false teachers sought to seduce them, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things,” 1 John 2:20, 27. Dr. Manning tells us that the church declares itself to be the interpreter as Christ did. Christ I believe; but why am I to believe the church when it speaks thus of itself? Not he who commendeth himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth.

But this gives rise to a preliminary question. Where is this church? Can he point it out to me? He will say Rome. But is Rome the whole church of God? I will answer with Jerome, referring to Rome, major orbis quam urbis. He tells us of a living organization with two heads, Christ in heaven, and the Pope on earth, the whole hierarchy of the church uniting it. But what does “living “mean? None of the hierarchy, they admit, are necessarily alive in Christ, neither is the Pope. Popes have been deposed for mortal sin; popes have been heretics; popes have been infidels; not one of this living organization is necessarily “living.”

Besides, history makes known (nor are facts wanting now to confirm it, though not so glaring as before the Reformation) that this pretended living organization was the most vile, wicked, corrupt, immoral body that ever existed; sunk in profligacy of every and of the worst kind; cruel, persecuting, and ambitious, and notoriously worse than the heathen whom it supplanted. Is that the “living organization” of which Christ is the Head? It is impossible to defile one’s pages with the habitual course of conduct of what Dr. Manning refers us to as taking the place of Christ, and as a living organization under Christ as its Head; and I speak on the authority of their own historians. Baronius, their great historian, a

cardinal and a Jesuit, declares that for a century he cannot own those who filled the See of Rome as legitimate popes—put in, as they were, by the mistresses of the Marquis of Tuscany, and not chosen by the clergy or even approved by them. It is well people should know that never was any body of people on earth so depraved as Dr. Manning's "living organization"; and the human head on earth, at the head of the depravity, often fighting for this seat of power, and, if one turned another out, declaring all the consecrations and ordinations null and void, so that a book had to be written to shew there were still sacraments. All was in such confusion, and often two and even three popes at a time, and Europe divided as to who was the true one, each excommunicating the other and all that owned him.

There is no such history in the world for iniquity and confusion as that of Rome. I dare Dr. Manning to deny it, or, if bold enough to do it, to disprove it from history. Indeed the evil state of what is called the church began before Rome's supremacy, though it ripened under it. Let anyone read Salvian, "De gubernatione Dei," accounting for the judgment coming on the Roman empire, declaring that virtue was to be found among the heretics and heathen, and nowhere among Christians; Cyprian "De Pudicitia," or Chrysostom's "Two discourses on the Virgins," both shewing the extent of depravity already existing in what was afterwards matured in the Roman system, in the boasted holiness and real depravity of monks and nuns. The assistance of God the Holy Spirit is always with His church and people; but is that a reason for taking the chief leaders in debauchery and wickedness—and such were the popes and clergy, I defy denial—as the vessels of that

Spirit to interpret the scriptures with authority as Christ did?

And now let us see, in passing, some of Dr. Manning's arguments. The New Testament was not the source whence Christianity was derived (p. 7). Fully admitted: it was derived from God through the revelation given to the apostles. But that is not the question. The question is, Are the writings of the apostles and the inspired instruments of the Holy Ghost, addressed to the Christian people at large, the best means of knowing what they taught, or Dr. Manning's interpretation of them, and that of other such persons who set themselves up to preach themselves and call themselves the church? Specially when the apostle declares that the professing church would become as bad as possible (2 Tim. 3), and that then the scriptures were the resource of the man of God.

Again he tells us (p. 9), "If we are compelled to depend upon the church for this knowledge that the scripture was ever written, and that these scriptures are the identical books which the apostle wrote—if we must depend for this upon the testimony of the church—where is the consistency of the man who says, I will take all this from you, but I refuse to accept from you the meaning of that book?" Supposing my banker keeps my will safe, and that the witnesses to it testify to its being the true will of the testator, therefore the banker and the witnesses are the only interpreters of the will? Now I do not admit Dr. Manning's principle or fact; but his argument is nonsense.

But further he tells us that this living organization is also before the apostle's mind when he says that when

Jesus ascended into heaven, “He gave some apostles … for edifying of the body of Christ,” which last he justly speaks of as the church (p. 14). But this upsets all his reasoning, for it is not the church which teaches or interprets, but which is taught and edified—the very point I have insisted on. And this distinction is very important; because “the church” carries with it an amazing idea of solemnity, authority, divine competency to hold a special place of authority, which is a mere lie of the author of lies. The church is edified. God’s word has authority. God employs instruments and responsible instruments of His choice to edify it. The inspired teachers, whose teaching we have in the scriptures, had and have authority because they were inspired. Others are useful in the degree in which they hold fast to the word, and labour with the power of the Holy Ghost working with them. But they may, we are expressly told, build wood, hay, and stubble, and their work will be burned; as they have done and worse, so that it will be burned. There may be those, as popes and Romanist teachers, who labour to corrupt the church; they shall be destroyed. But this house of God does not edify but is edified. There is indeed a sense in which it edifies itself; but then it is by every member in its place “compacted together by that which every joint supplieth, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” But this more than ever destroys the false statements of Dr. Manning, because it is not the church which teaches.

Dr. Manning tells me that the church is the teacher and interpreter; he tells me that the church declares she does as Jesus did. But why am I to believe him or her if she have spoken otherwise than by such as He? That a corrupt body seeks and claims all power by her agents

and ministers I know; but why am I to admit her claims, or believe what she says to me? As a Christian I believe Christ's person and words to be divine; I bow to them. But who is this excessively wicked body who claims the same attention and the same place? Dr. Manning quotes scriptures; he is obliged to do so with Protestants; but in these there is not a word of it, but the contrary. Inspired apostles and other ministers edify and teach the church, and teach the people themselves directly, and he produces no passage to shew that the church teaches. He says the church says she does, and has authority for it: I know her instruments and favourers say so. But when some unknown body claims this authority over my soul, whose eternal interests are concerned in it, I must have some proof that they have such title, and know who and what they are. When I read the scriptures which were addressed to the people, and which Dr. Manning admits, I find all the contrary. The apostles, by their very scriptures, which he tells us are a dead letter without the church to interpret, were living power by grace to the church itself, who read them without any interpreting church at all.

The whole system is a denial of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Manning tells us he could not convert a Unitarian when he used the scriptures. No, the work of the Holy Ghost was needed. His system sees infidelity growing up round it in a frightful way. Well, he has the church now, his living interpreter: why does he not stop it? He has got all he wants, but he cannot stop it. The church can, with all its pretensions, do no more than Dr. Manning could when young. It requires grace and the power of the Holy Ghost. History tells us that "the church "had another way of checking evil—burning people's bodies when it

could not convert their souls. There was such a thing as the Inquisition, regretted perhaps still by many, and which will, if possible, doubtless be put in use again. It roots up some tares, it may be, but a great deal of wheat with them; but this is no matter if “the church” has power. Christ has forbidden it; He will do that work in harvest; but that is no matter: the authority of “the church” is maintained. It was long before the Protestants unlearned what ages had accustomed man to; the heart of man loves the exercise of power when he has got it; but “it shall not be so among you.” It is a falsehood that flies in the face of all the facts of scripture and the history of Christianity that, without the interpretation of the church, the scripture is no longer the word of life. The preached word was such by the power of the Holy Ghost to heathens; the written word was such by the Holy Ghost to Christians. In neither case had the church anything to do with it. In the latter case it was written to the church or Christian people. Woe be to them if they did not understand and bow! Woe will be to the saints now who do not do so.

But little remains to add, unless I wrote a treatise on Romanism. When Dr. Manning says, “bring the whole Catholic world to one interpretation of scripture”; in the first place, the Catholic world has not got the scripture, but only what the priest teaches. But further, it is wholly untrue, unless by the brazen-faced pretension that Romanism is the whole Catholic world, whereas it is the smaller half of it; and, even so, half the men in it, or more, are infidels, despising the priests from their hearts, even if willing to go with the crowd, and a large body of conscientious men have recently quitted it because it flies in the face of history and truth. Why is

the Pope so bitterly complaining of the evil days they are fallen on, if all is so smooth, and what he calls the one true interpretation of scripture universally received?

Dr. Manning tells us that the church is founded on Peter. His church may be, but not the church of God. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,” says Paul, “which is Jesus Christ.” But again the testimony of Dr. Manning has to be dealt with. He quotes “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,” but leaves out that this is said when Peter had just confessed Christ to be the Son of the living God. And Dr. Manning knows the weightiest Fathers apply the passage to Christ. Augustine refers to the question, and says he has used it as Dr. Manning does; but then says it is referred to Christ, and people may take it the other way. Dr. Manning also knows that “rock” and Peter do not agree. I know that it is said in Syriac the difficulty does not exist. But we have it—the church of Dr. Manning’s phases has it—in Greek and not in Syriac, and in Greek it is impossible to apply it to Peter; and this Dr. Manning knows as well as I do, but does not say.

He refers to “this is my body,” as all Romanists do. But literally it could not be Christ’s body, for He was then in the body, and He did not hold His body in His own hand. He does not say will be, but “is.” But further, it was not, and could not be, His body, either as it was then or as it is now. Not as it was then, for He had not died—had not shed His blood; whereas in instituting the Supper He speaks equally of His blood shed, and eating His flesh and drinking His blood refers necessarily to a Christ who has died, as the bread come down from heaven does to a Christ incarnate. It is not in the very essence and substance of its meaning, Christ as He was, for His

death and blood-shedding are shewn forth in it. It is not Christ as He is now, for He is in glory, not in death and blood-shedding. This is all finished and over. There is no such Christ in existence as that which is figured in the Lord's supper. It is His body when He is dead, His blood when it is shed. We shew forth His death (1 Cor. 11:26); and He says, "this is my blood which is shed for you," hence taken apart from the body. But He was not dead then, He is not dead now: a Christ in the state of death does not exist. If the Roman doctrine is held, there is no redemption, for, as an excuse for not giving the cup to the people, they allege what is called the doctrine of concomitancy; that the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ are all in each species (in this case the bread as we should say). Now if the blood be in the body not shed, there is no redemption accomplished. Such is the profit of "church "teaching.

But scripture incessantly speaks as it does here: "This cup is the new testament in my blood," "lam the door," "I am the true vine," "I am the bread of life," "It is the Lord's passover." It is the common way of expressing the representation of a thing in the figure, and perfectly intelligible. A child would understand if another said to it in their play, "You are my horse." The "church" has corrupted this as all else, and made the blessed memorial of Christ's work of redemption and love a sacrament of non-redemption; for if the blood be in the body, it is not shed: redemption is not accomplished.

I have spoken in my previous tract of confession to a priest pretending to be inculcated in the words, "Whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven," of which, or any confession, save to one another, they say not a word. In the case of Corinth we have an example of this

forgiveness. The sin was notorious, judged by the apostle alone, and needed no confession; and he calls upon the assembly to put the guilty person out. Afterwards, the assembly having been faithful, the apostle in a second letter urges them to confirm their love to him again, and declares that what they forgive he forgives; 2 Cor. 2:5-10. The assembly, moreover, forgives as much as the apostle. Indeed the power of binding and loosing is continued in Matthew 18, not to any personal successors of the apostles, for they had none, but to the assembly, two or three gathered together in Christ's name—an important fact to observe in these days.

I have an historical mistake to correct in my previous tract, where it is stated that Chrysostom suppressed the office of confessor which had been established at Constantinople. It was Nectarius, his predecessor, who did so. Chrysostom exhorts abundantly to confess to God only, but Nectarius had suppressed the office of general confessor. I can only repeat here that the statement of Dr. Manning he must know to be false; at least I can hardly suppose him to be so ignorant of church history as not to know it. The facts I have given in my former tract.

Dr. Manning refers to James 5:14 for extreme unction. It is really wearying to follow step by step the impudent way these doctors seek to impose on souls. The Roman doctrine is that extreme unction "abstergit reliquias peccatorum" wipes away the remains of sin. What they go to burn in purgatory for after would be hard to tell; but that is the pretended effect; and if a man gets up again and eats and drinks, its efficacy is gone. If in a dying state again, he must be anointed again.

Now in James the prayer of faith saves the sick, the discipline is removed; and if sins have been the occasion of the chastisement, they are forgiven in the holy government of God. In a word the anointing of James was connected with the recovery of the sick and taking off the affliction by which they were chastened, and the extreme unction of Romanists is given only when this is supposed to be impossible, and, if he does recover and this discipline is removed, is worth nothing at all.

Nothing can be more sad than the rampant infidelity which prevails, and which Romanism and hollow clericalism have more than anything contributed to produce; for when religious profession sinks below the level of common or natural conscience, it produces infidelity. As to that which is produced, neither the profession nor the infidelity has anything to do with real faith, faith in God's word, and by it in the Father and in the Son. But religions, as a profession, wear out. Old heathenism did, and infidelity supplanted it; Brahmanism is wearing out in India, and again infidelity supplants it. What is truth? says Pilate. Romanism had done this for professing Christendom. At the Reformation God's word brought in faith in the word in large districts. Now all is worn out as a system, and infidelity believes nothing. Christianity met the case when Grecian and Roman heathenism had lost their hold. When Romanism had made Christian profession worse than heathenism, the Reformation partially met the case. Now judgment only and the coming of the Son of man awaits professing Christendom.

But it is not true that Rome has not varied in saying this is inspired, this is not. Rome for three centuries and more did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews; and

Rome receives the Apocrypha now, books which her own doctors in former ages rejected as not inspired, and which are not found in the Hebrew.

Two great principles remain for the sincere Christian. It is positively revealed (2 Tim. 3), that the church would fail and become as bad as heathenism; and the Christian is directed to turn away from the evil and turn to the scriptures, and Christ (Rev. 2 and 3) is revealed as judging the state of the churches, and the individual is called to listen to what He says as to judging the churches; so that the church cannot have authority over the Christian, for he is called to listen to Christ judging it.

Secondly, listening to the apostles themselves is made a test of the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. “He that is of God,” says the apostle John, “heareth us, and he that is not of God heareth not us.” Now it is admitted by all that we have what they have said in their Epistles. I am bound therefore to listen to the scriptures, or I am not of God. And this responsibility rests on the individual Christian, and He cannot escape it. He that is of God listens to what the apostles have said.

Further, it is alleged that, in listening to what Fathers and traditions say, we must be more likely to have the truth, as they were nearer to the source. But we have the source itself, that is, what the inspired teachers themselves have taught. It is not what (as Tertullian says) is prius, or earlier, must be truer. Paul says, that after his decease, grievous wolves and perverse men would arise. But the word of scripture is express: “Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the

beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." What we read in scripture is certainly from the beginning; what we read or hear elsewhere certainly is not; it may or may not be confirmed to it, but it is not from the beginning, so that I can judge by it. I have to judge if it is. He that is of God heareth us. And the reason is obvious. Those teachers are, what they tell us is, divinely inspired; what is said by other teachers is not.

Finally we do need the grace of the Holy Spirit to use the scriptures; but it is said to the babes in Christ to guard them against the seductions of false doctrines, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," and "the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no he, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Not that there may not be teachers; John was teaching them this. But when there is a question of seducing teachers, the weakest saint is referred to what was from the beginning, the apostle's own teaching, and assured that they, the weakest, had the Holy Spirit, and that thus by His grace and the scriptures, or what was "from the beginning," the apostle's own and inspired teaching, they would be kept from error and seduction, and so only.

Such is the divine safeguard in the last days.

Discipline And Unity Of The Assembly

Two principles seem to be at work at the present moment which it may be well to notice in connection with the title of this publication—The Present Testimony148We are living in a time when all things are in question, and principles of every kind are abroad. If there are such as seem to destroy the very position of the saints as a testimony in the midst of Christendom — a conscious and intelligent testimony—it is not amiss that attention should be drawn to them. The two principles I refer to are—

First, the denial of the obligation of a Christian assembly to maintain purity in order to be owned as such, or rather, the denying that if it allow evil within itself, it becomes defiled; and Secondly, the denial of the unity of the body as regards the church here on earth.

I have heard in such various quarters, both as to morals and doctrine, that no assembly of Christians can be denied by any evil in it, and even that it has to go on and leave it to the Lord to lay His hand upon the evil and put it out, that I must suppose it to be a principle generally admitted. And what has been often alleged in individual argument on the second point noticed above is now maintained in a tract which has been voluntarily sent me, I suppose for my edification, and which I therefore now take notice of. I am ignorant who is its author, and discuss its principles briefly as a subject that it is well to bring before the minds of many.

A tract has also been sent me on the first point. I have heard by report who is its author, but shall here simply discuss its principles. The two questions are, Can there

be corporate defilement by allowed evil in morals or doctrine? and, Is there any unity of the church of God upon earth?

It has been openly contended that, if fornication be allowed in a body of Christians, it is no ground of separating from it. This has been met by others; indeed exposing it in daylight was the best way of meeting it. To say that Christians were to separate from the world, to detach themselves from the great body of the professing church because of ecclesiastical evils, and then to affirm that positive immorality did not defile their community, but that, supposing it was allowed, saints should still own such a meeting all the same, was a proposition so monstrous, such a preference of ecclesiastical notions to the unalterable morality of God in the gospel, that one can only wonder how it was possible any Christians could have got into such a state of moral darkness. It was a solemn witness of the effect of false principles. With the individuals or their meeting we have of course nothing to do, save as the charity of Christ demands. We speak of principles; and let us see where these would lead. Those who are inside such a meeting of Christians are not allowed to break with them. They are bound to accept the companionship of sin, bound to accept disobedience to the apostle's rule, "Put out from among yourselves that wicked person." They must live in constant communion with evil, and constantly in the most solemn act of Christianity affirm the fellowship of light and darkness.

But this is not all. In such kind of meetings a meeting in one place receives, as did the scriptural churches, those in communion in another, and, when formally done, by letters of commendation. Suppose the fornicator, or even

those who have maintained his continuing in the meeting (another allowance thus of sin), to be commended, or to come in communion from the supposed meeting; and if they receive him deliberately at home, they must of course give him, so far as they are concerned, the same title abroad, and he is received elsewhere; and thus the deliberate wickedness of a majority of the meeting to which he belongs, or of the whole of it, if you please, obliges thus every Christian meeting, and, when the church of God was in order, we might say every church of God in the world, to put its seal on communion with sin and evil, and say that sin could be freely admitted at the table of the Lord, and Christ and Belial get on perfectly well together; or break with the meeting or church, that is, disown its being such at all. But if they ought, those who have any conscience in the meeting itself ought.

The national Establishment is incomparably better than this. There there is no pretension to discipline; each one is pious for himself. Here sin, and communion with sin at the Lord's table, is sanctioned on principle. And if it is admitted that it ought not to be allowed, it is declared, that if it is deliberately allowed, every one must acquiesce in it, the meeting is not defiled, and the disobedient sinners have a right to force the whole church of God to accept it, if not in principle, in practice, and deny their principles. It is the church of God securing as such, and by its special privilege and title, the rights of sin against Christ. How it would be possible to conceive anything worse I cannot imagine; it really seems to me the most wicked principle that possibly can be thought of. And it is not merely the habits of a particular class of Christians which lead to this; the

scriptural order of the church of God, as shewn in the scriptures, involves this sanction of sin if the theory be true.

No person can deny that saints passed from one assembly to another, and, if belonging to one, were received in another. It was not an organization of churches, such as Presbyterianism or Episcopacy, which I name here only to be understood, but it was a full recognition of them as expressions of the unity of the body of Christ. We see the saints going from one, and received as such in another, and that in virtue of letters commendatory. It was because each assembly was owned as representing the body of Christ in its locality that others were bound to receive those who belonged to it as being members of that body. Each local assembly was responsible within itself to maintain the order and godliness suited to the assembly of God, and was to be trusted in it; it is not disputing the competency of the local assembly, but owning it, when I receive a person because he belongs to it. If I do not receive a person who belongs to it, I deny its being a competent witness of the unity of the body of Christ.

Now it is exactly in this place the Spirit of God puts the local assembly at Corinth; not denying the unity of all saints on earth in one body, but owning the local assembly as so far representing it. “Ye are the body of Christ, and members one of another.” Now if I own the assembly at Corinth or anywhere else to hold that place, surely I must receive a person belonging to it as a member of the body of Christ— other membership I do not own. I quite agree that scripture owns no other; but for that very reason, when the apostle says, “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular,” and “we are

all one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf," I am bound to own the assembly as representing the body, and those who partake of the one loaf as members of the body. If I do not, I fall into the principle of a mere voluntary association, which makes rules for itself, and does what it pleases. Am I then to recognize, as representing the unity of the body, and acting by the Spirit with the Lord's authority, an assembly which sanctions sin, and says it is not defiled by it?

On the other hand, suppose such an assembly, say at Corinth, had put out from among themselves the wicked person, and another assembly received him, the latter thereby denies that the first has acted in the character of an assembly of God, representing there the body of Christ. It denies the action of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, or that what has been bound on earth has been bound in heaven. It is a mere sophism to suppose that, because an organization formed of assemblies is disowned, the responsibility of each assembly to the Lord is disowned, and its competent action by the Holy Ghost in the matters of the church of God. If a person were put out at Corinth, and received at Ephesus, the action of the Holy Ghost in the body at Corinth was denied, or Ephesus refused the action and denied the authority of the Holy Ghost and of Christ; that is, the assemblies were owned because each did in its locality act under the Lord and by the Holy Ghost. No doubt they might fail; Corinth would have failed but for the intervention of the Spirit by the apostle. But such is the scriptural principle, and that which we have to look for in an assembly; and the assembly is owned because it acts by the Holy Ghost under the authority of the Lord.

This point being cleared (and 1 Corinthians seems to me not to leave a trace of doubt on it), I would turn to another—the consequent responsibility of the Christians who compose it. They are to act for Christ by the Holy Ghost. “Put out from among yourselves that wicked person.” Paul forces it on the assembly; so in cases of wrong it is finally told to the assembly, and the “without” and “within” refer to it; that is, I get the body responsible as well as competent. The Lord, who knew all the coming history of His church, has extended this in His grace to two or three gathered in His name, and connects this with discipline and being heard. When two or three are gathered in His name, there is He in the midst of them. Thus, while fully admitting that all the saints in a locality constitute properly the one assembly in a place, if they will not unite, the responsibility and the presence of the Lord are found with those who do, and their acts, if really done as met in His name, have His authority; that is, another such assembly must own the assembly and their acts, or disown their connection with the Lord.

I do not mean that, if they fail in any particular case, they may not be remonstrated with, entreated, and so on; but, in a regular way, one assembly owns the action of the other, according to the promise of the Lord’s presence, because if it be a true assembly it owns the Lord’s own action in it, its own Lord’s action and the assembly as His. It is not a voluntary church, but a scriptural divine assembly; if they are not so gathered, and do not own the unity of the body, the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, and the presence of Jesus as so gathered together in His name only, I do not own the

assembly, though I may the saints who compose it. In the other case I am bound to do so.

But, further, we find that the assembly at Corinth did not put out the wicked person, and the apostle set about to correct this, and, indeed, would not go there while they were in this state, unless it were to exercise rigorous severity. His words, in speaking of it in the second Epistle, shew the thought that they were involved in the evil by allowing it— "Ye have proved yourselves clear in this matter." His complaint was that there was sin, leaven—not merely a sinner, but sin among them; and, ignorant as yet of discipline, they had not grieved so as that God should have removed the evil-doer from their midst; and he tells them to purge out the old leaven (not merely to put the person out, which was his practical direction) that they might be a new lump as they were unleavened. They, acquiescing in the sin, were involved in it; they were viewed in Christ and their true standing as unleavened; but they were to put out the old leaven that they might be a new lump, that their actual condition and standing might agree: otherwise they, the assembly, were not a new lump. Hence, in the second Epistle, when the first had produced its effect, the apostle says "that they had proved themselves clear in this matter"; but, if acquiescing in it, they were not clear. The assembly was not a new lump, and the members of it were not clear, if they accepted the principle of allowing sin in their midst. To use the title of our standing as a sanction for acquiescing in sin in fact in the assembly, saying it cannot be defiled, is a most evil and pestilential doctrine; and that persons in it, not guilty of the sin in act, are clear though they acquiesce

in it, is a thoroughly wicked principle, and directly contrary to scripture.

But, more, an assembly which admits such a principle has forfeited its title to be owned in the way I have spoken of above. We have seen it is a common point agreed upon, that the particular assembly met truly in the Lord's name represents the body of Christ, and Christ is to be looked for in their midst. But I cannot own an assembly which admits or acquiesces in sin, which takes this ground that sin does not defile it, to represent the body of Christ, or to be met in Christ's name. It is to make Christ acquiesce in the sin— "a minister of sin." God forbid! Christ's body (and we declare by "the one loaf" that we are one body) is a holy body; I cannot say I am one body with sinners. That a sinner or hypocrite may have slipped in, we all admit; but I do not own him. But if a body admit or acquiesce in sinners being there, it ceases to have the character of Christ's body altogether, or Christ's body is compatible with known sin; that is, the Holy Ghost and Christ present, admit and allow the sin. This doctrine (of the assembly not being defiled by known sin being there) is a direct denial of the presence of the Holy Ghost making them one, and of the authority of a present Lord. Does He accept sin in the members of the body? If not, those who do are acting as a voluntary meeting, acting on their own rules, not admitting the animating power of the Spirit of Christ; for it is a blasphemy to say He admits sin in those who belong to Him: an assembly which has this doctrine is not an assembly of God at all. Carelessness there may be—it should be corrected; but he who, as a principle, owns the existence of sin in the assembly, and denies it is defiled, denies its unity and

the Lord's presence; that is, it is not an assembly met in His name at all. What I think essential in this matter is the promised presence of the Lord, and the acting of the Spirit of God. If this be so, if I own the Lord, I must own the assembly and its acts; if it has a principle contrary to the presence of the Lord and the action of the Holy Ghost, I cannot own it as His.

The other question to which I adverted at the commencement is the recognition of Christ's body on earth. That which is taught in the tract sent to me149 is mere Congregationalism or Independency. I will give an extract or two from it.

"Now were we to understand the unity thus prayed for as designed to consist in all the disciples of Jesus throughout the world being visibly united, and forming one community on earth, or in any considerable number of them resident in any particular country or very large city being thus united, we should assuredly be at a loss to see how this prayer has hitherto been answered. But it formed no part of the commission which the risen Saviour gave the apostles to execute—that they should form all those of whom by the preaching of the gospel they made disciples into one visibly connected religious community. This accordingly is what the apostles, when planting churches and setting them in order, never aimed at; and so soon as there were other churches planted in addition to the first church formed at Jerusalem, believers ceased to form in all respects one community. We read afterwards accordingly, not of one church or religious community, but of numerous distinct religious communities independent of each other. We read of the 'churches of Judaea,' of Asia, of Macedonia, of Galatia, and of 'the churches of the saints,' that were

planted in the different other countries and cities in which converts were made to the Christian faith" (p. 2).

I only add what it associates itself with. The existence of sects, through the attempt to organize into one body, as the writer alleges, "is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world "(p. 9). I will add another. "Such is the oneness, it would appear, for which our Lord prayed in behalf of His disciples; a oneness invisible to mortal eye, but distinctly seen by the Omniscient" (p. 12). The absurdity of this is evident if we only read the passage in John referred to: "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." So the world was to be led to believe by "a oneness invisible to mortal eye!"

This however, to give the idea of the author complete, "was to be the foundation of a farther union—a union of a visible kind "(p. 14); … "the manifestation of it given by every assembly of Christ's disciples" (p. 15). This is fulfilling the "highly responsible office of giving a just representation of Christ's 'one body' "(p. 15). "Thus we are impressively taught, that as the human body is one, so also is Christ's spiritual body, the church, one. But the mystical 'one body' of Christ is nowhere to be seen in this world; nor is the church universal anywhere to be seen on earth as one body, except by representation. Where, then, is that representation given? It is given, scripture answers, by every scripturally constituted church which endeavours to keep the 'unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' In such a body alone—a body which is the institution of infinite wisdom—is Christian unity manifested, and the 'oneness' of Christ's body to be seen" (P. 17).

The author then states there is the invisible unity; and "of this spiritual unity there is a visible representation given by every assembly of Christ's disciples united on their profession of the one faith, walking together in love in the observance of all things the Lord Jesus has commanded, while endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Viewed in the first aspect Christian unity is much more perfect than when viewed in the latter. Though the one is a divinely appointed representation of the other, owing to man's failure and imperfection in this mortal state, it is often, and indeed at best, but an imperfect representation" (pp. 19, 20).

But the author goes farther. "The universal church of Christ may, therefore, be correctly viewed as one in reference to Him, its supreme Head in heaven; but it is not one community on earth; and the various schemes that have been devised to connect Christians in different districts of the same country under the same government, whether the government be avowed or merely virtually exercised, have been all futile attempts to accomplish what was never designed to exist" (p. 22). Again (p. 3), "It formed no part of the commission which the risen Saviour gave the apostles to execute—that they should form all those of whom by the preaching of the gospel they made disciples into one visibly connected religious community. This accordingly is what the apostles, when planting churches and setting them in order, never aimed at; and so soon as there were other churches planted in addition to the first church formed at Jerusalem, believers ceased to form in all respects one community. We read afterwards accordingly, not of one church or religious community, but of numerous

distinct religious communities independent of each other," etc. (p. 3).

"Under such circumstances, if disciples thought it advantageous to meet in separate assemblies in the same city or neighbourhood, there would not be any interference with Christian unity; for as an indefinite number of churches in the same district of country, independent of each other, was not considered inconsistent with Christian unity in the apostolic age, neither ought it to be considered inconsistent with it now" (p. 24).

These extracts will suffice to give the writer's mind. I affirm that, with the exception of the fact that local assemblies were formed, every statement of it is in direct contradiction with scripture, and that the very truth which the Spirit of God has been rescuing from the corruption of ages is laboriously denied in it. The best way to shew this will be to quote scripture as I have quoted the author. Our author quotes Romans 12:4, 5; Colossians 2:17, 19; and Ephesians 4; and 1 Corinthians 12; and says, "Why, it may be profitable to ask, is an assembly of believers such as the assembly at Corinth, to whom Paul wrote, united in faith and love to the Lord Jesus, and united by ties of love and sympathy to one another, compared to the human body?" (p. 16). "To whom, then, was this comparison designed to apply? Was it designed to apply to the mystical body of Christ, or to what is sometimes called the holy catholic… church, which, correctly viewed, is the same thing; or was it designed to apply to an individual assembly of disciples? It was designed, we apprehend, to apply to both" (pp. 16, 17). It is then he states what has been already quoted, "But the mystical 'one body' of Christ is

nowhere to be seen in this world; nor is the church universal anywhere to be seen on earth as one body, except by representation. Where, then, is that representation given? It is given, scripture answers, by every scripturally constituted church" (p. 17).

Now I have already recognized the responsibility of each local assembly in faithful discipline and unity as locally representing the whole body, because the Spirit and the Lord are there; so that they act by an authority which necessarily is binding on every other assembly, save allowance, as all make, for human failure, if the assembly be a true one. The question is, Is any one body recognized on earth? We are told "it formed no part of the commission which the risen Saviour gave the apostles to execute—that they should form all those of whom by the preaching of the gospel they made disciples into one visibly connected religious community "(p. 3). This assertion is easily disposed of. It is wholly beside the mark in every respect. There is not a word about churches, church, community, or communities, in the commission of the apostles. The mission or missions given by the risen Saviour had nothing to say to them. Either the gospel was to every creature unto salvation or condemnation, or repentance and remission of sins to be preached among all nations, or the nations were to be made disciples of.

There is a church spoken of; but the Lord is the builder or adder to it: this is never said of churches. But even when the apostles' work in this respect is spoken of, it is in general, or the whole assembly of God is spoken of, not particular assemblies, though such we know were formed, and in a practical sense in their own sphere represented the whole assembly. But the denial of an

assembly as one whole on earth is a great and mischievous error: we will consult the scriptures. The author distinctly states, “We read afterwards, accordingly, not of one church or religious community, but of numerous distinct religious communities independent of each other” (p. 3). This is in the teeth of scripture. “Scripture teaches that it is the bounden duty of every one who becomes a disciple of Jesus openly to profess his faith, and unite himself with a company of his fellow disciples” (p. 33). I deny this entirely. Scripture never teaches anything of the kind; they were added to the assembly; nor is there such an idea in scripture as uniting himself with a church. The writer does not tell us where scripture teaches it—for the best of reasons, because he cannot. Nor can any one be called on to prove a negation; but we shall find that scripture speaks quite otherwise on the subject. Disciples were added to the Lord, and became thus a part of the assembly.

Let us now take up scripture, and see how it speaks on the subject. The first place the assembly is spoken of is in Matthew 16: “On this rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of hell [hades] shall not prevail against it.” Now building the assembly is not even a mystical union of individuals with the Head in heaven. It supposes a system established on earth—a building—one assembly. The end of the clause is the plainest proof of this: a promise that the gates of hades should not prevail against mystical union with Christ in heaven, to the exclusion of the conditions of a church on earth, is an interpretation which condemns itself. The gates of hades have nothing to say to individual mystical union with Christ in heaven.

In Matthew 18, as we have seen, for the administrative authority of discipline, two or three met in Christ's name are sufficient.

I turn to the Acts. Here we see how the assembly was formed. As yet there was no diflference between the assembly and assemblies. The Lord had declared He would build His assembly, and He was doing it. There was no idea of the duty of joining a man's self to a community of disciples. A Jew, or a heathen, as soon as Cornelius was called, was converted to have share in the promises and calling of God. He was introduced (I raise here no special questions on the subject) by baptism most certainly, not into any particular assembly. Into what then? Into the assembly. He was publicly admitted among Christians. And now mark how it is as to the work itself spoken of: "The Lord added daily [to the assembly] such as should be saved." The Lord added. It was His work, and He added to the assembly. That is what He did with the remnant, preserved according to the election of grace. He did not restore Israel; He added them to the assembly, the nation being about to be cut off. They were put upon earth into this new position; also it was evident that the assembly was upon earth. It was according to the saying, "He died to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Now, if the unity were only the mystical one, if they were believers, they had no need of being gathered into one. They could not be scattered; their unity, as the tract tells us, was constant and unchangeable. Yet Jesus gave Himself to gather them together in one. The fact of baptism being the means of public admission makes the idea of joining a church impossible. The church had put its public sanction on them, and received them; and they

had a place, and were bound to take it, wherever they went, in God's assembly.

We may now turn to the church's dealings with them when they were within. The first Epistle to the Corinthians will here afford us divine light.

In the first of Corinthians it is of moment to remark because it is the epistle in which a local assembly is spoken of as practically in certain respects representing the whole assembly of God, that the epistle is addressed to all believers everywhere—all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. We get a church-character, but the apostle in his address is careful to associate all Christians with those at Corinth. Hence, if one was put out as a wicked person by the assembly at Corinth, he was "without," that is, outside the whole church of God (not of the body of Christ vitally, but the assembly on earth). Nor can you indeed read the entire epistle without seeing that what was said by the apostle, and consequently done by the assembly at Corinth, was an act valid for the whole body of saints on earth; that they are viewed as involved in it, as indeed they are expressly mentioned. To say he was only outside the particular assembly, when he was put out of it, is a monstrous and mischievous perversion. When the apostle says "them within" and "them that are without," to say that he only means within or without a particular body ("do ye not judge them that are within? them that are without God judgeth"); it is clearly "within," or "without," on earth; and it is clearly not within or without a particular assembly; the difference is between Christians and men of the world. Within and without, that is, applies to the whole assembly of Christ on earth; they were the fornicators of this world, or one called a

brother. In Corinth, to be of the assembly they must be of the local assembly, unless in schism; but if called “a brother,” they were of the assembly, not because they had joined that particular body, but because they were Christians not excluded by just discipline.

I now turn to chapter 12, which will make the matter as clear as possible; and, while it shews that a local assembly, viewed in association with all Christians everywhere on earth, practically represents and acts for all saints with the Lord’s authority if gathered in His name, yet it shews that the apostle has in mind the assembly, not an assembly. “But all these worketh one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will; for as the body is one, and there are many members, and all the members of that body being many are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

The tract tells us, “Every member of Christ’s ‘one body’ forms a constituent part of a great church or assembly, of which the Head is in heaven (p. 21).… The universal church of Christ may therefore be correctly viewed as one in reference to Him, its supreme Head in heaven, but it is not one community on earth” (p. 21). Again, “Its true spiritual unity has reference to its future existence and appearance in glory” (p. 21). In another place we are told “it applies to the mystical body of Christ—the church universal; but that it applies also to a particular assembly of believers “(p. 17). Now, I affirm that the passage can apply to neither (save so far as the church universal itself is seen on the earth), and solely to this last. The subject of the chapter is spiritual gifts, and the

figure of the body is not used in view of mere personal union with Christ (important, yea, yet more important, as that doctrine surely is), but of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. The church universal is not viewed as in heaven in its Head, but as on earth in its members; they have all been baptized with that one Spirit to make one body: the members are the gifts.

All are members and the Holy Ghost distributes as He will. Where are these gifts exercised, and to what do they belong? They are exercised on earth, that is a clear case; there is no evangelizing nor healing of the sick in heaven. But they do not belong to a particular assembly, but to the assembly; and God hath set some in the assembly: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healing, etc. Now nothing can be plainer or more positive than this. These gifts are exercised on earth; they are set in the assembly; they were not even all exercised in an assembly as apostles might be preaching to the world. Miracles might be wrought in the world, or healing take place; but they were members of the body who wrought; they were set in the assembly.

This chapter shews in the distinctest manner possible that, while scripture clearly owns local assemblies whose responsibilities and acts we have already considered, the action of the Holy Ghost is viewed as forming and acting in one assembly on the earth, and is viewed only as on earth—to the exclusion of what it will be in heaven, as is evident from the exercise of the gifts, and their nature. The whole scriptural view of the Holy Ghost's operation is denied by the teaching of the tract, as indeed the true nature of a local assembly is also. If Apollos taught at Ephesus, he taught when he went to

Corinth. He was a Christian, and thereby necessarily belonged to the assembly of Christians at Corinth, because it was the assembly of the Christians who were there. This does not hinder discipline, but makes the discipline valid as to the whole assembly of God.

If I turn to the Ephesians, more especially consecrated to the instruction of Christians on the highest privileges of individual saints, or of the church, I find the same truth. “Ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”; that is, Jews and Gentiles were reconciled in one body to God by the cross. It was growing to its full result, but there was on earth a habitation of God through the Holy Ghost. Here unity is a great point—one body, one Spirit, one hope. But where is this? On earth. Gifts are given to every one according to the measure of the gift of Christ. When ascended Christ gave gifts to men—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, till we all come, etc.

Thus, again, the future heavenly state is excluded. Yet we are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, for there is one Spirit and one body. The Head being ascended, He has given gifts—not in a church; apostles and evangelists exercised their ministry, the first partly, the latter exclusively, in the world, and the apostles as such clearly belonged to no particular assembly. The idea of the members of an assembly is wholly unknown to scripture. It is used as a figure, and in reference to the human body. We are likened to a body, but that body is the body of Christ; an assembly is not His body, though it may locally represent it. I read, “The assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”150 Now that predicted confusion has come in I certainly am the last to deny; a confusion

which makes one feel doubly the comfort of the promise, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” But this becomes a mere self-regulated voluntary association whenever the unity of the body on earth is not owned. They cannot take the scriptures for their guide, they have begun by denying them in the point which established their own position. We are God’s husbandry, God’s building. Alas! wood and hay and stubble have been built upon the foundation, and perverse men have crept in, and wolves have come, ordinances and legalism have perverted Christendom; but that does not alter God’s truth. God has foreseen all, and provided the path of obedience in the word, and grace for it. And when we deny a scriptural truth, we may be sincere Christians, and do so from prejudice and ignorance; but we deprive ourselves of the blessing and character of sanctification attached to that truth. So where the unity of the assembly on earth is denied, the blessings attached to it are lost, as far as our personal profit goes, and these benefits are nothing less than the action of the Holy Ghost on earth, uniting us as members to Christ, and acting as He sees right in the members down here. To deny the defilement of the assembly by the allowance of sin, and the unity of the body on earth by the presence of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy all the responsibility of the one, and all the blessing of the other, and in these points to make void the word of God.

148 This originally appeared as an article in The Present Testimony.

149 “Christian Unity contrasted with its Counterfeits.” Yapp and Hawkins, 70, Welbeck Street.

150 Compare too 1 Timothy 3:15. It is monstrous to say, that a particularly voluntary assembly, which “Christian disciples have thought it advantageous “to form, is the pillar and ground of the truth, though a local assembly of Christians ought to represent the church in this also, a truth which comes strikingly out in this passage; while, along with 1 Corinthians 12, it shews that the apostle, in speaking of a particular assembly, never loses sight of the one assembly, and always views it as representing that. See another remarkable instance of that in Acts 20:22.

A Reply To Defence Of The Doctrine Of Baptismal Regeneration

By the Bishop of Ossory, Leighlin, and Ferns.

Preface

It is with sorrow and regret I publish the following paper; I do it in no hostility to any one. These are not the times for it; they are too solemn for party controversy, but they are the times for the truth—times in which every Christian is bound according to his measure to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. I have not discussed at all the system with which the fatal error I do discuss is connected; I thought it more for the good of souls to confine myself to one plain point. I appeal to every conscientious Christian to say where the truth is. The subject would admit of large development, but I prefer abstaining from it. I add my name as more open and as shewing confidence in those who are more immediately concerned—confidence in their love of the truth for the truth's sake. I trust Dr. O'Brien will be assured that there is no thought of unkind feeling towards himself or any one. He cannot be surprised that truth on so important a point should be discussed: that concerns not only him, but the whole church of God.

May the Lord only bless this brief testimony to the hearts of those to whom it may come, From their faithful servant in Christ, J. N. Darby.

* * * * *

It is a sorrowful thing to see the Protestantism of the country frittered away, and by those who should maintain it; and the only use made of the authority which is in the hands of such as should be its natural leaders (perhaps I should say the influence, for authority they seem to have none) that of damping the energy of what life there is, and suppressing that which the love of the truth would arouse in some. Popish doings they tolerate and screen, Protestant truth—and I mean by this the truth drawn from scripture by what is called Protestantism, what gives it an evangelical character—this they discountenance and suppress. Positive truth of their own they have none. That gives energy and would tell itself out. Error is become impudent and boisterous and even threatening. The only object of ecclesiastical leaders is to keep things together, and hence the energy of truth must be suppressed if possible.

The only effect of their weakness, of the whole course they have pursued, is to discourage God's truth and give time and opportunity to error to penetrate and gain the upper hand. People wait for them to uphold the truth and check mischief, but truth they have none, and hence they are little concerned at its loss. Mischief for them would only be the outward system that gives them their importance being touched. The right feeling which accompanies truth is in general disposed to respect authority, and they avail themselves of this to keep it down and help error. But let them be assured of this, that they are pursuing a dangerous and ruinous course. If they go on much longer popery will supplant them—and why should it not if they favour its principles?—and those who love the truth will follow it3and they will have nothing to keep together. They will be nowhere. In a war

of antagonistic principles the man who seeks to temporize, while proving he has no principle of his own, and loves no truth, will disappear and leave only the memory of his own folly.

Remember, prelates of England and Ireland, if you are not Protestant, what are you? Popery will easily supply your places. Your only force is the truth. They as a system have infinitely more force than you—more force over civil government. They do not want the truth, they want power; you, Irish prelates, are sacrificing what gave vital energy to a minority to keep the support of the English hierarchy, which is at its wits end to know what to do. And Ireland is to be sacrificed to this folly. I ask every honest heart if, in the measure in which elevation in the hierarchy exists from an archdeacon to the Pope, truth is not proportionately lost, and if he can shew me an instance in which one promoted in it has honestly maintained the truth he held boldly before his promotion.

I turn to the publication which has led me to write these words—more sad than bitter—not because of what is in the tract I am commenting on, but as leading me to speak of what is going on. Dr. O'Brien was for a good while decidedly opposed to baptismal regeneration. We can understand the blinding influence of education in a system, when the word of God through traditional teaching has not its full power. Many excellent men have accepted the saying that a child was regenerate by the Holy Ghost when they did not believe it, being decidedly opposed to baptismal regeneration. But Dr. O'Brien is now convinced of it and gives us a plea for it, he tells us, from the Bible, and the Bible alone. He is as a prelate a convert to what he rejected as a simple Christian. I

might be tempted to tear to pieces his pamphlet, of which the weakness stares one in the face; but I restrain myself. The times are too serious, and the author is pious and aged. I will point out calmly its fallacies.

That a man who believes in what is in the Prayer-book as it is should justify this unscriptural notion is natural; it runs through the book. In the miserable Catechism, in which there is not one word of divine truth and abundance of error, it is carefully instilled into the young. Dean Nowell's catechism, if I might not agree with all, still had much divine truth in it. Saving truth this has none. But in a plea from the Bible and the Bible alone, this argument from what is in the Prayer-book will not do, still less when the object of the tract is to produce an effect in a revision of the Prayer-book because these things are in it. We lawyers used to say, "allegatio ejusdem rei cujus dissolutio petitur nil valet."

But Dr. O'Brien produces at the very utmost two passages of scripture. One affords him no proof whatever unless upon the authority of the "ancients" — an interpretation of the Fathers, who, if any ever did, darken counsel by words without knowledge, of whom the great body previous to Nice were unsound on the deity of Christ, let men plead what they will; not one of whom believe really151 in justification by faith; who exalted ceremonies at the expense of truth, and sanctioned immorality and superstition to win over the Pagans, putting deliberately the saints instead of the gods and demigods; and cultivated an asceticism which, in affectation of purity, pursued practices which called from shame at last repeated reprehension. Dr. O'Brien avowedly in the book rests his argument on these

authorities. “From the Bible alone,” is on the title-page alone.

In the only other passage Dr. O’Brien must know very well that the word ‘regeneration’ does not mean in scripture being born again at all; and the passage proves it. It is used but twice, and does not mean being born again.

Further, all his argument outside scripture is based on using a word as equivalent to another, or to a phrase which means a totally different thing, and where the whole force of his argument depends on their meaning the same; or again, on the grossest begging of the question on the very point in hand by the use of unscriptural words. As to any positive truth, you must not expect it. A teacher with authority must not commit himself to truth.

Dr. O’Brien assumes a multitude of principles which may embarrass others who accept tradition, but which I should formally deny. He copies the style of Butler, which calculates the possibilities of facts and the probabilities of truth from evidence, and investigates with much power of analysis, how far a proof goes, and what may be, though some apparent denial of what is alleged to be truth may exist; but there is no positive truth. To see how far this may lead I will only say that Butler says there must be what scripture calls sin (Butler ‘propensions’) in heaven, or that there could not be happiness; on the Aristotelian principle that for happiness there must be habits of virtue, for virtue conflict, consequently propensions to overcome. Such is theology.

But I must prove my statements as to Dr. O'Brien. First, the change of terms on which the whole argument depends, and the petitio principii involving the whole question. "All who believe baptism to be a sacrament must believe that what is outward and visible is connected with something inward and invisible, that what is material is connected with something spiritual—not merely as an outward, but as an effectual sign thereof: that is, a sign by which, or through which, as the channel or means or instrument (whether sole or concurrent) these inward or spiritual effects are wrought." Why so? Because that is the definition of a sacrament (which is not a scriptural word) given in the system which is attacked as false. A sacrament, in the catechism which teaches baptismal regeneration so called, is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us as a means whereby we receive the same. Of course, if a sacrament confers the grace of which it is a sign, so that it is an effectual sign, 152 it does confer it. If I call it a sacrament (and a sacrament means conferring the grace and I must add, if this be the grace signified), the grace is conferred.

But this is the whole question. Dr. O'Brien takes the definition of the word given by the impugned system, and then shews that the definition involves the system. Of course it does. But that is exactly the point in question; the adversaries of the erroneous system deny that the grace is conferred in the rite, and Dr. O'Brien, bringing in the word sacrament (which has no warrant in scripture) and the definition given of it by his system, cannot prove anything but that his system holds it. It is too gross a case of begging the question to pass current for a moment. It is the very thing denied which his

definition of a sacrament involves if we call it sacrament. Of course, if I accept his word and definition, I must accept the conclusion, for it states it: that is, he states what is denied as a proof that it is true. His arguments amount to the use of an unscriptural word as the name of the rite, and a traditional definition giving a sense which the word itself never had, which false definition is a statement of the doctrine denied.

Why not give a scriptural declaration of what the rite means? But after all, though all depends on this attempt to blind our eyes by the habit of calling it a sacrament, Dr. O'Brien gives this up too. He is content to accept, though he does not agree with, what upsets it altogether. He would not detract from this view (p. 21). But the change of idea in this other view is total: "For they would have thus secured to them by covenant a right to the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, with all His gracious influences." But a sign conferring a spiritual blessing, nothing less than the communication of divine life, is a totally different thing from securing a right to advantages which I may utterly neglect after all. Nor indeed is the new birth among the things we have a right to in Dr. O'Brien's list. Only, remark in all this, the Bible and the Bible alone is simply and wholly forgotten. Next we get (p. 22), "Grace or graces, like mental qualities in a natural man, as substitutes for being born again," which drops the question of giving life.

But Dr. O'Brien does quote John 3. He says (p. 24), "It is impossible to doubt that born of water and of the Spirit is to be understood of baptism," etc. Well, if so, we must of course admit people are born again in baptism; but even so, not by it of the Spirit. But this is just the

question. Does it apply to baptism? and not only so; but to use it to the end Dr. O'Brien purposes we must prove that being born of water and of the Spirit means being born of the Spirit by means of water (p. 37), for this is Dr. O'Brien's and the Catechism's theory.

Now, why is it "impossible to doubt it"? First, it is thus "our church" interprets the words. Very likely, but the objection is to the church's teaching it. It is not a proof from the Bible alone, or the Bible at all. It is the rightness of the church's so teaching which is controverted. What further proof then? Hooker expressly declares that of all the ancients there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise expound or allege the place than as implying external baptism. Now if it be merely implied, I should not much object; the point is, does it speak of it? But if so, what is this proof? The Fathers so speak, who by this reverend term are made to palm on us a mass of heresy and nonsense that no Christian of any sense would have on his table in English. "But if this be the case," says Dr. O'Brien, "we appear to be fully warranted in stating we have the Lord's own authority for assuming that it is in baptism that the new birth takes place." If what "be the case"? If we have the authority of our church and the ancients implying it? How is that the Lord's own authority? You have our church, and the ancients for saying it means it; but nothing more whatever.

The argument of the writer is this: all the ancients say that the passage implies baptism; therefore we must conclude that we have the Lord's own authority for assuming that it is in baptism that the new birth takes place! How what the ancients say gives the Lord's own authority is hard to tell—the ancients who have not one

word of solid truth, and are full of error and folly, who corrupted the church by Platonism, as every one who has reach church history knows, even to the obliterating the divinity of Christ.

We forget that the apostle assures us that in his time all sought their own, that after his decease perverse men would arise; another, that there were many antichrists; another, that those had arisen who were to be judged at the coming of the Lord; another, that the time was come for judgment to begin at the house of God. The Christian is warned by one to abide in what he had heard from the beginning; by another, that one must know from whom one had learned anything, and that the scriptures were the security of the saint in the perilous times. Another was obliged to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; another warns, there should be false teachers and many follow their pernicious ways; and again, Paul, that there were many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, men who subvert whole houses, that the time would come when they would not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers. What security does this afford me? The word of God does. I know of whom I have learned in learning of Paul, and John, and Peter, and that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God.

But who is Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria, or Origen, Tertullian, or Hermas, or any of these, to enable me to say, I have the Lord’s authority? Men who have really led the way in gross error of doctrine, and wild speculation, false principles, and (I add) immorality. Is this the Bible and the Bible alone? The world, the Indian held, was on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on what? The plea from the Bible and the

Bible alone has landed us on what the ancients say, if Hooker be right.

But a word on what scripture does say: water cleanses, we all understand. We read, “Ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you,” “sanctifying and cleansing it by the washing of water by the word.” And Christ, washing by the water He had poured into the basin, says to the disciples, “He that is washed [bathed] needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” Now none of these passages apply to baptism: in most they had not been baptized; as indeed, as to the first disciples, there is not the smallest hint that they ever were—they were to receive, not be received: who should have received them?

Hence too, when the Lord speaks of what livingly subsists as born, He says only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” and speaks no longer of water. Water cleanses what is, life begins when one is born. And if we give heed to the Lord’s words, who tells Nicodemus that as a master in Israel he should have known these things, we cannot doubt that the Lord alludes especially to Ezekiel 36:24-27: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,” etc. That is to say, there is a moral practical cleansing, typified by the word ‘water,’ and a new life given by the operation of the Spirit of God. No one could say that which is born of water is water; it has no sense. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit; it is the communication of life, like in its nature to its source; but that we are born of the Spirit by the means of the water, there is not the slightest hint of. And even “our church

“has sense enough to see this when it has its eyes open: “Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin.” Hence the scripture speaks of baptism as being for death, not life; as in Romans 6, Colossians 2, where at the utmost you make speak of resurrection being involved in it, after the death, unto the likeness of which we have been planted, through the faith of the operation of God who raised Him from the dead. Hence, if we take baptism as a figure, it is as, to the water, a figure of death—Christ’s death; being born of the Spirit, a communication of new life.

And here I may quote the only other passage which Dr. O’Brien quotes in pleading from the Bible and the Bible alone, “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” I have already said that the word is not used for the new birth; it is only used once again in Matthew 19, for the new order of things which Christ shall inaugurate, commonly called the millennium. Hence the word as scripturally used I have no objection to apply to baptism as a figure of true cleansing, but note it is here, as in John 3, in this sense carefully distinguished from renewing of the Holy Ghost. There are two things—a washing, water or laver, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. There is no pretence in form more than in doctrine to say born of the Spirit by, or through, or by means of, the water. It is a pure invention of corrupted Christianity.

Take Peter again. “The like figure (antitupon) whereunto baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Not a word of being born. It is planting in the likeness of His death, not being born of the Spirit. That

comes in with an “and,” or alone and apart. The doctrine in baptism is death, death to sin as Christ died to sin, to whose death we are baptized. If Dr. O’Brien will take it as effectual, he must say we are actually “saved” (so says Peter) and dead to sin, one word of which he does not allude to nor believe. It is not infantine undeveloped grace, as he would make us believe by analogy, but absolute death to sin, as indeed the service declares, and actual salvation. He that is dead is freed (justified) from sin—cannot be charged with it.

If it be merely said that John 3 teaches truths which baptism symbolizes, provided “and of the Spirit “be kept as a distinct thing as scripture always does keep it, I have nothing to object; as John 6 teaches truth which the Lord’s supper symbolizes, but what is totally and utterly untrue, if applied to the Lord’s supper itself. If John 6 apply to the supper itself, every one who partakes of it not only has eternal life now but is eternally saved: “whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” The whole application of either to “sacraments” is a delusion, though the sacraments may allude to the truths taught.

But I have another question to ask Dr. O’Brien. He tells us (p. 25) that baptism is administered to the penitent and believing adult. Now we read in scripture that we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. One who has repented and believed is most certainly born of God. I am aware that it is prayed that they may be born again, but this only shews the gross confusion which arises from this false doctrine. Were it only that adults or children were formally admitted by Christ’s institution into the place where all God’s ordered

privileges and blessings were, I should have nothing to say. If the word ‘regeneration’ were employed in its scriptural sense (though modern use would make it dangerously equivocal) one might have nothing to say; but in a statement quite unscriptural, asking they may receive the Holy Ghost that they may be born again (which is never true, for it was after being baptized for the remission of sins they were to receive it, Acts 2), and with this additional error, it is asked that they may be thus born again after having repented, and believed. And to confirm and increase the error, it is taught in the Catechism that they are not only made children of God (ascribed to faith in Galatians) but members of Christ and inheritors of the kingdom—another blunder, for we are in it. By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and in every case in scripture the Spirit was given apart from baptism: the apostles, those Peter spoke to, the Samaritans, Cornelius, and the twelve men in Acts 19.

Further, the writer rests all his argument on infant baptism being a divine institution. He admits that it would have no force if it were not (p. 25), and this last solely on the fact that Jewish habits of thought would so require. He leaves out the passages Paedobaptists use, such as Matthew 28, 1 Corinthians 7:14, relegates into more than doubt historical testimony, denies the validity of other passages they claim as proofs, and rests all on no one scripture, but the contrary (p. 11). He rests all on his own conclusion that with a Jew it must have been forbidden not to be practised. This, which has been often alleged to confirm the Paedobaptist view, stands alone with Dr. O’Brien. Scripture he has none, save to deny its application and from “this foundation being now,” he says, “as I hope, securely laid,” he goes on to

prove we are born again in it. And this is a plea from the Bible alone! It is impossible to conceive anything weaker. Many things are assumed, but I do not dwell on them, such as the Christian covenant, the new covenant being made with us, all which is unscriptural (though we get the spiritual blessings of it); yet really all his argument is founded on this traditional error. But if Christianity were the new covenant, which it is not, the Holy Ghost is the seal of faith now as circumcision was then. Matthew 28 was never carried out. The mission to the Gentiles was given up to Paul explicitly (Gal. 2) who was not sent to baptize, and the mission in Matthew was from resurrection, not ascension, and did not apply to Jews but to Gentiles only—was not to every creature as Dr. O'Brien says, but only to Gentiles. But all this would lead me too far.

Dr. O'Brien could not have read, or has forgotten, Luther's longer catechism, when he laboriously discusses the connection of baptism and justification by faith, puts the objection to his view of baptism, because he had taught men were so justified, and answers it by its being faith in the word used in baptism. Water could not produce so great an effect, but water with the word! To such shifts does error reduce great men. It is a curious effect of this baptismal system where universal, that the forgiveness of sins, when received as the full privilege of the Christian state and standing, takes place when people have committed none at all. Those that are committed men must receive occasional forgiveness for, as Jews did for theirs. The whole of Hebrews 9, 10, is despised, the "once for all" is denied in toto, the peace given by atonement (left as the heirloom of the Christian

by Christ at the cost of His precious blood) is abrogated. It is a base, vile system.

But further, Dr. O'Brien speaks of election as a mysterious doctrine, and would seem to leave it in suspense. But the baptismal system denies all its reality: men are spiritually really born again and perish after all; alive in Christ, they perish; forgiven their sins, they are damned for them. It is not leaving it in the shade, it is openly denying the positive declarations of Christ and the scripture. Either the baptized child does not receive life, or he perishes when he has received it in many cases, and it is uncertain in all. Either he is not forgiven, or he is condemned after he is. What kind of gospel is this? Take the seventeenth article, if I am to speak to Episcopalians, where the doctrine is clearly stated in human language for them; and what will they make of the ruin of those who have received eternal life and forgiveness? If it be not eternal life, what life is it? The truth is, the system makes every truth uncertain. It takes up blessings scripture speaks of in blessed truth, and connects them with superstitious error, and truth has ceased to be truth then, and those who have received divine life perish. Those who have not committed sins are forgiven, and those who are forgiven are damned. And the plea for it is drawn from the Bible and the Bible alone! Dr. O'Brien wisely left out that part of his title when he came to the body of his book. I cannot but regret that Dr. O'Brien should have intimated that the doctrine of the Trinity is about as uncertain as infant baptism. I have not a thought here of calling infant baptism into doubt; but I should own in the fullest way the most narrow Baptist as perhaps a better Christian than myself, though I might regret his

narrowness. But one who denied the Trinity I could not own at all; and I think it is unhappy to bring what is of faith on a level with the uncertain grounds of a pamphlet such as I am observing on. It presents us two propositions: one, that infant baptism is a divine institution; the other, that the new birth spoken of by the Lord takes place in baptism, for the proof of which Dr. O'Brien has assuredly brought no certain warrant of scripture at all, but the natural feeling of Jewish minds—a reasonable ground of persuasion it may be—and the opinion of the ancients, which proves worse than nothing. But what can we expect when a system takes precedence of the truth, and the truth is given up for it? Many things I should have to remark on; but my object is the main question. I only notice one, that it is—no, we must not expect "it is" as to any truth— "it seems to be (p. 34) the appointment of Christ for His universal church, the tares and wheat are growing up together." I do not argue the question, but this passage in Matthew never speaks of the church at all. Matthew 16 speaks of the church; chapter 13 of the kingdom of heaven. And the Lord's explanation of this parable expressly says, "the field is the world." There it is they were to grow together. The world is not the church.

There is one thing I think striking, as the effect of this balancing of arguments instead of believing the word of God. Not one single doctrine or truth is held as a divine certainty. As to what is spiritual life or the operation of the Spirit, or in what does its beginning consist, we are told the reformed teachers could not have found in scripture the means of making precise statements. Where is the testimony of God? where the pillar and ground of the truth?

I would but add, as regards forgiveness in baptism, this much: the Homilies of the Anglican body declare that that only is a sacrament in which the forgiveness of sins is annexed and tied to the visible sign; the full-grown Puseyite, that the forgiveness of sins after baptism (when there are none to forgive) is next to impossible—may be had by severe penance perhaps; the moderate Puseyite or full Anglican, that they receive it on taking the sacrament, and remain between each occasion unforgiven. What absolution may do, I do not say! This is Judaism, in contrast with Hebrews 9 and 10 where the subject is fully treated.

151 One or two use the term, but it is not Paul’s doctrine.

152 Its being a sign of being born again is assumed into the bargain. It is not so in scripture.

Disendowment — Disestablishment:

A Word to the Protestants of Ireland, in a Letter to the Ven. Archdeacon Stopford Barbadoes, February 20, 1869.

Dear Mr. Archdeacon,

I regret the marks of discouragement which are in your letter. It is not the time for it. That we are in full revolution everyone sees, and the vain and weak tool of it, Mr. Gladstone, knows no more where he is leading the country than the princes of Zoan, when God took away the boasted wisdom of Egypt. But there is One whose power is above all revolutions, and who turns the hearts of men what way He will.

I belong to no external church; I own that only which Christ builds. I am, as we are all, responsible for the ruined state of what God set up at the beginning, and I profit by the privileges scripture affords for the state we are in. I look to the effect on the country of the measure which is before us all. It is very likely the measure of disendowment may succeed: but that is far better than compromise with popery. I left the Establishment more than forty years ago, because I did not think it the church of God. I am confirmed in that conviction; but I am not going to cast an Edomite stone at it in the day of its calamity, but the contrary. Jeremiah could testify against Jerusalem, be an iron pillar against the whole land, and weep over her calamities with unfeigned sorrow. Without being a prophet, I may judge the evil, and mourn, as I do, over your calamities. An Edomite was glad of the downfall of Jerusalem, because he hated the place and testimony. The prophet could judge the

evil, and mourn the departure, and the judgment of God on the people that had failed. Be assured of my sympathy.

But to return. At the time I refer to, Roman Catholics were passing over to Protestantism many hundreds in the week. The Archbishop of Dublin insisted that the Protestant Establishment suited the State, made them take the oaths of abjuration and supremacy, and the work stopped. You are now reaping the fruit of that connection, and your dependence on civil power, when what rules the State is become semi-Papist or semi-infidel.

As to the Dissenters, they have forfeited their claim to be accounted a religious body. Political power they have attained in a considerable degree. The wealth and population of the towns have largely passed into their hands, and political power has passed in large excess into the hands of the towns. But they have sold the pass to the devil for political objects. As a religious body, I judge them extinct. They are drifting, to keep up with the spirit of the age, into infidelity, and are already, in the most servile way, pandering to infidels to gain their favour. They look to set aside the Protestant Establishment, having joined Papists and infidels for the purpose. When they find the height to which Popery will pretend, they will set themselves against it, but on infidel grounds. Indeed some, two or three years back, avowed this to me in conversation, that they would join the Roman Catholics in pulling down the Establishment and then fight it out with popery. But they have joined the latter and the infidels to begin with, and forfeited their title to be reckoned as standing on Christian ground. The word of God has lost its power over them.

That is not—was not when I knew it—the case with the Protestants of Ireland. Let them trust God now. If disendowed and disestablished, let them be wholly, absolutely separate from the State—at all cost. If the State take everything from them, they will have taken no true power, but I believe, increased, if God be trusted, the power of the body as such. I am looking at their place in the country. Nobody will or can hold their place there. The Roman Catholic clergy are not and never will be gentlemen. I do not speak of this as a religious motive, but simply as a social fact. Their political influence may be increased, though it has been long paramount; but a moral, social, intellectual position, such as the Protestants', they never will—never can have. They must be servile and ecclesiastical. It is the power of their system, but it keeps them there. It is so in every country. Nor is it even otherwise with Dissenters. It is a common remark among themselves in England: the carriage of a man who has made his fortune is seen at the Dissenting chapel door, but, as a rule, that of his son never. No growth of democracy will change this. It is the case in the United States. The upper orders go to the Episcopalians, besides some poor. As a rule, the poor are never found in any churches in America (in Roman Catholic ones, they must go to get the sacraments). They have what are called mission-churches for them. But socially, what are called the respectable classes in towns are Episcopalians. It suits their taste and habits better, and as others advance in position, they gradually slip in there: though of course there are wealthy people elsewhere.

If the Protestants trust God, this will remain their position. Let them, because of the word of God, and in

honouring it and what is called Protestantism, as owning it cordially, coalesce with the Presbyterians, as you have noticed they did in the best times under Bramhall.153 I believe even politically— I speak as a looker-on, for I never meddle in politics in any way—that, entirely separated from the State, they will have more political power than now. At the heels of a Conservative minister levelling-up popery, or receiving heavy blows and discouragement from a Liberal minister, they had no voice or influence of their own; if they are independent and hold together as such, they will. Only be yourselves, and trust God. Have done with the State and reject it, making no terms for a little money and much subjection; if you do, you are lost. There is wealth enough to carry on your needed plans if they take everything. See America; see the Free Presbyterians of Scotland. And surely England would largely help. If trust in God is there, money will not be wanting. Only be independent of a semi-infidel semi-popish State. If this measure leads to the rising up of Roman Catholics against connection with England, as is possible if it suits them, and the voice of the people is to govern (the power of the crown is too much weakened to be a bond), you will be no worse off than before. The influence will be American or French, and you as free or freer than before. England will be dependent on France when she has a separated Ireland at her side, and then, “See to your own house, David.”

The hand of God is upon you in chastisement. Bow to it, but turn to Him. Trust Him. You have leaned on Pharaoh, that broken reed: it has pierced your hand. Acknowledge your failures, and God will be with you. Care for the poor; they are often more true to their

convictions than many of the rich. Seek them out when they are scattered. I do not belong to your system, and could not. The power of popery and infidelity I have expected more than forty years to be thus rampant. It is this aspect of it which makes me speak. No mere political measure would open my mouth. But we are in the last days, and it is well to notice the working of the power of evil, and where the refuge is. Forty years ago I was overwhelmed with the prospect of the dominancy of popery and accompanying infidelity. Now one can look out of it, sorrowful as it is, to a brighter hope beyond. But the question is there: Is the word of God paramount, having direct authority from God over every Christian; or is the church so-called, above it and to accredit it, and to rule over men's consciences in a way superior to the direct authority of the word? That is the question. Has God's word direct authority over the conscience of man, or has man, calling himself the church, control over it and his conscience?

This is not the place to speak of what I may think in the Establishment inconsistent with the word. But it was (in the main external character of its testimony in Ireland) the main-tainer of the authority of the word of God against the church claims of men, of which the priests were the representatives. If you hold this ground, God will be with you in spite of defects. If not, the priests will do apostate church-work more thoroughly, and Christians must take their own place by the word under Christ—you will have none. My own path is in peace, far from all these things. But I feel for many an honest and perhaps troubled heart, as a Christian looking on at what is passing. My portion is out of this world. We

have, when all is shaken, a kingdom which cannot be moved.

I have ventured this testimony, believing we are in the last days, when the word of God is the revealed resource of faith; 2 Tim. 3.

Yours faithfully in the Lord,

J.N.D.

At this distance from Ireland much may have passed already of which I am ignorant; but this would not alter the principles of my letter.

153 Originally all such Protestant bodies were owned, and it is said by your best liturgists that the form of the article was worded on purpose to own them.

Remarks on a Book Entitled, “Is Modern Christianity A Civilised Heathenism?”

I recognize that this writing is calculated to produce serious thoughts; but it is as marking coming judgment. As a judgment of the state of things, the writer is sadly right; but he has not got a step beyond the conventionalities of the church of England. The testimony of Christianity is in its effects; but of Christianity itself he is wholly ignorant. His highest idea is asceticism, and fine Gothic buildings, when he comes to the positive side.

But if I take the precepts of Christianity, he lives not in them, but in his own natural thoughts. It is just as much a precept of Christianity— “when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and shut to thy door,” and that on the deepest moral ground, as to be separate from the world, not in a chancel with the door open. “The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” “They that worship God must worship in spirit and in truth.” It is equally a precept, “when thou fastest, be not of a sad countenance, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast.” All this inward part of Christianity is gone; nay, the opposite is required to win the world to believe.

But there is more. We cannot too fully recognize that the friendship of the world is enmity against God; and he that will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God. We are crucified to the world and the world to us. But Christianity and consequently conscience and heart are

both wanting. It is, humanly speaking, a just satire (though it is, say they, “an ill bird that fouls its own nest”); let us hope the end shews some conscience. But Christianity is not a satire; it is grace. See the difference: “For many walk of whom I told you before, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour.”

The two great pillars of Christianity are wanting, John 3:3, “Ye must be born again,” and verse 16, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” There is no new inward life, no love of God.

The man, to use the strong Irish expression, is “to make his soul” by asceticism and praying in agony in a cathedral where anybody that likes may see him. No trace of love in God, no need of another and divinely given life in Christ—no trace of either is found in the book. This is so true, that it is not merely that the world hated Christ (which is most true, because He testified of it that the works thereof were evil—light came in so that all without exception were condemned); but he makes Christ hate the world! I read, “I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, that ye yield your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service; and be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” In this book the mercies of God are wholly unknown; nonconformity to the world is insisted on by the heathen mind and natural conscience; transformed

by the renewing of your mind is wholly ignored. Now nonconformity to the world, without the other too, is the pharisaism he says the Saviour came to judge. The picture of highest good is being scorned by the world, like Christ. Good in God, or in Christ, never crosses his mind. It is imitation: I know what it is. Earnest men may try it, when they have no knowledge of God or redemption, and be driven, under grace, to know they need a Saviour. He has no idea but of one lying stretched at the foot of the cross, loving Him with a love all the world can see. God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, then making Him to be sin for us, he knows not at all. “He took upon Him human flesh that we might know for certain how human creatures ought to five, who died on the cross to win for us the power to imitate His brave contempt,” etc.

But further his statement as to heathenism is false. See Romans i, where the apostle only touches on the mountain tops of the evil, hiding justly in the dark shade what grew in baleful luxuriance beneath. He denies positively in terms the apostle’s statement in Romans 1:19, 20; and his argument as to a final cause is wholly illogical. We cannot help believing causation; that is, when we see an existing thing expressing a thought, we believe there must be one who has caused it. Consequently we cannot know God, because He exists without a cause. We know that He must be; but what makes us do so shews we cannot know Himself.

I need not say, the Christian is not of the world. As such, Christ is all to him; and all he does he is to do positively in the name of Christ. This only is to live; hut it is because he is bought with a price, he knows and feels he is Christ’s, and Christ is in him in the power of life.

The man has never lived with true Christians, any more than he knows a Saviour God. It is a sad and solemn picture; but he has known nothing beyond it. The infidel world can attack evil: with that he falls in, putting the right side in a heathen's mouth, ashamed to quote scripture himself. His statements as to this are quite untrue. "The Bible as a primary instructor tells me nothing about God whatever." "The Bible is of no use without an interpreter." And what is the result? Miserable labour to get heaven, and, instead of fox-hunting and society, he gives species of insects, the number of botanic genera, architecture, music, painting, poetry, which may be consecrated to Him, as stone buildings prove; and we must have good music (as well as distinguish a beetle from a cockroach) and an active life. Redemption, spirituality, and Christ being really all, and the real service of love, are alike unknown to him. Where these are really known, it may rouse careless souls; and that is well. I believe a Christian is to live Christ and nothing else. As to the scene this writer describes and is in, and the correctness of which, as a systematic whole, he assumes as a matter of course, the believer has learned already from scripture (2 Tim. 3), that "in the last days perilous times shall come, men shall be lovers Of their own selves … having the form of godliness and denying the power of it: from such turn away."

The writer has with rude hand torn the veil from his own sphere of life, but has substituted nothing which supposes good in God, and labours through fear of hell to make peace, if he can at last, with a righteous Judge, glad to win heaven by suffering and despising the world like Christ. Mind and natural conscience have judged, as

an infidel can, of inconsistency with profession, in conformity to a world which is enmity against God; but there is a total ignorance of God revealed in Christ, of redemption and Christianity. This is for him a “distinct revelation of God’s will,” but no revelation of God.

It is an Edomite’s attack on Jerusalem, not a Jeremiah’s sorrow; and he has not faith enough in Christ to know there is something behind and beyond all this. I only hope it may act on the consciences of some to shew them the utter incompatibility between Christianity and the world. But it will do this with those who know Christ’s love. He would only make despair, monks, Pharisees, and hypocrites. He has no motive but winning heaven by labour, and a piety which shews itself to the world, and would honour God with a Jewish temple (which God has set aside), not with a Christian heart. A member of what he despises and reviles, he is much more infected with infidelity than he is aware of.

What Is The Unity Of The Church?

I should never have spoken of Mr. F.O.'s pamphlet if there had not been in it very decided principles upon some important points, and an object which all do not perceive. If it were only the desire to cast contempt upon his brethren which was manifested in it, nothing would be easier than to pass on. Every one can judge how far Mr. O. has profited by the light of brethren whom he is pleased to treat with a measure of contempt. I do not find the proceeding very noble; but if any one wishes to kick down the ladder by which he has mounted, it certainly is not worth the trouble of writing a pamphlet, however small, to point it out. Mr. O. tells us that he has gone on his way "groping." When we submit to what is found in the word, we do not grope: one does grope with the thoughts of men. With God's word we may still be ignorant on many points; but if we receive, and that joyfully, the yoke of the word, we do not grope.

Mr. O.'s object is to establish or direct independent assemblies and to justify laxity in discipline. He understands absolutely nothing as yet of the unity of the body. Practically his pamphlet is directed against that unity. Those are the only points that I shall take up, presenting what the word of God says of assemblies, and some fresh light that God has granted me. The latter is not of any great importance: but what His word says is always of interest to the Christian. It is a happy thing to know that, if we are grounded upon the word, the fresh light we receive never overthrows the old but completes and makes it clearer.

First, allow me to say that the assemblies of so-called “Plymouth Brethren,” far from calling themselves the “assembly “or “the church of God “in a particular place, have always formally opposed the title. So little truth is there in the insinuation, that it is principally this which has hindered these brethren from forming part of the Rochat flock. They believe that they alone are assembled upon the true principle of the church of God, which I in no wise doubt: but they believe that the church is in ruins, and that the pretension to be the church of God in a place would be a false pretension. I add that, if all the Christians in a place were to be found gathered together which would form (according to order) the assembly of the place, I would not give it that title, because the universal church is not gathered; and I do not believe in independent churches. I believe that there were formerly local churches representing in a certain sense the whole in their localities; but we are very far from that now. All who have taken the trouble to inquire know, or might have known, that from the first the brethren in question have taken their stand upon the principle of Matthew 18 as a resource given of God in the general ruin. The pretension to be the assembly of God has always been rejected by the brethren we speak of. Every assembly gathered by the will of God around the Person of Jesus or in His name is an assembly of God, if it be only a question of the force of words; but when it is a question of being the assembly of God in a locality, it is not so in the true sense of the word, and could not be so, considering the state of the universal church. It may gather together on the principle of the church of God, may find the promised blessing, may be the only one gathered according to that principle in the place, and may attach immense importance to it (and it

ought to attach immense importance to it, if it desire to be obedient and faithful); but it is only the witness for God so far as by its separate walk it testifies to the faithfulness of God, to the divine principles which govern its walk and to the true state in which the church is found as a whole. In this case it will be God's witness; certainly it ought to be so.

Mr. O. will have it that the totality of the churches, that is to say of the assemblies, constituted the church or the assembly. Not at all. Numerically speaking, it is not true. Many Christians were scattered here and there preaching the gospel, converted without being connected with a flock, like the treasurer of queen Candace, like Paul and Silvanus and Timothy and Titus in their labours. But, what is more important, the principle is entirely false, and the question which occupies us is altogether that. The assembly or the body was composed of individuals, and not of churches or of assemblies. Here are Mr. O.'s words in p. 11: "assemblies all united among themselves by one faith and one worship, and forming, in their totality, the church, the body of Christ upon the earth." There is no such idea in the word. The body had members. Now assemblies were not the members, but Christians individually were the members; and although the assemblies had the same faith and the same worship, it was not this principle which constituted the unity of the body, but the presence of the Holy Ghost which united all believers, Jews and Gentiles, in one and the same body.

1 Corinthians 12 makes the doctrine of the word of God perfectly clear with regard to this. The body of Christ on earth is composed of individuals and not of churches.

Now if this be the case, there is unity only in the whole; there is none in any local assembly if it be detached from the whole as a whole. If it be regarded as an independent church, it has nothing to do with the body, it is not in principle an assembly of God. At the beginning of the first Epistle to the Corinthians it is said, “to the assembly of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Jesus Christ, saints by calling, with all those who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” Thus the apostle could say, “Ye are the body of Christ.” The assembly at Corinth represented at Corinth that one and only unity, that of all individuals united to Christ in one body by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Everything had a connection with the one body, composed of all the members of Christ. There was no action which did not relate to the whole body, no suffering of one member which was not felt by all the members of the body:1 Corinthians 12 leaves no doubt upon this point. The gifts were exercised in this whole (1 Cor. 12:27, 28). Their object was first the perfecting of individuals, then the edification of the body of Christ; Eph. 4:12.

The object of this effort to make independent flocks is the desire of being independent, of doing their will without submitting to the discipline of the church as one body. Mr. 0. says as much (p. 43). Each assembly being independent, united only by one faith and one worship (p. 11), is in a position to judge the disciplinary proceedings of another assembly (p. 43). The unity of the body therefore does not exist. An act is the act of an independent church; it has no reference whatever to the whole, and is not binding upon other assemblies or other Christians. Some one may be put out by one assembly

and another assembly may receive the one who is put out. It is evident that this is disorder. The “within “and the “without” are not simply the church of God and the world. All that is lost. It is the “within” of a small voluntary and independent assembly which only exercises discipline in relation to itself. It is quite evident that the “within” and “without” of 1 Corinthians is not merely the “within” and “without” of a particular assembly, so that the wicked man could be without at Corinth and within at Ephesus. The Epistle carefully teaches the unity of the body on the earth and only recognizes the local act in that unity, a unity composed of individuals and not of churches. Look at the act of discipline in another point of view; and you will see the immense difference of the principles, and how this system of independent churches destroys the truth of scripture on this subject. What is the real power, the real source of authority, in discipline? The presence of Jesus: not simply that the discipline is the act of a voluntary society which excludes one of its members from its bosom, but that it is the act of an assembly according to God, assembled in the name of Jesus, and acting in His name and by His authority, to maintain the holiness which belongs to that name. Now the independent church is only a society which acts for itself: another assembly may judge all that it has done. There is no trace either of the unity or of the authority of the church of God.

Does it then follow that, if another assembly has acted hastily, a flock is bound hand and foot? In no wise. Just because the unity of the body is true and recognized, and that in a case of discipline the members of that body who gather together elsewhere take an interest in what

passes in each place, they are free to make brotherly objections, or to suggest some scriptural motive; in a word, they are capable of all brotherly activity with regard to it. If it be an independent assembly, it is not concerned; there is nothing for it to look into. If these things are done in the unity of the body, every Christian is interested in what passes. It may happen that the discipline of an assembly cannot be owned; but then it is rejected as an assembly, and the presence of Jesus giving authority to its acts is denied—a very grave thing, but one that may occur. Mr. O. has entirely falsified the unity of the body, and wishes for independent churches and a unity of faith and worship, the aggregate of the churches forming according to him the unity of the body. The word of God knows nothing of this system. The reader may judge of it by reading i Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 1 and other passages of the word.

But another object is proposed wherever this system of half-Plymouth-Brethrenism-half-Independency is adopted; for it is not in Switzerland only that this ground has been taken; They wish to be free to support the Bethesda discipline, or that of the neutrals, of those who condemn absolute exclusivism as Mr. O. calls it (p. 41)—an expression which I confess I do not understand. Every one is not excluded, I suppose. Some persons are excluded in Mr. O.'s independent churches. The assemblies of the so-called "Plymouth Brethren" also exclude some. The question is, if the limits that have been put to the exclusion are scriptural. The expression "absolute exclusivism" may serve to bring opprobrium upon assemblies with which one does not agree; it is nonsense. But we have rather more intelligible

expressions: “disciplinary ways which go far beyond scripture” (p. 42); and again, “to combat such teaching, we do not excommunicate in large masses Christians who are ignorant of it.” There can be no mistake. Mr. O. condemns the discipline of the assemblies called “Plymouth Brethren,” and he wishes the discipline of Bethesda or of the neutrals. This is the object of his pamphlet and of the support which he gives to independent churches. I will not weary either my reader or myself with the history of this question; but the real point in question is of all gravity for the church of God. Can an assembly be corrupted? We had broken with what we had considered to be outrages and blasphemies against Christ. Up to that time there had not been any great difficulty— some painful things, but settled without much delay. But here we have an assembly which receives those whom we have excluded as blasphemers: could one walk with that assembly, taking the Lord’s supper with these excommunicated people? This is the first question. For my part I could not do so, and those who admitted them knowingly and willingly were not a “new lump,” 1 Cor. 5. This raised the question: Is an assembly corrupted when knowingly and willingly it admits sin as blasphemy? Our adversaries maintained that an assembly could not be defiled; that individuals who are in sin are defiled, but that the assembly could not be so. They insisted upon this in several tracts. And not only so, but the principal brethren in a so-called neutral meeting signed a printed circular affirming that, if an assembly should admit fornication knowingly and willingly, we ought none the less to acknowledge that assembly and to receive letters of recommendation from it. We judged that, if an assembly (not taken by surprise, which may happen

everywhere, or through carelessness, of which we are all capable, but) knowingly and willingly admits sin or blasphemy, it is not a new lump; that in order to be a new lump it must purge itself from the old leaven (1 Cor. 5:7); and that in so doing the other members proved themselves pure in this matter (2 Cor. 7:11): otherwise they would not have been so. This is the principle in question. Several went farther, maintaining that in no case does blasphemy or any kind of doctrine call for discipline.

The effects have been, to my mind, most fatal; but I limit myself to stating the question except that I will communicate the result in one case which may arouse Swiss consciences. The doctrine in question in the United States has not been that of Mr. N. but the denial of the immortality of the soul. There is a meeting at Philadelphia (and there are even two) on the neutral principle, which does not follow the so-called exaggerated discipline and which blames the severity of brethren. Those who hold the denial of the immortality of the soul were admitted to the meeting; afterwards the doctrine was taught there. We broke or rather refused all connection with these meetings. Those who blamed our severity were not willing to keep themselves thus separate, and now the principal instruments of the Swiss mission or of the Grand-Ligne deny the immortality of the soul. I hope all have not come to this— God knows.

I do not enter farther into details: it would be too painful and of but little use. It is certain that the lack of faithful discipline, the loose system extolled by Mr. O., the lack of absolute exclusivism in regard to what is false and evil, has led the Swiss mission into the doctrine which denies the immortality of the soul. They may say, We do

not preach it; but the doctrine has currency; people go and ask the minister what he thinks of it; he thinks it is truth, and souls receive it. Well, we refused those who were not willing to break with this system, and I bless God for it; but there is a fine field of labour ruined precisely by the system which Mr. O. extols. Neutral meetings, taking advantage of the absence of absolute exclusivism, and approved of for this by Bethesda and by the neutrals and by the O.'s, are traps for simple souls who go to New York and Philadelphia.

The question is no longer Bethesda; but can an assembly which knowingly admits grave errors be recognized as an assembly of God, and those who are accomplices in the thing be held to be innocent, although they support evil, because they are not themselves blasphemers? In 2 Timothy 2 we are enjoined to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonour: is it purging ourselves to be in full communion with them? 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Corinthians 7 settle the question for me as to the condition of those who support evil without being themselves personally guilty.

There are many things I might take up in Mr. O.'s tract, but that is not my object. When it is said (p. 2), "The church is begotten of God," no passage quoted speaks of the church. It is not begotten of God; individuals are. It is not their being begotten of God which constitutes them members of the church, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I do not know in what sense Mr. O. thinks the apostle said to the church at Corinth, "Ye are the body of Christ." But I am not occupied with these things. I only keep to the fact that the tract is a plan of adhesion to a system which denies the true unity of the church, which establishes independent churches, and which

justifies a discipline or rather a lack of faithfulness to Christ. This turns what are called holy assemblies into a snare for the simple to entrap them into false and injurious doctrines, and to destroy integrity of conscience—the certain result of all false doctrine.

I believe, not that the public apostasy is yet come, but that, in the spirit of the thing, it took place long ago; just as there were many antichrists although the Antichrist was not there. Now Antichrist, at least the man of sin, is connected with the apostasy. Mr. O. wishes dismemberment. It would be impertinence on my part to contend with Mr. O. about the import of French words; but in the things of God there is something more than words. I find the word he has chosen the most unfortunate possible. The proper meaning of it is the act of tearing away a member from a body. It is employed for the division of a state, a kingdom, etc. But when it is used figuratively, something of the real meaning always remains. It is lie greater force coming from without which divides. Poland and Bavaria have been dismembered. And if one speaks of the dismemberment of a society so that it is divided into several parts, it always leaves the idea of an effect produced on the society. It matters little if the members are agreed about it: the society surfers violence; something of the original thought remains.

Now I admit that the apostasy in the full and complete sense of the word has not arrived, and that the application of this term to the Romish system (an application made by the mass of Protestant writers154) went beyond the true force of the word. But let it be remarked that the apostasy is the fault of the church on earth; it had lost its first love; it had had time to repent

and had not repented; it had a name to live and was dead; it was to be spued out of the Saviour's mouth. This was a moral condition for which the church was responsible; and if the apostasy has not come, we have reached such a point in that direction that the distance which separates us from it is scarcely appreciable: only the Spirit of God is acting in a remarkable manner. After all Mr. O. now admits the fall of the church, which is the important thing. But dismemberment (a frightful word when the body of Christ is in question) which Mr. O. can make use of because the true idea of the body has no place in his thoughts—dismemberment is only a fact.

The apostasy, or the tendency to apostasy, expresses the thought (crushing, if the grace of the Lord were not revealed) of the unfaithfulness of the church to the One who has so loved it. But there is something more. If it be a question of the body of Christ and of members united to the Head in heaven, the dismemberment of the church is a horror. If the church on earth be a simple society, then it becomes dismembered or is divided or decomposed. Now Mr. O. has not the least idea of the unity of the body, nor of the responsibility of the church to maintain that position which it has never had in his eyes. It was a society composed of several local societies. To divide might perhaps be an evil, but an evil which happens to an earthly society. "The church at Corinth, notwithstanding its disorders, was not dismembered in Paul's time; and he could still say to them, Ye are the body of Christ" (p. 3). If Mr. O. had the least idea of the body of Christ, this phrase would have been impossible; it has no meaning for anyone who understands what the body is.

I may be permitted to add a few words with regard to the two points of view in which the word of God looks at the house. Christ (Matt. 16) builds the house, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. It is Christ who builds; the house is not yet completed. In 1 Peter 2 the living stones are added; there is no human architect. In Ephesians 2 the building fitly framed together grows up unto a holy temple in the Lord. But in 1 Corinthians 3 we find quite another thing. Paul is a wise builder; every one must take care how he builds. There we have the responsibility of man, although the building may be called the building of God. He who, being a Christian, builds well has a reward; but the one who, although a Christian on the foundation, builds badly will lose his labour, but he is saved. There is a third class; he who corrupts others will himself be destroyed. Now popery and the ritualistic system have confounded the temple that Jesus Christ is building, and which grows up into a temple, with that which depends on man's responsibility —a grave and fatal error. They do the same as to the body. But there was responsibility to maintain the unity of the Spirit, and thus the manifestation of the unity of the body, and the church failed in it: then it confounded the body with what man has built. The unity in John 17 is not the unity of the body; John never speaks of the church. He speaks there of a unity of brethren or of disciples which would in fact manifest the power of the Spirit of God.

Mr. O. refers us to another pamphlet on "Elders," etc. He wished to name some whenever the minds of brethren might be prepared to receive them. As an authority for this, having thrown overboard the old dissenting principles, he has only this reasoning, namely,

that the apostles must necessarily have provided for the future of the church—a point already discussed with M. de G.—which is nothing but a piece of reasoning and of false reasoning, for it supposes that God wished Christians to know that the church would subsist long upon the earth, thus destroying the present expectation of the Lord, which His word avoids in a most remarkable manner by insisting upon that expectation. I believe, in common with many Christians, that the seven churches give the history of Christianity, but God took up churches which were then in existence in order not to take Christians out of this position of continual expectation. The virgins who sleep are those who awake. The servants who received the talents on the departure of the master are those who are judged at his return; the duration of the delay does not go beyond the life of the men. “If I will that he tarry till I come,” says the Lord. “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” says the apostle. “And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord,” says again the Lord. An expectation of every day is not only an idea but was what characterized the early disciples. They were converted to wait for His Son from heaven, and God is not slack concerning His promise. But as to any arrangement which supposes a long continuance of the church on earth, there is no trace of it in the word.

To support this false idea, Mr. O. has recourse to a passage from Clement of Rome—a fatal sign when one has to go outside the word to support one’s thesis. But the phrase, by which Clement tries to explain his views on this point, is most obscure. One of the terms employed is a word entirely unknown, except as used in quite another sense in Plutarch, and is not found at all in

Alexandre's dictionary. Even the meaning of the phrase is contested. In general it is applied to the death of the elders named by the apostles. But there are grave theologians who apply the words "when they should have fallen asleep "to the apostles and insist upon the passage as a proof of episcopacy, admitting that there is nothing of that kind in the word of God, but that the apostles in the prospect of their departure, arranged that other tried men should succeed them in their authority: a position that Mr. O., if I have rightly understood him, arrogates to himself, by putting himself among the number of those who have replaced the apostles as ellogimoi andres. I do not accept this interpretation of the passage from Clement which they support by the deuterai diataxieis of a passage from Irenaeus (if indeed the fragment be his), and by the nomination of Simeon as the successor of James by a convention of the apostles who were still living, of which Eusebius and other patristic authorities speak. But what a poor foundation is all this in comparison of the word of God, given for all times by God Himself, the divine light in the midst of the darkness of this world!

Now this is the main point of the matter. What gave rise to the existence of the so-called Plymouth Brethren is the grand truth, the great fact, of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, to form the body of Christ into one; then the coming of the Saviour as the continual expectation of the Christian. These two truths Mr. O.'s pamphlet denies.

There are three principal positions of Christ as Saviour: on the cross accomplishing redemption; at the right hand of God, whence He sends the Holy Spirit; and returning to fetch us and to judge the world. The first

truth is the gospel preached to man as a sinner. The last two have been clearly brought out again in these latter times and are those which have aroused attention, and have placed the so-called Plymouth Brethren in their present position; they also throw immense light upon the first truth. The evangelical world will not receive them: from that time nothing but conflict and opprobrium, as is always the case with truths freshly brought to light. Mr. O. admits many minor consequences; but his pamphlet entirely denies the real ground of the truth on these points. He wants a unity formed of local independent churches, having the same faith and the same worship; and he wishes to prove by reasonings, or rather to suppose, that the apostles taught Christians to expect a long course of centuries before the Lord should come. That is to say, he still denies the great truths necessary for Christians in these days. I state the fact because I believe it to be important for Christians, begging Mr. O. to be assured that there is not a trace of hostility in my heart. When evil comes in like a flood, it is not the moment for Christians to be tearing one another, however firm one may be in maintaining the principles that one is assured have been drawn from the word of God.

154 This question has been fully discussed, as well as the sense in which the word apostasy is applied to the church. No one was troubled about it until I shewed, by Romans 11, that if there were apostasy in the church of Rome, there could be no re-establishment of the church — which always remains fundamentally true.

Episcopacy:

What Ground is there in Scripture or History for Accounting it an Institution of God?

Were it merely a question between one form of church government and another, no one would hear a word from me about it. If man forms a government, others will judge of it according to their habits of thinking, their early prejudices, or natural dispositions. But the establishment of episcopacy led on to popery, and was closely connected with the progressive corruption of Christendom. In modern times the same system is leading to the same result and associated with the same degrading superstitions. The system might sleep, but, awoke up, that is its universal path. It is well therefore to ascertain what true scriptural and historical ground there is for the episcopal system. Respect for position and authority is no unholy feeling, nor to be despised even as a natural one; but if the prestige of position is used to resist the truth and lead into error, as in the case of the high priests, we must not give up God's authority over us and the truth that sanctifies us for pretensions that after all have no real ground in scripture or history.

It cannot be expected that the great body of Christians should be able to search out in Benedictine tomes the facts of the case. I have given them here so that any one can judge of the claim that episcopacy has to be an institution of God. I am not aware of any historical testimony in its favour which has been omitted. I do not go into the gross corruption which rapidly sank Christianity to the level of heathenism. My object is the

original title of what now professes to be the necessary channel of all spiritual grace and authority. No one denies that at the end of the second century the episcopal system, not the diocesan but one superior president of the principal local churches, was generally established. Our question is its origin; who established it?

First, it is perfectly clear that in scripture bishops and elders are the same thing (Acts 20; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). In Philippi Paul adds, to all the saints, “bishops and deacons”; and this, note, when he was in prison very late in his ministry, the last period of which we have any definite history, where we might have expected a bishop according to the later acceptation of the term if anywhere, now that the church was in a certain sense left to itself. So in Acts 14 he appoints for them elders in every church. The inspired author, in the formal constitution of the church, had no idea of any higher authority established by the apostle. Thus we have distinct and formal evidence of every kind: original constitution, Acts 14; address at the close of his life, Philippians 1:1, and those to whom he commends the church, Acts 20, when he thought he should see them no more.

That Paul knew no such thing as a prelate in the church, he neither institutes them nor recognizes them. If such there were, he treats them with absolute neglect, takes no notice of them, but charges others with duties which would have been incumbent upon them. The modern notion that Titus and Timothy were bishops has no ground in scripture whatever. They were personal companions of the apostle, whom he deputed for special services, and recalled them when it was done; and they

stayed with him, or he sent them elsewhere. Peter knows no more of any such order than Paul, though we have fewer details. Elders were the usage among the Jews; all we have from him is “the elders which are among you.” This utter contempt of the principal authority in the churches, if such there were, is utterly inconceivable.

There could not be stronger evidence against an individual superior authority in the churches, against episcopacy, than that which scripture affords. The only semblance of anything of the kind is James at Jerusalem: we find him closing the debate in Acts 15, and saying, “Wherefore my sentence is,” etc. Peter, when delivered by divine intervention from prison, says, “Shew these things to James, and the brethren,” Acts 12:17. So Acts 21:18: “Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present.” So in Galatians 1:19 he saw besides “James the Lord’s brother.” So chapter 2:12: certain came from James who made poor Peter afraid to eat any more with the Gentiles. We have thus clearly one who had great influence amongst the Jewish Christians, not always a happy one. It led Peter into dissimulation, Paul into the temple, so that his public ministry, as far as scripture goes, was closed. God may have overruled their effects and shewn perfect and blessed grace—assuredly He did; but so it was in fact. But in his history there is no trace of episcopal care.

James’ position in Acts 15, which seems to look most like it gives a clue to his local influence, which there was of the greatest importance. But it is quite inconsistent with a bishop’s place. Either he was the apostle James, son of Alpheus, or he was not; if he was, he gave his voice as such after the others, and as the most Jewish of all; and

the very leader of Jewish thought and feeling, as Galatians 2:12 shews, and the other passages confirm, to say nothing of his being the Lord's brother, which it appears he was. His voice in such a case as the Jews compelling Gentiles to be circumcised was all-important and would naturally close the question the assembly had discussed. Peter and Paul had declared God's ways in their active ministry, and now James, the vessel of Jewish thought, brings in the conclusion of the matter.

Now all depended on the Jews accepting this: hence God had not allowed Paul to settle it by apostolic authority at Antioch. Had he done so, we should have had a Jewish church at Jerusalem, and a Gentile one at Antioch, rival and hostile centres. The Jews under grace must decide for Gentile freedom; and all was right; and so it was through God's gracious handiwork. If he was not an apostle but a bishop, then we have a bishop deciding over the heads of the apostles who were there and spoke, and, if this ground be taken, they spoke as inferiors.

We hear in history exterior to the Bible, that he not only had this influence over even unconverted Jews, but Josephus attributes the destruction of Jerusalem to their killing him. He had acquired the name of James the Just. His influence scripture does tell us of. (His epistle is to the twelve tribes, though with the faith of Christ the Lord of glory.) It neither gives him this or any analogous name, nor gives a hint of any episcopal service. Paul among the Gentiles, as we have seen, neither established nor knew such. And this his contemporaries, as far as we have them, confirm.

Clement gives us the same evidence as scripture, as far as he goes, and as history it is important; his epistle is universally received as genuine. He addresses the church; he knows no episcopacy there but that of the elders. As was just said of Paul, it was treating the bishop of Corinth with utter contempt if there were any such; but the evidence is positive: he knew of no such thing, but the contrary (C. 42). We read, “and thus preaching through countries and cities they appointed the firstfruits of their conversions to be bishops and deacons over such as should afterwards believe,” quoting Isaiah, right or wrong, for the purpose. So 44: “So likewise our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ that contentions should arise on account of the ministry, and therefore having a perfect knowledge of this, they appointed persons as we have before said, and then gave a direction (epinomen, a difficult word if the reading be right) in what manner, when they should have fallen asleep, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry.” And then he fully speaks of them in the plural, closing by saying, “blessed be those elders,” etc. Clement’s testimony then is perfectly clear on the subject. The apostle appointed elders, several, in a church; he arranged further succession; but of bishops, so-called now, he knows nothing. His statements contradict their existence.

Polycarp affords us the same testimony; he writes to the Philippians, desires them to be subject to the presbyters, but wholly ignores any so-called bishop, and speaks of the elders that were with him. Ignatius addresses him as bishop; and there is no doubt that Ignatius recognized the office. He does not in writing to the Romans or Ephesians in the Syriac; but the bishop is mentioned

apart from elders, and no doubt there were such—not diocesan, which were very much later—in local churches. Ignatius uses them only to urge a spirit of subjection and so of unity. If the Greek epistles are nearly of this date, as some allege, it would be a proof that it was a new thing which, from the coming in of disorder and heresies, led the forger of them, finding that Ignatius had once so spoken in his letter to the Ephesians, to urge submission to the bishops and elders with a gross and offensive elaborateness of repetition, using Ignatius' name to give it currency. At all events we have no trace of a bishop till near the end of the first quarter of the second century, all previous testimony positively contradicting the existence of such.

This is the broad fact, and Polycarp's not calling himself so, when so called by Ignatius, just proves the earnest purpose of Ignatius to use it as a means of unity. A later tradition may connect itself with this, but scripture directly contradicts its existence, as does the earliest history. Barnabas—a very early writer at any rate, if not the true Barnabas—probably the earliest and with more personal faith, does not speak of it. And Hernias, who came thirty years or more after Ignatius, does not speak of any episcopacy, but makes the angel to desire Hermas to tell the presbyters what was said. But no bishop appears; yet he does blame the way presbyters sought to be first or chief. At the close of the second century their existence as presidents of churches in a city was general.

The country was still largely or chiefly pagan, the word meaning a villager. But for some hundred and twenty years, not only is scripture, which has final authority, most clear, giving another system than episcopacy, but,

after this, history confirms the same as existing, and that by unexceptionable testimony, where it is recognized as a fact without any motive to lead to it but the existence of the fact; whereas the motives of the earUest testimonies to the existence of episcopacy betray an anxious, earnest, desire to maintain it. Justin Martyr even speaks of no bishop; but his testimony can hardly be cited for any system, as he only speaks of the earliest meeting of an assembly, and of one that presides in it, and of deacons. Were this all the testimony of nearly the first hundred years after Christ, it is clear against episcopacy, the scripture establishing formally another system which excludes it. But testimony to the contrary is alleged, especially from Irenseus, but also from Tertullian; and we may add Hegesippus, an old historian in Eusebius. Now that there were local (not diocesan) prelates in their days is unquestionable.

But these ancient writers are alleged to shew lists of prelates back to apostolic times. We have seen positive contradiction of this from earlier unquestionable authorities; we may now see that these have really none, and that ecclesiastical tradition of the kind is a most uncertain and unsatisfactory guide—may be perhaps trusted if writing of what was under their eye, but no more, like old Herodotus.

Irenseus was a Christian worthy of respect, though not sound in the faith after all, but our question with him is as an historian. Now the first point to be remarked is, that he had a controversial object in his facts, which alters the force even of his testimony: but we shall besides find that he states on the subject what certainly is not the fact. I do not doubt he believed it. He was tormented, as was the whole church, with Gnosticism,

which denied that the true God of the Christians was the Creator, and he appeals to the universal faith of the churches everywhere, and specially of Rome, to prove that such a notion was never held amongst Christians. And he traces back the list of prelates, particularly at Rome, to prove this, that it was handed down by these worthy men from the beginning. He appeals to the scriptures, but, the heretics cavilling and appealing to tradition too, finding himself baffled by their cavils (instead of doing as the Lord did when Satan quoted scripture to Him, answering by another plain scripture), he turns to the common faith of the churches, and what the most esteemed leaders of the church had held, and hence gives their succession; but I am sorry to say, he himself was, what Rome and all orthodox persons would call, a heretic. But his appeal is really to meet the use of it by the Gnostics who pleaded, as Rome does now, that there were doctrines known by tradition, not contained in scripture.155 He answers, None of these successors of the apostles had such as you allege. What I have just said as to his testimony to tradition is clearly stated, lib. 3, c. 2, 3.156 We have only a very bad translation of most of Irenaeus' works.

But it is as an historian we have to do with him: how little his statements can be trusted, a few instances will shew. First he states that Christ Himself continued on to be an old man, which he reckons as forty or fifty years, sanctifying old age as well as youth, as he tells us the Gospel and all the aged men who conversed with John testified (Lib. 2, c. 22). The Gospel we can answer for; the tradition of John, Irenseus and the aged men must answer for. Whom, he adds, are we to believe most, those who had seen, not only John but the other apostles

and heard these things from them … or Ptolemy, who had seen none of them? Massuet says, Perhaps he heard it only from Papias, who, says Eusebius, was a foolish old man. But, as Massuet observes, Irenaeus makes Christ not teach immediately after His baptism but wait till He was of full age, at thirty being only a youth, and so die an old man—diametrically, as he says, opposed to the plain testimony of scripture. But so much for tradition.

But we have another case directly to the point, as the commencement of the passage which is quoted to prove that episcopacy dates from the apostles' days and was established by their authority. "Now Matthew," says Irenaeus, "brought out amongst the Hebrews in their own dialect the written gospel (ten graphen euaggelion) when Peter and Paul were evangelizing in Rome and founding the church." I will add what the Benedictine edition remarks on this. All the Fathers hold Matthew to have first consigned the Gospel to writing; but how reconcile this with what is said of Peter and Paul, for Paul could not have been there before a.d. 64 or 65? Either, therefore, the other Fathers are to be abandoned or Irenaeus; either are alike inconvenient. The securest thing to say in so obscure a matter is, that nothing can be defined (c. Hær. lib. 3, c. 1, Benedictine edition [Massuet] 174). Eusebius follows his account (H. E. 5:28). Not only so, but this account which Massuet admits to be untenable and contradictory to all the statements of other Fathers, is the basis of all Irenaeus says on the succession, and of papal pretensions too.

I may add, though our business is with Irenaeus, Eusebius (2:25) quotes from Dionysius of Corinth the statement that Peter and Paul planted together the

church of Corinth, and then went on to Rome, taught in like manner, and were martyred. Now that Peter and Paul may have been taken to Rome and martyred together, passing at Corinth together too, is very possible, though we have no account of it; but what is said as to the foundation of the church at Corinth or Rome is unquestionably false. Paul, we know from the Acts and his Epistles, founded that at Corinth, Peter having nothing to say to it. And even Paul did not found that at Rome more than Peter, as his Epistle to the Romans shews: Christianity preceded them both there. The Roman church, so far from having a potiorem beginning, was not founded by an apostle at all.

But this famous proof of episcopacy leads us to another passage of Irenaeus (3:14, 12). He is arguing against the Gnostics, that Luke was the constant companion (which itself he states in a manner contrary to Luke's, to make him always his companion, whereas this only began at Troas), yet he never puts forth these Gnostic notions, and then adds: not only to those with him, but he (Paul) made himself clear to all, for having called together in Miletus the bishops and presbyters which were from Ephesus and the other nearest cities, and then he gives Paul's discourse. That is, he falsified the plain statement of the passage to get up his traditional testimony with episcopal authority attached to it.

Now he gives us in this book (3) a list of bishops at Rome as serving for all such; and this is the authority for bishops going back to the beginning. Now, untrustworthy as we have seen him to be as to his historical statements, this, as far as it goes, plunges us into utter obscurity, suggesting that there were not any bishops really there. The list is (lib. 3:3, 3) Linus,

Anencletus, Clemens, Evarestus, Alexander, Sixtus, Teles-phorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, Eleutherus, who was in Irenaeus' time. Paul and Peter, he says, committed it to Linus.

Eusebius as usual follows Irenaeus, but he gives the dates: Peter to 68, Linus 68-80, Anencletus 80-92, Clemens 92-101. Here we stumble, after three or at any rate two others his predecessors in the see, on one who, as we have seen, owns no bishop at all but states, and justly, entirely another order of government as established by Paul. Tertullian (de Praes. 32) puts Clement as the one put in charge by Peter. Eusebius (3:2) states positively it was after Peter's death Linus was put in, and Clement is twenty-four years afterwards. Ruffinus, says he, does not deny that Linus and Anencletus were first, but Clement was appointed while Peter was alive. Some indeed say Clement was named first but would not be from modesty, but was obliged after the death of the others. The point with Tertullian is security of doctrine by succession, but he contradicts Irenaeus plump as to who was the person it was committed to. Optatus Mil., who leaves out two, puts Peter first, then Linus, then Clement, and then Anencletus.

Now all this shews how totally uncertain these traditions were, that they could only be varying memory; whereas he who was specially wheeled about as to his place, being placed first, second, and third, Clement, knows nothing of any such place at all. My own conviction is they were all there together and that Clement has given the clue to it. None of them were bishops; practically one or another may have presided. There is just the same disorder found at Antioch, betraying the same

origin of prelacy. But we have more as to this episcopacy, which helps us on to trace this clue. The deacons were setting up to be a great people at Rome, and Jerome, the most learned Father of the ancient church, knowing East and West, thus writes (on Titus 1:5): The presbyter is therefore the same as the bishop: and before that by the instigation of the devil parties were sought to be made in the church, and it was said among the people, “I am of Paul,” etc., the churches were governed by the common council of the presbyters; but after each sought to make those whom he had baptized his own, not Christ’s, it was decreed in all the world that one chosen from among the presbyters should be set over the rest to whom the care of the whole church should appertain… As therefore the presbyters know that they are subject by the customs of the church to him who may have been set over them, so let the bishops know that they are greater than the presbyters more by the custom of the church than by the truth of any ordering of the Lord, veritatem dominicce dispositions. And he declares that while the only thing a presbyter could not do was to ordain, yet in Alexandria till Heraclas’ time, when the bishop died, the presbyters themselves established another from among themselves in his stead (Ep. 146 ad En).157 And even Cyprian, the greatest founder of the power of the primitive episcopacy, says almost everywhere there must be prelates to do it. So Augustine says (Litt. 72:33); Although, according to titles of honour which the practice of the church has made valid, the bishop is greater than the presbyter.

If the reader desires to see more as to the change made as to ministerial order, and a positive historical

statement of the substitution of episcopacy for the government of presbyters— one presiding as the senior, and another succeeding him, as it produced scandals often, the successor being worthless—he may consult the commentary on Ephesians 4:12, published at the end of Ambrose's works (said to be by Hilary); who states also, that the presbyters ordained the prelate of Alexandria. According to him the system was changed for prudence' sake, adding providente concilio (whatever that may mean), a council making provision in the matter. (Supplement to vol. 11, page 243, Bened. ed.)

Thus, for some ninety years after Christ's death, there is no episcopacy on record; but after that, we hear of it first pressed for the sake of unity by Ignatius; then, on account of false doctrine, by Irenaeus and Tertullian. In the latter part of the second century it prevailed; only presbyters appointed, and (it is said) ordained, their prelate in Alexandria; and he was recognized by all as a true bishop. Clement of Alexandria says that John after his release from Patmos went in some places establishing bishops, in some arranging whole churches, in some the clergy (klero) putting into that place (kleroson) some one of those signified by the Spirit. (Quis Dives Salv. 42.) Tertullian says the order of bishop, counted to its origin, will stand on John for its author. (Adv. Marc. 4:5.)

I do not enter on proofs of the wretched uncertainty of the traditions of the Fathers. Were we to believe them, Christ Himself made and ordained James bishop of Jerusalem; another, that Christ and the apostles did, and that He committed His throne on the earth to him; that John and James and Mark were high priests. (Bingham,

2:9,5; Euseb. 5:24, as to John from Polycrates.) James, as I have already said, had a special place and influence from his character and being the Lord's brother. It is related that on his death some meeting of the remaining apostles and others replaced him by Symeon, another in the same relationship with the Lord.158 But it is never hinted that James was a bishop; and, besides what I have already said, the address of the letter to the churches proves he was not. It is addressed from the apostles and elders and brethren. Why, if he was a bishop and spoke as president, is he left out? It cannot be said because the apostles are spoken of, because the elders are distinctly noticed, and they delivered to the churches the decrees of the apostles and elders.

The result is, first, that scripture refutes episcopacy and established another kind of official authority, which this sets aside, just as much as if a republic was changed into a monarchy: the monarch is not added, the state has ceased to be a republic. I do not say the church was a republic or that authority came from the people—I do not think so; what I say is, that the addition changed the government which was scriptural. Episcopalians and Puseyites do claim for the church the title to change its government. I do not agree, but I do not discuss it; I only say that the episcopal government is not the scriptural one, but sets it aside. Further, ecclesiastical history confirms the fact and does not recognize episcopal government; and we have the most learned Fathers of the church declaring presbyter and bishop were the same at the outset, and that church-custom only had made the honour valid. I conclude with Jerome that episcopacy does not come from veritate dominicæ dispositionis.

I have gone through the traditions which are alleged for it, I believe fairly, and admit the system was generally established in the latter part of the second century; but it was not established by God.

155 They quoted 1 Corinthians 2:7.

156 I have not the least doubt that potior em principalitatem was in Greek archen, and meant "origin." The context proves it, I think. It is a famous passage with Romanists.

157 He adds, "Does any one think that the judgment that a bishop and a presbyter are one is ours, not that of the scriptures? let him read again!" and quotes Philippians 1; Acts 20; 1 Peter 5; also Hebrews 13:17. See also epistle to Oceanus (ed. Vail. 69:416) to Evangelus (old ed. Evagrius) 146. The same difficulties occur as to Smyrna, if we listen to Apostol. Const. Pope Urban in a very numerous council declares (a.d. 1091), "It is read that the primitive church had them (presbyters and deacons) alone; as to them alone we have precept of the apostle."

158 Rothe will have it that the meeting, which according to Hegesippus put Symeon in James's place in Jerusalem, established episcopacy as a received order. But that only proves this learned man could find no real proof of it.

Churches and the Church

Editor's Note 159

You ask me, Were there not churches in scripture? I answer, there were; but what are churches? The effect of the question is to bring out the state of the mind. Most Christians would immediately think of what are called churches in the religious world, perhaps in Christendom at large. They would think of the Presbyterian church, or Congregational and Baptist churches, or else of the church of Rome, or the like. The person who lived habitually in the mind of scripture would think of Corinth or others which we meet with in scripture. Are then the facts which exist in Christendom, or the thoughts there current, different from the facts found in scripture, or the thoughts formed by it? Let us inquire into this, not with a haughty heart, but if we find all gone far away from the scriptural state in principle and practice—if we find all ruined, instead of power in the Holy Ghost and unity—a fair show in the flesh, let us mourn in heart, and cry to the Lord. He will meet us in our need.

What were churches in scriptural times? “Church” means simply an assembly, or, from local use in Greek, an assembly of privileged persons, of citizens. The whole multitude of believers gathered into one by the Holy Ghost formed the assembly or church. Only here of course it was God’s assembly; of course those in Rome or Corinth could not meet in Jerusalem. Hence there were assemblies in different places, forming each locally God’s assembly in the place. It may be well very briefly to examine how the assembly is viewed in scripture as a

whole, before we speak of local assemblies. It is viewed as the habitation of God; and also as the body of Christ, and first of the former. In one sense the church is not yet formed, not complete. All that shall be united to Christ in glory form part of it.

“I will build my church,” says Jesus, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” This will be infallibly accomplished. So Peter, evidently alluding to this, “unto whom coming, as unto a living stone, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house”; so Ephesians 2, “in whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” This is yet unfinished, and still goes on; and, though at first a public and evident body (the Lord adding daily to the church such as should be saved), it is become what is called the invisible church. It is invisible: though if it was to be the light of the world, it is hard to tell the value of an invisible light. If it is acknowledged to have fallen for ages into corruption and iniquity, a very Babylon in character, that has not been the light of the world. The persecuted saints— for God has surely had a people—gave their testimony; but the public body in the world was darkness, not light in it.

But there is another way in which God’s assembly is spoken of, and still first as the house, a habitation of God, that is, as established by the intrumentality of man, and under the responsibility of man. “As a wise master-builder,” says Paul, “I have laid the foundation, but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon.” There is human instrumentality and human responsibility. It was a large body formed on earth which was God’s house or temple, the Holy Ghost dwelling in it down here as descended on the day of Pentecost (1 Cor. 3), not the

body: there can be no wood and hay and stubble, which is to be burned, in that. Again," Ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. 2:22.

This is a very interesting and precious truth, I mean God's dwelling down here in His house prepared for Him according to His will. God never dwelt with Adam innocent, though He visited him, nor with Abraham though He visited and singularly blessed him; but the moment Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, God came and dwelt among them. The dwelling of God with men is the fruit of redemption. (See Exod. 29:46.)

The true redemption has been accomplished, and God has formed a habitation for Himself where He dwells by the Spirit. It is so indeed as to the individual (1 Cor. 6); but I now speak of the assembly, the house of the living God. This is now on the earth, the habitation of God by the Spirit. He dwells and walks among us. We are God's building. Man may have built in wood and hay and stubble; but God has not yet executed judgment to remove the house out of His sight, though judgment will begin there.

The assembly is also the body of Christ; Eph. 1:23. It is by one Spirit we are baptized into one body. This though the final completeness of it will be in heaven, yet is established on earth, for the baptism of the Holy Ghost was His coming down—the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). That this is on earth is further clear, for in the same chapter we find He has set in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, where we have miracles, gifts of healing, clearly on earth. Where, remark also, that they are set in the whole church, members of such

or such a kind in the one whole body. Such is the church or assembly as depicted in scripture.

What were churches or assemblies? These were local. The apostle could say, “To the church of God which is at Corinth.” It represented the whole unity of the body in that place. “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Two bodies of Christ, even in one place, representatively there could not be. In Galatia, which was a large province, we read the churches of Galatia. So in Thessalonica, a city of Macedonia, we have the assembly of the Thessalonians. So in the seven churches; so John writes to the assembly. So everywhere there was God’s assembly in any given place which could be distinctly addressed as such. In Acts 20 he calls for the elders of the assembly. There were several appointed by the Holy Ghost to be overseers of God’s flock. Hence Titus was left in Crete to ordain them in every city. We have (Acts n:22) the assembly which was in Jerusalem, though it was exceedingly numerous; in Acts 13 the assembly that was at Antioch. So Paul (Acts 14:21-23) returns to Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium, and chooses for them elders in every assembly. All scripture clearly shews there was one assembly in a place, which was God’s assembly.

Churches as buildings they had none: the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; and hence they met in houses where they could; but all formed one assembly, God’s assembly, in that place, the elders being elders in the whole as one body. The local assembly represented the whole assembly of God, as 1 Corinthians shews us plainly. The position which Christians who composed it held was that of members of Christ, of the whole body of Christ. The only

membership known in scripture is membership of Christ's body; as an eye, a hand, etc.; ministry was directly connected with this last thought. When Christ ascended up on high, He gave gifts to men, apostles, prophets: they were the foundation (Eph. 2); evangelists, pastors, teachers: these were set in the whole church or assembly; 1 Cor. 12.

If a man was a teacher at Ephesus, he was such at Corinth. Even as to miraculous gifts, a man spoke with tongues where he was. The gift belonged to no particular assembly but was that member or gift in the whole body on earth, wrought by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12), and by which a man was a servant of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12 we have the Holy Ghost on earth distributing them as they then were. In Ephesians 4 they are given from Christ on high, and only such referred to as ministered to the perfecting of the saints and edifying of the body till we all grow to the stature of Christ. They were the talents with which a man was bound to trade, if he knew the master, in virtue of having them: "as every man has received the gift, so minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," 1 Pet. 4:10. They were to wait on their prophesying or exhorting. Rules are given for their exercise in scripture. Women were to keep silence in the assemblies.

But my main object now is to shew that it was as gifts in the whole assembly of God everywhere that they who possessed them acted. Elders were local and were not a gift, though aptness to teach was a desirable qualification. Still all had it not; 1 Tim. 5:17. Elders were elders in a given city of God's assembly there. Gifts were exercised as set in the whole body, wherever the gifted member was, according to scriptural rules. The result of

the examination of scripture is, that there was one assembly of God in each town where there were Christians; that these were members of the body of Christ— the only membership known in scripture; and gifts were exercised in the whole church, or one assembly of God in the whole world, as members and servants of Christ, by the operation of the Spirit, according to rules given in scripture. Eldership was a local office to which persons were chosen and appointed by the apostle or his deputy; and they were elders in the one assembly of God in the place over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers (Acts 14:23; Titus; Acts 20:17-28). It was not a gift, though one gift was desirable to make the office more effective; but the chief requisites were qualities which made them fit to be overseers.

No trace of this subsists at present in the common order of what man calls churches. Thank God, men cannot hinder the Lord in His work, or His raising up such as may minister to His own in a sovereign way; but man has organized churches each according to his fancy, and the church of God and the word of God are forgotten save the owning by some of an invisible church which the Lord is faithful to carry on. But that they leave to His care, and arrange the visible church each as he sees good. The church as a public body in the world had sunk into popery (or Greek corruption, with which we have less to do in the West). All was in ruin, as the apostle had predicted; and at the Reformation civil government set up national churches. The church of God no one thought of, and for some time nothing else was allowed. Religious liberty then became more common; yet no one thought of the church of God but of mere organized

churches united by a system of man's devising, or independent one of another, but man arranged and organized them. The unity of the body, that membership was membership of Christ alone, that the Holy Ghost was on earth, that gifts were given by Christ and brought responsibility for their exercise with them, all this was wholly forgotten and left aside—that is, the whole original scriptural truth on the subject of the church and the presence of the Holy Ghost.

The Episcopal body was so far diiferent that they pretended to have the original title by succession, and made people members of Christ by the baptism of water, a dream of which there is no trace in scripture. It is by one Spirit there we are baptized into one body. Baptism is to the death of Christ. But leaving aside the Episcopal pretensions and errors, the existing system is that of assemblies formed by men on some principle they have adopted with a man chosen by themselves at their head; and people are members of this so-formed church or assembly, and vote in it as such. They may be members of Christ or not: that which gives them their title is that they are members of that particular assembly. In most churches a majority, if the vote does not create a division, carry out their will. The Holy Ghost is not in question. All action from beginning to end is man.

The Presbyterians may have various church courts and have an aristocratic element in their organization; Congregationalists have all their decisions come to by each separate body and the vote of the members of the assemblies. But the whole is a human arrangement formed and carried on by man. A man is a member of a body which man has organized, and acts as such. The actual state of things is a church or assembly of which a

certain number of persons are members with a person educated for the ministry at its head. It is Mr. So-and-so's flock or church: he is paid so much a year; he may or may not be converted, but he is ordained, he may be an evangelist and put into a pastor's place; he may be a pastor, but must preach to the world. Although, if he does not succeed in this, he may be dismissed, generally directly, sometimes indirectly. The whole constitution of the church of God is ignored—God's constitution, and man's substituted for it. And the order and the power of the Holy Ghost is ignored, or not believed in at all.

In scripture there is no membership of a church, no pastor of a flock peculiar to him, no such voluntary assembly formed on its own particular principles. Not a trace of such an order is in the word, if it be not in the incipient divisions called carnal in Corinthians. There was God's church or assembly, not man's churches. If Paul were to address an epistle to the assembly of God at ——, no one could get it: there is no such body in existence. Churches have set aside the church of God. The operation of the Spirit of God is set aside—that is, evangelists, servants of Christ for the world; pastors and teachers, not of a flock who have chosen them, or their flock, but exercising their gift where God may bring them; teaching at Ephesus in God's assembly if they were there, at Corinth if they were there, acting according to the gift given them from on high wherever God sent them, trading with a talent because their Master has charged them with it: as every man has received the gift, ministering the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if they exhort, waiting on their exhortation; if teachers, on their teaching; and that in God's assembly as a whole.

Man has organized, but he has wholly set aside, as far as his arrangements go, God's order and arrangements as to the assembly. Thus the church, God's assembly, is set aside to have churches; the Spirit who gives gifts to various members, to have a minister of their own choosing; and the word in which God's order is revealed. The church and Spirit and word are all set aside by what is called order, that is, man's arrangement and organization. We are told it "must be." That is, there is not faith to trust the Lord to rule and bless in His own house, according to the ordering He gave to it; yet true blessing can only come from His operation by the Spirit He has sent down. And what is the effect? It would be ungracious of me to expose (nor am I the least inclined to do it) the miserable consequences which often ensue. They are well-known: the world knows them.

My object is to shew that the system is anti-scriptural, and denies the Holy Ghost and the true church of God; but it is evident that a person chosen and paid by an assembly, of which very commonly half or more is unconverted, where the object is to increase numbers and influence, and to have rich people, must please those whom he serves. And, says the apostle, "if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ." They must adapt themselves to their audience. For the practical result I appeal to every godly conscientious person conversant with the state of things. I hear their groans on every side. But it is the natural and necessary effect of the system. Ministry is not the exercise of gift given of the Lord, but a person educated for a profession and ordained, so that a great many are not really converted. The true church of God established on earth (1 Cor. 12) is ignored, as are true churches,

God’s assemblies in each place; and churches are made by men according to their view of what is right, and men are members of their churches, not viewed as members of the body of Christ. An unconverted member of a church has all the rights and power of a converted man, a member of Christ.

The influence of wealth, not of the Spirit of God, is paramount, and a majority decides cases, not the guiding of the Spirit. If a majority had decided at Corinth, what would have been the effect? In the whole system man, and man’s will, and man’s organization, have taken the place of the Spirit and word of God, and of what God organized Himself as declared in that word.

People say, Were there not churches then? I answer, surely, and this it is that shews the anti-scriptural character of what exists. Let anyone shew me in scripture such a thing as a separate distinct body such as is called a church now, and membership of it; or, as I have said, if Paul wrote a letter “To the church of God at ——,” who could get it? All is anti-scriptural, and sets aside what is in scripture to form something else.

I do not touch on many collateral subjects, the ruined state of the church as a whole, the coming of the Lord, wishing to confine myself to the question—is the existing order of things scriptural or anti-scriptural? That men having drunk old wine straightway desire new, I understand, is not likely; but happy is he who follows the word, and owns the Spirit, if he be alone in doing so. The word of the Lord abides for ever, as does he who does His will.

2 Timothy 2 and 3 clearly point out the condition of the church in the last days, and the path of the believer in

them, as the first epistle gives the external details of the church when first arranged by apostolic care.

159 The following paper was written in the Western States of America but not published; as the principles apply everywhere, and some have wished it, the hesitation of the writer has been overcome.

Ephesians

Editor's Note 160

The exhortations in the Epistle to the Ephesians have a large scope and a higher aim than those of most of the epistles, though nothing can surpass the importance of details of godly practice in their place; that in walking according to them God may be glorified, the Spirit ungrieved and the heart free to receive and enjoy all His communications from the word. These exhortations are founded on, and refer to—as indeed in every epistle—the doctrine which forms the subject of the first part of the epistle. But there is an exceptional subject in this epistle: the unity which flows from the full revelation of God, the necessary centre of all; and more especially from the exaltation of Christ, in whom, according to the mystery, all things are to be headed up; and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth uniting the saints to Christ, the Head of the body on high, and assembling men by His power to the confession of His name upon the earth.

I have called this an exceptional subject, because it is not the first and proper doctrine of the epistle, but is introduced as an extraordinary revelation of an especial state and relationship into which the saints are brought. The primary relationships spoken of are individual ones with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: we are chosen in Christ to be holy and without blame before God in love, and predestinated to the adoption of children. The exhortations founded on this doctrine begin with verse 17 of chapter 4, and are first and mainly referred to the name of God, passing into the

relationship of children in the first verse of chapter 5. It is natural they should; because, while special affections are drawn out by the name of Father, the character of God Himself is that after which we are to be formed. Definite relationships are entered on in chapter 5:22; and there again the relationship of the church with Christ is introduced.

It is not to be passed over that, whatever the corporate blessings of the church (and they are very great and eminent) the individual relationship of the saint holds the first place, and that the action of the members of the body as such is for the perfecting of the saints individually. Indeed, seeing the place that God must have, and the unutterable obligation and relationship in which we stand to Him—we may add, the very place Christ Himself has with God as man—this could not be otherwise, whatever peculiar privileges the counsel of God gave to us in union with Christ.

Thus, in the first chapter of Ephesians, we find saints presented in relationship to the names and nature of God as revealed in that He bears toward Christ, as denoting our proper calling, and what characterizes us as saints—our relationship to that which is above us. And then, all things being centred up in and gathered into one under Christ, we become joint-heirs, so as to have the glorious place due to God’s children towards that which is below us. It is only at the close of the chapter, where he speaks of the power exercised towards those that believe, that he introduces (after the exaltation of Christ Himself raised from the dead) the union of saints with Him, their identification with Him as objects of the operation of the same power by which He was raised and exalted. They are not merely morally and

gloriously like Him; they are raised up together with Him, His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

The general purpose of God had been stated in verse 10 of the chapter. This especial part of it, the union of the body with the head, and the unity of the body itself, and the forming of a dwelling-place of God on the earth by the Holy Ghost, with its various consequences and aspects, and the obligations that flow from this great fact, are unfolded from verse 22 of chapter 1 to the end of verse 16 of chapter 4. The whole of the second and third chapters, and the fourth down to the end of verse 16, may be considered as a kind of parenthesis, in which the doctrine of the church is richly developed with the exhortations which flow from it; not separated of course from the doctrine of the whole epistle, but forming a special body of teaching within it. We are not viewed as the fruit of Christ's redemption individually before God, but as the associates of Christ's position in union with Him. It is at the same time remarkable, how, through the vastness of the place and counsel of God, these truths are interwoven.

It is the name, in reference to which we are individually children, which forms the groundwork of the prayer in this part of the epistle, which generally treats of the church; and it is the name of God with whom we are individually in relationship, because it is in grace, which lays the foundation for the union of the church with Christ, because of that divine power which has raised Christ, and us with Christ, from the dead, to form one new body in a heavenly condition before Him—a condition in which no middle walls of partition could arise; for what barriers of ordinances to exclude shall be found in heaven?

The name of the Father, in which we are brought into nearness of communion and relationship, gives its character to the prayer of chapter 3 (compare John 17:26). But under the name of Father of our Lord Jesus Christ every family in heaven and earth comes, and we are heirs of all. And the apostle seeks our blessing according to the riches of glory individually of Him who possesses all. In order to the present enjoyment of this, Christ, who fills all things, must dwell in our hearts by faith, through the strengthening of the Spirit in the inner man (compare—as regards hope, which is the form in which it is enjoyed in Colossians; for they were not holding the Head firm—Col. 1:27); and this is what the apostle seeks here. All things depend on the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and form the sphere of His glory. With the name Jehovah, Israel alone, of all the families of the earth, was in relationship. It alone was thus known by God; Amos 3:2.

On this name every family in heaven and earth depends; but then, according to the whole wide extent of His glory, in which He has given us a place, and as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He strengthens us by His Spirit, so that Christ should dwell in our hearts by faith, and that as rooted and grounded in love. This is the power of realization, that we may comprehend the extent of glory in the sphere of creation on the one hand, and have the intimate knowledge of Christ's love in us, which passes knowledge, on the other; so as to be filled to all the fulness of God, whether in the display of His glory, or the blessedness of His nature. Now it is the exercise in us of power which surpasses all our thoughts, which produces the great result and binds all together for His glory in the church by Christ Jesus. It is power in us which fills

us to all the fulness of God; but this power necessarily binds us together in a nearer and closer sphere—the church of God; and hence, while setting us to look out to the whole sphere of His glory in Christ, and binding us in the intimity of knowledge to the love of Christ Himself, the Spirit brings us to God's glory in the church. Indeed, it could not be otherwise; because, Christ the Head of the body, fills all things; and the body, as associated with the Head, is placed in connection with the whole scene; and He dwells in us, so as to give the power of going out unto it all as His, under the Father; and to know His love, too, by His dwelling in us.

Hence the previous part of the chapter, and the admission of the Gentiles as one of the families, leads to this prayer. Now the church has a double aspect and character, both of which are presented to us in this epistle. It is looked at also in two ways; as indeed is the case in every dealing of God with man and this lower creation, with this peculiar difference, that the church is the nearest and most immediate object of His thoughts next to Christ, forms no part of the ages and dispensations of this world, and has no existence but by the full display of God, as He is the true light now shining, and of man to God, according to His glorious counsels in the Person of Christ in glory on high, and the consequent presence of God on the earth in the Person of the Holy Ghost dwelling in men, and in the habitation God has formed for Himself here below amongst men.

Notwithstanding this difference, however, the same great general principle is in play as to the church, as in the case of other dispensations of God; because, though not of the world, and the object of God's counsels before

the world was, the church is displayed, and has her place and service in time in the world.

Now the double aspect of all the objects of God's dealings here below is the display of God's power and perfect wisdom in results, and the placing of the realization of it in man's hands under man's responsibility, before God's bringing it about by power according to His own mind. The very creation has been subjected to this principle: there will be a new heaven and new earth, where righteousness will dwell according to the thoughts and counsels of God; whereas that which now is groans under the bondage of corruption which sin has brought in.

I do not go farther than the earth, though my subject partly leads there, because the higher part of creation above is the proof of God's preserving care and grace; as we, of His restoring power by redemption and reconciliation.

But, as to this earth, everything trusted to man and for which he has been responsible will be accomplished finally according to the mind and purpose of God. Man himself failed in Adam, and will be perfect and glorified in the second Adam. Man was entrusted with the law: it will hereafter be written in his heart, and he will be made to walk in God's statutes. David's royalty failed; it will be perfected in Christ. Man, entrusted with sovereign power, failed in ruling over all: but Christ will reign over the whole earth in equity and truth, and glorify Jehovah. The very promises were presented in Christ, and man would have none of them. They will all be shewn to be Yea and Amen in Him. The church and the individual saint ought to glorify the Lord; they too

have failed. But Christ will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believed, and the church itself be fully glorified with Him.

So with the church. It will be presented perfect, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, as the bride of Christ by Him to Himself; as God did Eve to Adam. But it is set in the world as responsible to display by the Holy Ghost His character and glory now. There must be this difference, which I have already alluded to, that the church knows its own perfectness already in its Head, to whom it is already united by the Spirit; whereas Adam was the first man, and the Jew evidently never had Christ in the promised kingdom. It knows the perfect love of God, which has been revealed in all its fulness, and is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. It has the knowledge of its present union with Christ, and knows of the character of its existing relationship with Him, as His body and bride. Israel could not know, as a present thing, the reign of Christ in any sense. Love being perfectly revealed, the work of redemption accomplished, and our union with Christ a present truth, this difference must necessarily exist, though the great full result is yet to come, and we have the treasure in earthen vessels.

But, having noticed this, I turn now to the distinctive characters in which the church is set before us in the Ephesians. No doubt responsibility attaches to us as to both; but the failure of man is displayed more particularly in one, as being the proper sphere of his responsibility; while, though he may fail as to the other, its proper nature is in itself unalterable. The two characters of the church of which I speak, are found in the close of chapter 1, and of chapter 2 of the epistle—

the body united to the Head on high by divine power; and the building on the earth, the habitation of God through the Spirit. The body as united to the Head cannot fail, nor can any form part of it but true members of Christ. But it implies unity on earth amongst those who are there: and here there may be failure, that is, in maintaining the manifestation of unity on the earth as a witness. But the body itself cannot and never will fail. God has given Christ to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. That, of course, is necessarily made good. It would otherwise be as if something should fail of Christ's fulness.

But the aspect of the church presented to us at the end of the second chapter is a different one. It is viewed as formed on earth. Jews and Gentiles are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Now of course the thought of God, and the proper work according to God as far as He has wrought, is to put right stones in this building. The house is a real thing; but there is no such statement as in the end of chapter 1, where the essence of the truth was a glorious Head and living members of a living Head: God had given Christ to be Head over the body. Here the divine point was God in the Spirit dwelling in a house. He is Himself joined to nobody. It is a mere dwelling-place which is formed, and in which He is found. The fact is stated; the principle on which it is formed, namely, Jews and Gentiles both received and built on the apostles and prophets of Christianity, Jesus Christ Himself being the cornerstone; but who did it is not said, and, though naturally it is supposed to be real, the qualities of the stones are not in question; but the principles on which

they are received, and the object—the dwelling of God there—not in Israel.

Now I see no reason to doubt, that at first the body and the house were the same, but not necessarily so. If, of the three thousand added in the day of Pentecost one had been the victim of his imagination, or a hypocrite, he clearly would not have been a member of Christ's body, save in a mere nominal way; but the Holy Ghost would have dwelt just as really in the house formed, as if all had been true saints. When Simon Magus was received, when false brethren came in unawares, they were no members of Christ; their baptism did not in any way constitute them such. It is not its office in any way. But the Holy Ghost did not cease to dwell in the house of which they formed a part. It is not, be it so, the theory of God. But we are on earth, and the result there is mixed up with the responsibility of man. No one can be a member of Christ unawares; because that is in its nature a living, real, divinely-wrought thing; whereas the formation of the assembly or house on the earth, in which the Holy Ghost dwells, is partly the work of man, though God may operate therein. The theory was living stones built upon the Living Stone, a spiritual house. The practice soon diverged from this; but the Holy Ghost did not for that reason forsake the house.

This fact, I suppose, can hardly be denied, that is, the presence of the Holy Ghost where false brethren and unconverted persons already formed part of the public assembly of Christians, where the Holy Ghost dwelt. This indeed was so truly the case, that in Hebrews 6 an unconverted person is supposed to have come under His influence, and to have been made a partaker of Him. So we find in 1 Corinthians 10, the apostle suggests that

many who partook of baptism and the Lord's supper God might judge and reject. That which the house is responsible for, for which it is placed in the world, is to be the pillar and ground of the truth: that is, to maintain and hold it up in its public profession before the world. A true member of Christ may be in error, without ceasing to be a member of Christ; but the house, as such, is called to be the public professor of the truth. The church does not teach. The teacher does that. The church is taught. But it professes the truth. The providence of God will preserve this till the great apostasy in the main; but it is connected with the responsibility of man, so that all has to be judged.

There is another passage in which the house is spoken of (Heb. 3), which I ought not to pass over: "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." This speaks of the house as the ultimate result, "the end." Of course, if any one abandoned this hope in Christ, he had no part in the matter. This was the danger of the Hebrews. I do not think, if the object of the epistle be understood, the passage offers much difficulty. In result the house at first, not necessarily absolutely but in fact, was composed of living members of Christ. In the end it will be, according to God's own purpose and heart, the tabernacle of God. Meanwhile, like every dealing of God, it has been left under the responsibility of man. The result, without its ceasing to be the house as to its place and responsibility, has been what it always has where the creature is in question.

I think, in Ephesians 4 (and therefore, it was I dwelt on what preceded), we have in connection with this, three characters of unity to which the Spirit draws our

attention. The exhortation of the special part to which I have alluded, in which the church is treated of (chaps. 1:22 to 4:16), refers to the fact of the dwelling-of the Holy Ghost in the church looked at as formed on earth, her activity and energy of gifts; the body is referred to chapter 4:7-16, but in its individual members. Christ is viewed as the Giver; and gift and blessing is spoken of, not responsibility; nor is even the working consequently of the Spirit present on earth but of Christ the Head in heaven. The work is complete in power in the Person of Christ; and in virtue of that He confers gifts for the perfecting of the saints first of all, and to the edifying of the body. There is an effectual working in the measure of every part according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

But it is somewhat different in verses 1-6. There responsibility and duty are spoken of, an endeavour through grace, and that in connection with the Spirit of God, whose presence gives power to and characterizes our unity here below. The exhortation, as all exhortations must do, applies individually. God had brought them into His presence in peace, and dwelt among them; and Jew and Gentile were bound to have towards each other, for very different reasons, yea, every saint one toward another, that bearing which the presence of God would surely produce. The unity was by the Spirit, not in flesh (there the enmity had been), and they were to strive to maintain practically, in the bond of peace, the unity in which they stood in Christ; but the apostle then proceeds to refer to various characters or aspects of unity, the force of which I do not think has been generally seen, and which connects itself with the general subject of which I treat.

There is, says the apostle, one body and one Spirit, as we are called in one hope of our calling. There I find what is essential and of vital reality in the church of God —the body of Christ necessarily as such composed of living members, whatever responsibility those who pretend to be of it may be under; but here the apostle speaks of the unity in its true nature: one Spirit, which is the bond and power of this unity, and the one conscious hope which belongs to those who are called into this blessed place. That is the substance and reality of unity.

The next enlarges in its sphere of application, but loses in its essential character—one Lord, one faith, one baptism. This is profession upon earth, connected with the title of Christ to Lordship over them. He is Lord. It is not union with Him which is in heaven. The Holy Ghost unites us to the Head there; and we hope to enjoy fully what we enter into in spirit. Our calling is above. But faith here is the truth of the doctrine we profess. It is not even personal living faith here, for he could not then say one faith. One faith is the one thing believed, in the truth of which we own the Lord; and in baptism a person is publicly admitted into association with those owning the Lord and holding this faith, who form the house publicly upon earth. All this of course is on earth. There will be no faith in heaven. It is the unity of the owning of Christ's title. There is but one Lord, the holding the truth with which the announcement of Him is connected, and in the announcement of which that Lordship is maintained, and public outward association with the professors of it where that Lordship is owned. Simon Magus believed and was baptized; he was never of the body of Christ. It is a unity which regards professed Christianity on the earth.

The next unity is one God and Father of all. That is, we have God, the Lord, and the Spirit, as in 1 Corinthians 12. This last is necessarily a larger unity still, based on a more widely claiming name, a name to which a wider sphere belongs. The Spirit is connected with the body, for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. The Lord is owned by faith, and men are associated with the public profession of His name by baptism; but with the unity of God everything that is is connected, or there is something that exists independent of Him, and His unity is denied; or else creatures are not creatures but have independent existence of themselves. This to us now is simple; but when men owned "gods many and lords many," it was not so. To us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ. Hence the Thessalonians are said to be in God the Father. This one God is above all, and through all. It is far from Pantheism: that a heathen could imagine. He is one God above all; yet He is present throughout—He is through all. Whatever length and breadth and depth and height there may be, above all He is; and one God fills it all gloriously. But this is not all. He who fills all things dwells in the believer, He is "in you" or "us all" — He brings us most blessedly into this immediate association with Himself.

If Christ is Head over all things to the church, God, who is above all and through all, dwells in each individual who composes it, and brings him into the universe with personal divine blessing—filled with Him who fills all. This brings us divinely back to realities, filling us with God Himself, in the widest though more outward and general sphere of His glory; yet even here we could not be separated from direct divine blessing. Lordship over

might be over professed subjects; but God could not pervade all things without being in us in the proper way of divine blessing, because of our living relationship to Him—wondrous grace and blessing! Through all things He is, but He who is so is in us. Here then we have three distinct unities, the first of which gives us the real unity of the body; the second, professed subjection, as the apostle speaks, to the gospel of Christ (how wide is this gone now! How dreadful the state of those who thus own His Lordship!); the third, that of all things and God.

This leads me to another question and passage, 2 Timothy 2:15 to the end. Hymenseus and Philetus had erred, overthrowing the faith of some. The whole passage refers to professed truth (see 15, 16, 17, 18, and 23 to the end), Satan subverting the soul by vain questions and false doctrine; the individual might or might not be a believer in heart, a member of Christ. It is not the question here. The answer to this unsettlement by error is, that the foundation of God remains sure—the Lord knows them that are His. That is immutable and immovable by evil. Then comes the responsibility of man. This has a double character: first, the individual's conduct, as to which conscience decides very simply; second, his conduct as belonging to what is described under the similitude of a great house where there might seem more complication.

The first principle stated in the passage is very simple, absolute, and of universal application. It is a great comfort that it is so, and that this precept is of absolute unavoidable obligation. God's secret is with Himself, whatever the confusion and the error that is rife—He knows them that are His. That I must leave with Himself. I may rejoice, by the fruits produced to know

that any one is a child of God; but it is of God to know absolutely who are His.

But responsibility is my part, I name the name of the Lord. It is the profession of holy power; I must depart from iniquity wherever I find it. Whatever the leaving it involves, I must cease all iniquity—depart from it. If it be bound up with an ocean of good, I am not master but slave in my responsibility of conscience; I must depart from iniquity. That is a settled thing, a divine exigence which nothing can meet but acting on it. It is owning and abiding with God Himself in my conduct. Nothing can be so good, or doing so much good, as doing His will.

“To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Is any given thing iniquity? Is it wrong according to the light Christ has given me? I depart from it. I am told, “But you will lose opportunities of usefulness, of serving the Lord, of doing good; and you must leave other Christians. With whom will you go? “I answer, I know nothing of all this. That thing is wrong: I must depart from it; I dare not do otherwise. “But you will find wrong in everything.” Not for me—for a Christian—to sanction. He may fail in doing right, but not deliberately accept any doing wrong, however small, if he fears God. I name the name of the Lord; I cannot abide in what is not right. It is destroying all responsibility, and denying God’s authority over me to allege any motives for not departing from evil. None could have a better excuse than Saul when he lost the kingdom. There was one simple thing in the whole matter—he did not obey. “He that will serve me, let him follow me” —a weighty word of the Lord’s.

But the confusion which evil has brought into the church, and the enormous system of evil which bears its name, may create difficulties in many a sincere soul, when what bears the name of the church of God is the seat of the power of the enemy. To this the apostle turns. “But in a great house,” continues he, after speaking of these mischievous teachers, and the general principles which secured and directed the heart of the faithful. “In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour.” The professing church— what bore the name of Christ in the world—would become like a great house, where one finds vessels of every kind, and for all uses. What was to be done—leave the Christian profession —become unbaptized? That was impossible. There was no going out of the great house. Whatever state it was in, Christ was the Master of the house. We cannot be heathens, or Mahommedans, or strangers to Christian profession. What, I repeat, was to be done? Remain with those that dishonoured Christ because they also were in the great house? Not so. “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel to honour, sanctified and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” What defiled the house was worse, as such, than heathenism or the darkest ignorance.

Am I then to remain isolated in separating myself from these vessels to dishonour? Not so; I am to follow what becomes saints—righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Nothing seems to be plainer. Vessels to dishonour, I must expect would be found in the house; I must separate from these. But there are those who call upon

the Lord out of a pure heart. With those I am to associate, and follow after every Christian grace with them. If the house, once builded on the earth of choice and goodly stones (I am not aware that it is ever said that God positively built and formed it, I do not think it is), has become a great house in which vessels to dishonour are found, my path is clearly traced for me. The extent of the evil does not affect the principle, and other guiding ones may come in for other points of conduct. But this I have; I separate myself from the vessels to dishonour. I associate myself with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

It is not a question of local discipline, but of public and personal conduct. The responsibility of all in the house remains founded on the place to which they pretend, in which they have outwardly stood. This is clearly taught in Matthew 24, where the evil is viewed as a whole (v. 48). “But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.” Here the servant is treated as a servant, but as an evil one, as a hypocrite by the Lord. He considers himself so too. He says “My Lord” — he is so dealt with—the Lord of that servant. What a lesson for the professing church, and particularly for the hierarchical part of it! What makes this more remarkable is, that he is treated as the same servant, as to position, as the other who will be made ruler over all his Lord’s goods. Nay, he is treated as the

same servant changed in character, “But and if that evil servant, o kakos doulos ekeinos.”

It is indeed a solemn thought for those who take the place of rulers in the church called of God. But my object at present is only to lay before the reader the view scripture gives of the church’s responsibility, and the fact of the existence of that house in which vessels to dishonour are—how scripture looks at it. We cannot, with impunity, lose any part of scripture truth, and especially on points which commit us to grave points of action. We cannot begin the church over again: God is not beginning it. We cannot accept any evil in what is called by that name; less than elsewhere. That is a matter of absolute Christian responsibility.

The seven churches of the Apocalypse also clearly take up this responsibility of the church. We see, no doubt, local assemblies; but embracing, I doubt not, as is very commonly believed, an aspect of the whole professing body, or something characterising a general division of it by a distinct principle; but still the state of the professing church as such. The candlestick is threatened to be removed; and finally, nauseous to Christ, the Laodicean is spued out of His mouth. What bears the name of church is not only judged by Christ, instead of judging others, but every one that hath ears to hear is called upon to listen, and give heed to that judgment—to pay attention to it, as coming from the Spirit.

It has been alleged there is no going out. In a certain sense it is impossible; I have not the smallest thought of ceasing to be professing Christian. I name the name of Christ; am I, for that reason, held to continue in evil?

I add a few other passages, not cited or referred to in what precedes—all that I am aware of which refer to this subject— to facilitate to my reader his search into the truth of scripture on this subject: first, Hebrews 10:21; 1 Peter 4:17; and Matthew 16:18. The last I cite as connected with what I have said as to God's building. The word 'house' is not used, nor is the thought of a dwelling-place of the Spirit in this passage; so that I do not think it affects the question. I think myself, it may apply to both the true and external church; but especially, and finally, to what God secures as the living God, the true church.

The "priest over the house of God" is used in a general way, as an allusion intelligible to the Hebrews—the whole administration of the professing body, but exercised in favour and in behalf of those who drew nigh.

I apprehend, in 1 Peter 4:17, the professing house is referred to, alluding to Ezekiel; but in both these passages, and in all where ruin is not spoken of, the house, though viewed as outwardly subsisting in this world, is supposed to be a true one. Thus, when it is said to Timothy, "behave thyself in the house of God," it was his conduct in the professing church of God upon the earth, but assumed to be composed of disciples. That hypocrites, false brethren, might have got in, this altered nothing as to Timothy's conduct. He was to behave himself in it as the house of God, and maintain its order practically as such. What might come of the house through man's unfaithfulness is another and special question; what is seen in the passages I have just cited is the character, not the state, of the Christian body.

160 I send the following thoughts to the Present Testimony, rather to lay the subject seriously before your readers, than to teach upon it. Not that I have not in the main—while willing to have any thought corrected—a clear and decided judgment on that of which it speaks. But the subject is new to many: and all I wish at present is to direct their thoughts to it, that they may weigh it before the Lord. Hence I have added a signature, that the responsibility may rest with the individual who sends the paper.

Thoughts On The Church

Acquaintance with the truth of the church is indispensable for the setting free of the soul. I call him set free who has done with all questions between himself, God, and Satan.

Having entered into this understanding that we belong to the house of God, as if we had always been of it, the question arises, What has Satan to say to it?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the point is that all is settled through Christ's blood, and I can draw near. For the church it is, I am of the family of God. My life is from Christ; it comes from above. I am with God. By the blood of Christ I draw near from without; as a child I am within whence I come.

There is for me a difference between peace in the conscience and peace in the affections. As regards justification, the blood delivers me from a God of judgment, and the resurrection delivers me from the power of Satan, because the enemy cannot go farther than death. Then, in speaking of the church being risen with Christ, we are one body with Him in resurrection in a sphere where Satan has nothing. If I remain, as it were before the blood only, God always continues to be for me a judge; but, being risen with Christ, I am united to Him in heaven. And such is the church's place, for the church is composed of those who are one with Christ in heaven, and nothing else. We exist in virtue of the love of God, instead of having done anything to satisfy His righteousness. The lack of deliverance nowadays arises very much from the affections not being subdued. Therefore people really do not get out of this struggle

till they have the consciousness of the love of God. One cannot enjoy the love of God without being in holiness. If the heart is full of love, God Himself is there; and this is holiness. Resurrection puts us there consciously; without resurrection and the power of the Spirit one is not of the church. On the earth I am not said to be dead; I have a right, it is true, to count myself dead; still, the flesh is in me; whilst in heaven my life is hid with Christ in God, and this by virtue of His resurrection and ascension. With the flesh I am not in heaven, for I am not united to Christ by virtue of the flesh. In resurrection the church is there, where is neither Jew nor Greek. Viewed in Christ, in its privileges, the church is in a condition which goes beyond the state where a conscience is needed; yet this is brought home to the conscience by the fact that the church is on the earth with a testimony.

John does not speak of position, but he signalizes the nature which responds to this position; Paul is rather occupied with position. Consequently John is always individual, whilst Paul, speaking of position according to the counsel of God, can consider the body. There are two features in John—love and righteousness. To dwell in God is that which is most elevated in the doctrine of the New Testament. It isindeed communion: only that carries communion very far. Amongst our acquaintances, how much better we know the people with whom we dwell! To dwell in God is to dwell in Him in love. Surely God loves us always: it is infinite grace to enjoy it. But to dwell in God is more than that: it is to find oneself in this love, to sail there, as it has been said of the deluge, sea upon sea, boundless ocean. The only cognizance that I can take of this space is that I cannot

get out of it. If we dwelt in God somewhat habitually, that would express itself. The Saviour does not give, like man, from high to low; that is why He rejects the word 'benefactor.' "And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors," Luke 22:25.

The church is in heaven as to title and its privileges, and on earth as to fact and its duties. On the earth the church ought to be the manifestation of the activity of God's love, and of His holiness, according to the power of the Holy Ghost. As we have seen, the church by resurrection in Christ is in heaven; but in fact it is also on the earth. If we had ascended to heaven to receive the Holy Ghost, the unity would be only for heaven; but the Holy Ghost having descended to the earth to form the unity, that unity is here below.

The body of the church could not exist before the glorification of Jesus, for this would have been a body without a head, which would have been more monstrous even than in a human body.

In Ephesians 1:7 we have in Christ the remission of sins by His blood. Then, in verses 9 et seq, having given us a position of salvation, God makes known to us His intentions and plans. Meanwhile, in awaiting the accomplishment of things, we have the earnest in the gift of the Holy Spirit until the redemption of the purchased possession. Not till verse 22 do we hear of the church on high.

Chapter 2 shows us how we are brought in. Finding men dead in their sins on the earth, God in His infinite mercy quickens them, raises them with Christ, and seats them

in Him in heavenly places. In verse 6 together twice occurs: the first is “together” with Christ; the second is together— Jews and Gentiles. We have not got the body in this verse, but that which He does to form the body. In verse 14 we get nearer the church, and see there that the formation of the church could not take place until after the death of Christ, who has broken down the wall of partition.

Verse 15. The Messiah ought to have been the keystone in all things for the Jews; but they rejected Him, and this has given place to His death, and the formation of the new man. Every ordinance is enmity. Take baptism and the Lord’s supper, as they are misused in human systems, and you will find thus. See the various religious bodies. They make a constitution. Then of two things one: I must either swallow what is against my conscience, or keep outside. There is also another evil in a constitution, when, to avoid offending the conscience, they reduce it to the lowest degree they can find. If God constitutes, it is the only thing that unites these two conditions—liberty and order. For me, I should never separate from an assembly of Christians, unless it had ceased to be the church. I am speaking as to principle.

The church being formed, it is one body. In verse 20 the apostles and prophets are those of the New Testament. Moreover, when it is said, “for to make,” etc., it is something quite new (vv. 21, 22). Not only new, but in contrast with that which had preceded. This is again a proof that the church is formed on the earth. In the first half of the chapter we see the fulness of grace which seeks individuals in order to save them; in the second, the revelation that God’s intention was, not only to save

by this work of Christ, but also to unite these saved ones.

In chapter 3 we have a further revelation, namely, that not only the church did not exist under the Old Testament, but also that it was not revealed. There are moral connections of all importance; as that the election of the church was before the foundation of the world. So, when man on the earth was put under responsibility, God revealed His counsels for the church before the foundation of the world, outside the course of this world.

In chapter 4 Paul takes the church itself. In verse 2 the call is to be the house of God. Then one must walk according to this call, according to the presence of God. The unity of the Spirit exists, because there is not only a body, but one body and one Spirit. The unity of the Spirit being lost would make use of the bond of peace to prevent unity. It is here (vv. 7-10) that it goes beyond the revelation of the Old Testament; for in Psalm 68 Christ ascends on high; but there is more here—it is He who descended who ascends: then He fills all things. This gives a very remarkable character to the Person of Christ, namely, that in order to have dominion over all things He must fill all things. “Thou hast received gifts for men,” Psa. 68:18. It is the idea that He has received gifts in humanity. As man He received gifts to give them to men. This is a main point—that the Holy Ghost, instead of remaining solely in His divine being, should come into man. It is the baptism of the Holy Ghost which makes the church to be one body on the earth, and that it cannot be anything else. At the end of the first chapter Paul supposes the doctrine of the thing. At the beginning of the second he gives what God did to put the church in the condition where Christ is, and at the end of the same

second chapter, the revelation that it is the tabernacle of God on the earth.

Finally, in the fourth, he declares our responsibility of walk according to this calling, that we are the tabernacle of God, and develops the power of operation according to the fulness of Him who fills all things for the forming of the body.161 Every mayor is a Frenchman, but every Frenchman is not a mayor.162 It is the same with the church; it shares the general privileges with the others, but it has its special privileges as the church. The Christ of the church is a Christ so glorious that He can be in heaven and in my heart. Paul says the two things in the same phrase, Galatians 2:20. In verse n the Apostle Paul sees Christ so much in resurrection, that here he only sees the apostles since Christ is risen on high, without taking account of the call of the twelve whilst Christ was on the earth. In verses 11-16 we have the undeniable proof that it is the body on the earth, the whole body.

Further, I will not use such an expression as “I cannot” to diminish the responsibility of man. If the church has not the consciousness of being the bride of Christ, it cannot realize either the affections or the duties of the bride. One cannot discern them, if will ignores spiritual affections. Would it be with the church as with the children of the two women before Solomon, one half in the national church, and one half in the free church? Oh no! answer the spiritually enlightened affections, rather take all. Yes, the unity is possible on all the earth. Take, for example, a Moravian. Well, at every point of the globe, in Greenland, in Europe, this Moravian is at home. It is the same thing with a Wesleyan. If I have the idea of making the church as it ought to be down here, I

shall be discouraged; but if I view the church according to God, and I walk to that end, I find myself in the obedience of faith, and God encourages me. People say we must content ourselves with that which is possible. I reply, You have never seen the vision of the assembly; you have never seen the church according to God. He always puts before faith an object that one never obtains before one has been put there by the power of God. It is what will take place in glory as to life eternal (1 Tim. 6), for the church (Eph. 2, John 17), etc. There is another thing. If the people did not go up against the Amorites when God ordered it, they would be beaten when they rose up a second time; but God will be with them in the wilderness. Even the ark will be at the bottom of Jordan to open the entrance into Canaan. One must count upon God for the present. The visibility of the church was plain, because of the difficulties which it had to surmount in order to maintain unity.

Would it be an evil to allow of an invisible church, as God is also an invisible God? If God was manifested in flesh, so I say, the church has also been manifested here below; 1 Cor. 12:28. It is evident here that it is not a question of heaven, but of the earth, of the church; for in heaven there are no healings, helps, properly helpers [it is, in manner of speaking, gifts which are not substantive, but objective; gifts of too little scope to act alone, but which are of great help when there is another to shelter them]. There is still another passage on the church to mention in this Epistle; it is verses 16, 18 of 1 Corinthians 10. We have here one body manifested in the act of breaking one bread. It is that which has led people to call the Lord’s supper a sacrament. Originally “sacrament” designated the oath by which the Roman

soldiers pledged faithfulness to their standard. So, in taking the Lord's supper, Christians declare faithfulness to Christ (chap. 14). In each locality the union of the local church was the expression of unity of all the body.

If the church is one, it cannot make an alliance with itself; if it is, with whom will it ally itself? with evil?

One sees by Matthew 16 that Christ had not before Him the idea of the existence of the church up to then. Several confessed the Christ during His life, but it was only Peter who recognized the title of Son of the living God—a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is not the idea of being raised up with Christ, and being in heaven with Him, but rather that of being raised up with Him, and walking on the earth. One is not in heaven in this case, one is going there. As to moral character, the doctrine of the Epistle of Peter can be applied to the saints in the high places of Daniel, and again to those raised up after the rapture of the church. The saints up to Christ had indeed inward life, but they had no intelligence of it; they would not have been able to discern the flesh. There is again this difference, that this life did not connect itself with the Messiah as existing in heaven. God thought of the church, but He would not leave the Jews, before they themselves had left Him. It is for this reason that the church was not revealed until later. In verse 18, for "I say also unto thee," read "And I also say unto thee." The Father has told thee something about Me, that I am the Christ. Well, I tell thee something of thyself. Thou art Peter, and on this rock, etc.

Now the Son takes His place as Master of His own house. God had revealed (not given) to Peter the name

of Christ; now Christ gives (not reveals) to Peter a name concerning his position of service in the church, as Adam gave a name to all the creatures. Does this promise annul the fact of the failure of the church? No. One must distinguish between the responsibility of man and the faithfulness of God. The failure is but another proof in favour of this power which is able to keep the saints, and save them after all. It is the same with the Jews; their lie will abound to the glory of God. The keys are not of the church, but of the kingdom. In his ministry Peter always acknowledged the Jews; hence in the beginning of the Acts he never mentions the church. He needed to make use of the keys for the work of the kingdom. As to the church, it was rather Christ who baptized with the Holy Ghost, and who could make use of such and such a person. And what is remarkable is, that not until Paul is Jesus proclaimed as the Son of God. The same as to the promises: Peter acknowledges Israel as the heir (Acts 3:25), whilst Paul says that it is the seed of Abraham, which is Christ (Gal. 3:16). As for binding and hosing, Peter was steward in the house while working also for the kingdom. To bind and loose is not only in reference to people, but also to things; whatsoever thou shalt bind, etc. He loosens from the law, for example in Acts 15:9, and when he eats with the Gentiles. Nowadays one binds and unbinds persons, as in John 20.

Peter was invested with a certain authority in Matthew 18. As to the force of verse 18, I decide nothing: but verse 19 seems to have a very simple application. The Holy Ghost acting in the church, if two or three agree, the Lord is with them. Like government in a state, it does not make the laws, but it makes use of them; it is

invested with discretionary power. Only we must remember that we have not discretionary power outside the word. Such is the perfection of the word, that there is not a single case for which it has not spoken; but wisdom is needed to apply it. It is remarkable to see the wisdom of the ways of God. That which was the church at the beginning has pretended later to be the kingdom.

Although the tares were sown in the midst of the wheat, the children of the kingdom remain always children of the kingdom, whilst the assembly as such may corrupt itself. That is easily understood. The unity is broken; the children of God who formed the unity always remain the children of God; but there is no longer unity; it is no longer the church as such. The rule for me is not to leave an assembly if I think it is the assembly. If the principle of an assembly is to have the children of God gathered because of Christ, I will not leave it, notwithstanding the neglect which has admitted unconverted souls; I would work for its good, and the righteous dealing with these unconverted; but I would not withdraw—quite the contrary. If I find a gathering wholly composed of Christians, but these not assembled on the principle of the Spirit's unity according to the word, I would not unite myself to them in any way. I would not separate myself for false brethren who might have slipped into an assembly, because at all events there was the assembly into which they had slipped.

For admission to the Lord's supper, not only faith is required but peace. At present I count upon the Saviour to lead me, knowing that His grace is sufficient for me. We are the guardians of the Lord's table; but in one sense we are also the guardians of the Saviour's sheep, and, from love to them, we shall wish to see them as one

flock, far from the dangers of the world; it is a great responsibility, for which however the Lord's grace is always sufficient.

In a case of sin, it is better to leave the individual there for the assembly to suffer for it until it judges itself, than to exercise discipline among a few which might lead to the scattering of the assembly. As we must hold to the purity of the church's conscience, one must, in case of sin, wait till it has the conscience before acting. If these two or three made a rule, they would not be in the place of the word; but in holding to the word, they are authorized for the execution of the thing.

The church administers to the house of God (I am not speaking of the keys now). First, there is unity. There is one body working by its joints of supply. Secondly, there is the power of God by the Spirit confided to the church for that which is within it. The great principle is that the Holy Ghost was there directing everything, while making the Christians to act as servants of Christ, the immediate head of His house; Heb. 3. The root of all is that the church has disowned the presence of the Holy Ghost; it has forsaken the principle which constitutes the foundation of its existence. That is what I call total failure and apostasy. For the church it is the abandonment of the principles on which those who made profession of them were united. In reality the apostasy of the church is impossible. There is outside all the counsel of God—within the saints—there is life (John 10); but, on the other hand, there is also the result of its responsibility on the earth.

Modern Protestantism denies the power of the Holy Ghost to form on the earth one body. The Reformation

had in view other things, but it did not deny this one. There were two things in Protestantism—the authority of the word, and justification; some have lost nowadays one of these things, others another. As to popery, there is unity, it is true, but a unity of which the Pope is the centre. To deny unity is unbelief on this subject. When one arrives at the fact of die fall, one finds at the bottom Judaism; it was that against which the apostles struggled at the beginning.

Judaism, if we consider the church, is, it seems to me, the principle of succession in clerical ordinances, in the place of the Holy Ghost rendering the servants immediate servants of Christ. This goes even farther, because they have made a priesthood—in a word, the clergy. There are many other things to add, as legalism, the earth, etc., but these do not belong especially to the unity of the church.

The facts are, first, the Holy Ghost is not owned as the power in the church;

Secondly, the unity is lost in the sense of the visible body on earth;

Thirdly, the sense of our responsibility to be one as a testimony on the earth—in a word, the idea of the church is lost. The consciousness of the relationship of the church with Christ is also lost. Could not one say, one is fallen through lack of love? Then, if love is found again, the failure no longer exists! No; not only that, for power is necessary to unity.

The consequence of this failure is, further, that the heavenly character is lost—the principle of action is falsified (as in the clergy). Peter and Paul could not preach in the church, such as it is now known; and if

Satan comes with ordination, he is received. All the working of the gifts is laid aside, and replaced by human systems, which do not recognize the action of the members in the aggregate. They make churches, because they do not believe in the church. There is still an important question—it is to find out Where this failure has begun. It is difficult to say. We find already at Philippi that each one sought his own interests. At first the evil did not affect the unity of the body, but it was soon to do it. That which is serious in this evil is that it began in the church. See again among the Colossians, how they began to lose sight of the Head of the body; and it is from this source nevertheless that for the church flowed all its life. The church judaized in losing the consciousness of its unity with the Head. We see the same tendency as to justification among the Galatians. As to the Ephesian church, it had abandoned its first love. In Acts 20 we see that the departure of the apostle was to let loose these wolves. We can only see how the evil has come in, but it has spread very far, as is evident when we come to the apostasy. It is solemn to see that it is in the church that all this began.

James 5:14. There is an internal administration or power, which is completely wanting nowadays. The church was competent as to the ways of God with the members of the church. There is at present total incapacity in the house. If that is not a failure, I hardly know what a failure is. Alas! the church has not now the consciousness of itself. There is another great point—it is that the church and the world are blended together.

The First Epistle of John shews us the worst evil was already there. It is the evidence of two things; first, that the presence of Antichrist is that which characterizes

the latter times, and that it is in the church that it springs up; and, secondly, that this evil was already in the days of the apostles. It was indeed the last time, for this moral character, the essential character, was already there. The church ought to have been the perfect testimony of what Christ is; whereas it had become the source and cradle of corruption—the formal denial of Christianity. There was already, to begin, the denial of Christ come in the flesh: they denied the Father and the Son; they did not deny God. “Whoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service, because they have not known the Father nor me.” Satan always comes, with an old truth which does not put faith to the test, to oppose the one where there is power. The Saviour marks the last time by that which existed in the days of the apostles. We must remark that here these antichrists came out from the midst of the saints. That is a difference from what one sees in Jude.

In Jude 3 the moral force of the phrase lies in this, that Jude, having the intention to write to the saints on their common salvation, had to leave this, in order to occupy himself with the adversaries and apostates, whom he points out to the vigilance of the saints. We see in this epistle, not the fact, but the introduction and the progress of the evil up to its judgment.

In verse 14 Jude passes over all the period of Christianity, and shews it was against those who were there, then present, that the judgment came. Such is the history of the ruin of the church. It is into the church that Satan has introduced those who are to be specially the objects of judgment when the Lord comes with the saints. It is not only that the general system has failed, but, besides that, the evil entered when all was in good

condition. The virgins slept in the forgetfulness of the coming of the Lord. They had to go out a second time. It seems that they had entered some place more convenient to slumber in. Christians having entered into the world to sleep, it becomes a question of going out again. We learn, then, from Jude that the evil, which is the object of judgment, enters into the church. He identifies the evil with the judgment at the end. He passes over the history of the church, save that he gives the character of evil in verse 11: three characters of evil, summed up in Cain, Balaam, Core. There is perhaps here a certain analogy with the dragon, the false prophet and the beast at the end. Although religious corruption is serious, it is in the character of Core that one perishes. It is in the church that these three things have sprung up. We saw higher up that the negligence of Christians allowed Judaism and worldliness to enter. Now we see people with these characters enter. Satan did not fail to profit by the open door. Then it is that God declares clearly the apostasy. First, they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Sovereign God and Lord Jesus Christ. Although when they entered they confessed Christ, Jude does not allow himself to be deceived— he puts his finger upon the evil, and declares that they deny Him. Later they will be seen to go out, as it is said in John.

There is this besides, that they were spots in the love-feasts of the saints; that is the reason why it is said of them that they were twice dead—dead naturally, and dead as to their profession. “Wandering stars” they have the appearance of giving light, but disappear immediately in the darkness.

How do they distinguish themselves? They pretend to have great knowledge; they were forward in things which they did not understand; they occupied themselves with fables, with endless genealogies; they affected a great elevation of mind, etc. (v. 18). Remark, too, that Jude also says, like John, that the presence of these men is the sign of the last times. One has elsewhere in the word directions how to conduct oneself with regard to such men (1 Cor. 5, for example), but it is not the subject here. Jude gives the thing as a revelation to serve for the instruction of the church until the end. The Holy Ghost does not treat of all the subjects at once. Now that in the aggregate the evil has overflowed, one must go out. We are responsible for the evil which has entered, even when we have not done it, and are not of the system where it is (popery, etc.), because, being identified with the true church, it is that which allowed the evil to enter.

The responsibility is individual. When it is a question of conduct, the Lord takes notice of our conduct in that state of things. But when it is a question of the heart, it identifies itself with the whole body, to whom the testimony of God had been confided.

2 Peter 3. It is very nearly as in Jude, with this further character, that there are mockers who deny the return of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-7. Here indeed is the apostasy. We have here the facts of the apostasy established. If there is an apostasy it is little. But the Christian testimony has not continued in its primitive integrity; so that there is no restoration, and the end of that is judgment. Two important things are to be borne in mind in this subject.

First, there must needs be an apostasy (v. 3). Secondly, this apostasy is a thing of such a nature, that it is the occasion for the judgment of God (v. 8). For my part, I do not think that the apostasy is consummated, although since the days of John and of Jude the development of the principle has made great advances.

Hebrews 6 may be applied to the Christian system. If men have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have turned away from it, there is no restoration. The guilt of the Jews, viewed as a nation, is that they rejected the Son of man; they will be re-established in the millennium, whilst the Gentiles, fallen as to the Holy Ghost (there is no blasphemy yet, but there is the analogy of the principle), will not be restored. Verse 7, returning to 2 Thessalonians, is the formal declaration that the mystery of iniquity had already begun to work in the days of the Thessalonians. We have already seen that elsewhere. He restrains who makes a hindrance. The important thing for us is to know that there is a bridle which restrains the development of evil, without inquiring what this bridle is. The fathers said that it was the Roman empire. Well, I admit this for a time; as for our days God employs other things: He can maintain the civil governments to serve as a bridle for man’s will, in order that the evil may be checked.

So long as the church is here below, God maintains the authority necessary towards the ministers of His justice in all that which contributes to the good of His church (v. 9). Satan disposes of the creatures, although he can create nothing, so that for man it is a miracle. With a magnifying glass, by the concentration of the sun’s rays, I could produce a fire, which would be a miracle with a window. Satan does something like this with men. But

there are two things that Satan entirely ignores—the love of God, and spiritual discernment. (Compare verse 9 with Acts 2:22). You will see that the same signs which characterized the Christ are those which will characterize the man of sin. Again, in the time of Elijah the question between Jehovah and Baal was settled by fire from heaven descending at the voice of Elijah, which the false prophets then could not do. In the Apocalypse we see that the second beast will cause fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men. The acts of power which were a testimony of God by Christ, as well as of Jehovah in Israel, will be exercised by the man of sin.

It seems to me that Judaism occupies a very great place in the prophecies that concern the end.

1 Timothy 3:15. The word is for the church, and the church for the world. After all the church is always the depository of the truth. It is in the world the sphere where one finds the truth. Viewed in its aspect in that which appears, it is an immense lie; but viewed in that which is of God, one finds the truth, which God maintains by the faithfulness of His grace. One finds even among the Papists fundamental truth—the deposit is there; but the additions and the transformations render it false as to testimony. Earthly priesthood and human ordinances are brought in between God and man, who cannot get near Him.

In 2 Timothy 2 the man of God was to purge himself from the vessels of dishonour in the house of God—Christendom. Evil is not to be sanctioned, however earnestly we may seek to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Indeed fidelity is essential. If the Lord know them that are His, let him that names His

name depart from iniquity. Other names should not bind us to iniquity. It is not discipline here, but conduct regulated in view of corrupt Christendom, and this relative as well as personal. “Flee also youthful lusts, but seek righteousness, faith, charity, peace with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Thus he may count on fellowship according to the Lord even in such circumstances—not isolation, but communion by the will of God. The perilous times of the last days need not hinder this. From the pretenders who deceive the silly, and resist the truth, one must turn away. For there will be professing men, since they have the form of piety; and here they respond to the picture that we have of the heathen at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans. (Compare 2 Tim. 3.)

The heathen, it is true, are more undisguised there; whilst in 2 Timothy the evil is more hidden; they have the form of godliness. One sees in verses 6, 7, that there was activity in these things— “ever learning,” they are silly women (gunaikaria), captives, under the tyrannical influence of these individuals. On the other hand, there are the scriptures which make one wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The two things are the word and faith. Faith is the key to enter into the word with. What is very remarkable here is, that as security he does not give the Holy Ghost, but the word. The Lord (Luke 24:44) acknowledged the Old Testament as it was received with the various readings. Moreover, in this He sanctioned the faith of those who had acknowledged it before it was sanctioned. You do not understand all the code of laws, but you read it, acknowledging that these laws express authority in the land. The church does not give any authority to the

word, but was its guardian. To the church the oracles were confided. It is in this that it has been unfaithful—in the keeping of this deposit. For that which calls itself the church has added to scripture the Apocrypha.

Observe, “From a child.” It is the authority of the book which is recognized (from father to son); for Timothy as a child was hardly able to judge whether it was the word of God. We have in these verses all that is a security for the perilous times.

Peter also says the scriptures, when he mentions prophets (2 Pet. 1:20, 21). Again, he recognizes the writings of Paul as inspired writings (2 Pet. 3:14). I believe in literal inspiration, because it is said, “by words taught by the Holy Ghost,” 1 Cor. 2:13. But if one come to this, I should rather say absolute inspiration, because I believe that the Holy Ghost is the Author of that which has been written. He has made use of instruments for this. You find them, over and over again, in their special features and individuality. From Him is the difference of the facts reported by some, and not by others, in the Gospels.

Then I admit that God permits all these difficulties in the word (the various readings, etc.), in order to stumble unbelief. One has an example in Isaiah 8:13, 14. God permits that there should be things in the manifestation of the truth, which suffice to stumble those who do not believe. If human science can judge respecting the Bible, to decide if it is the word of God, then the spirit of man must be above God. This is infidelity, apostasy commenced, which is consummated for the Christian profession by the fact that it ceases to be the church, just as death brings a man to his end. It is like a shadow,

which at the decline of day grows longer and longer, and then—ceases.

161 The cross is the end of the world, and it is the starting-point for the church! The goal before her is the coming of Christ. Between the two we have the Supper which connects the two points. These are the three fundamental principles of the church, which I immediately saw to be laid down when I left Nationalism.

162 These notes were taken at a conference at Annonay, in France.

The Vaudois

I know not whether your readers are interested, as I have been, in the hunted remnant of the middle ages, both east and west, during the time that ecclesiastical corruption and wickedness were on the throne of their power. They laboured under a double disadvantage. They have no historians but their enemies, alike bitter and unprincipled, who would stop at no calumny to blacken them, their own stupendous wickedness making the accusation of it a natural weapon. This was one reason why we know so little truly of them, and that little to their disadvantage.

But there was a second disadvantage under which they laboured; they were thrown, by being separated from the public professing body, into the danger of following their own ideas instead of the abominable and senseless traditions in which they had been nurtured, and so much the more because they had (though the first that largely used them after darkness set in in the church), comparatively speaking, very little the opportunity of availing themselves of the word of God. And further they were in danger not only from the working of the human mind as we all are, but of coalescing With various heresies and works of Satan which moved about in the dark, but hated the ruling religious powers for the truth they preserved more than for the corruption they were guilty of. You will always find Edomites that would raze Jerusalem, not because it is corrupt but because it has the standing of the city of the great king, as well as those who say “The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these,” while they are only bringing ruin

on it by corrupting it and dishonouring the Lord of the temple.

The Waldenses have this advantage—they are attacked by both. Roman Catholics and Ritualists attack them of course; and free-thinkers, who would have error free because it is free-thinking, will never bear subjection to the word of God, nor holding fast to the truth because it is the truth, for then man cannot be a free-thinker. Another very serious disadvantage under which the Vaudois have laboured is, that those in the seventeenth century who furnished their documents or copies of them to the Protestant world in England and France tampered with them—that is, Leger and Perrin, or at least Perrin. Critics and Ritualists settled on this, as flies on a sore, and sought to cast on the Vaudois the sins of their historians and furnishers of documents. There was no serious effort to investigate the truth, but the greatest delight in detecting what was false and thereby discrediting the Vaudois or Waldenses. Even Moreland, who deposited the MSS. at Cambridge, did not escape; he, it was said, must have stolen them away after putting them there, that they might be in some safer Puritan's place and detection avoided. Quite a theory as to this was built up by Mr. Algernon Herbert in a very vulgar-minded detective-police article, quite worthy of that class of religionists, which is now proved to be all false. The MSS. are in Cambridge, and have always been there, overlooked though close by the rest.

Nor was the spirit of Dr. Todd much better, who anxiously insinuates they held popish errors in the very pieces which relate their being tortured and delivered to the secular army by Romish prelates. Some of the MSS. are of a later date than the warm advocates of the

Vaudois have supposed, and some falsely dated by the copyist for Perrin, or by Perrin himself— very likely the latter. I know not why, but the French Synods were dissatisfied with his work, yet at last accepted it. The Nobla Leycon is a genuine and ancient document, but their manipulations had sought to give it an earlier date than was the real one; and we have a large body of documents genuine, though some have been meddled with, and some probably very ancient; and Gilly has pretty well proved the most ancient European translation of the New Testament found in any language is the Romaunt or Gallic. The copies we have are written with chapter and verse, but scripture is quoted in some treatises without either, proving the quoted passages to have been written early in the thirteenth century at latest. (Gilly's Introduction to the Romaunt version of John, 41.)

It appears that the Nobla Leycon reads really 1400 years are fully accomplished, not 1100. This was Leger's doing, or some other, who furnished the MSS. But the poem is genuine; and long before the Reformation the early French translations were to supplant the Vaudois scripture. Such is the evidence of documents now afforded. We have the testimony of a letter of Pope Innocent III in 1199, of a Gallic translation circulated in the diocese of Metz in 1229. The Romaunt version was prohibited in the Council of Toulouse. Other acts of the inquisition and councils to prevent people reading this version it is unnecessary to speak of.

Simon (Hist. Crit. de l'Anc. Test.) informs us that the first Roman Catholic translation was made to hinder the people reading these. They were evidently widely spread in 1250. The inquisitor Reinerius Saccho states

distinctly that he knew poor people who knew the whole New Testament. The use and quotation of it subsequently is beyond all question.

As to the antiquity of the Vaudois themselves, some remarks may be useful. Waldo's history is well known. He appeared about 1170, was at first well received by the Pope, but forbidden to preach; he did however and was driven from Lyons. He had nearly all, if not all, the Bible translated, and was very active, having given away all his fortune. The upholders of popery have taken great pains to shew that the Vaudois were in many points conformed to the followers of the Pope. Now there were many points as to which they were in the dark. The infamy of the clergy, degraded by species of vice which none can call in question, had roused the conscience of many, and more as to practice and the acts by which they made money than as to dogma. But purgatory, consecration to the priesthood and indulgences, confession to priests, prayers for the dead, were all rejected. They are charged by ritualists with recognizing penances of prayers, fasting, alms. There is truth in this; but they appear to have been as opposed to indulgences which had obliterated all true discipline. They rejected oaths on confession extorted by torture. Andrinus Crespini, or Valoy, said there was no purgatory but in this world; he denied the spiritual power of the Pope, prelates and clergy, disapproved of the invocation of saints, kept no feasts or fasts of the church, gave no honour to images, had no faith in holy water. This was half a century before the Reformation. The superstition and vices of the clergy and church of Rome— that they rejected; holding the common faith of the church at large, without any apparent protestant doctrine of

justification by faith. This was the case also with the revival in Moravia and Bohemia of Hussitism before the Reformation, closely connected as it was with the scattered Waldenses, as their history plainly shews. They did not then like the doctrine of justification by faith when brought from Luther. Todd seeks to insinuate that they held the seven sacraments; but his own quotation proves that they did not hold extreme unction as really such, though he speaks of Perrin's only giving what refers to the abuses of the Roman Catholics. Nor, it is clear, did they hold priestly ordination at all.163 And now as regards the origin of Vaudois. Of Waldo I need say nothing. The facts as to him may be found in most church histories, and (with a trifling difference) the date of his coming forward as a herald of what truth he knew, and getting the scripture translated. He was forced to retire from Lyons, but it is admitted that the Vaudois sect was spread over all Western Europe. It is said Philip Augustus of France in the earlier part of the thirteenth century razed three hundred castles of Vaudois Seigneurs. This could hardly be from Waldo, who only began to preach at the end of the twelfth. But further Waldo first received serious impressions from a Troubadour, of whom many carried piety and anti-Roman doctrines around where they penetrated with their songs; and it is expressly said by Stephen of Borbonne that when driven out, Waldo went and joined other heretics of Provence and Lombardy. They were therefore already there. And this question then arises, Were these simply Albigenses or Manicheans as is alleged? That there were Manicheans spread from Bulgaria, originally from the east of Asia Minor, on into Spain itself, can hardly be questioned. But not even the Inquisition ever charged the Waldenses with this. The

archives of the Inquisition of Toulouse published by Limborch demonstrate this; and the well-known testimony of Reinerius Saccho which declares that they live justly and believe all the articles of the creed; which makes them, he says, so dangerous. But, if we are to believe Mosheim, there were two parties even among these Bulgarian teachers who filled the whole south of Europe, and particularly Lombardy and the south of France, the latter being exterminated by the crusade of de Montfort, for which the Inquisition was invented. The one, or Alben-anses, really held the doctrine of two principles, and thus were Manicheans; the other Baioli, of whom came the Albigenses, held nothing of the kind, but that there was one God the Creator, Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, but that Satan, after his fall, had ruined the earth, making the four elements. So they were divided into three parties as to the flesh of Christ, some holding He took flesh of the Virgin Mary, some not; others that He took it really and suffered in it, but did not take it to heaven on His ascension. The sacraments of the Roman body they wholly rejected. They had a certain but unsatisfactory faith in the Trinity.164 All this had nothing to do with the Vaudois.

We have clearly then, I think, three parties: Waldo's followers, who amalgamated with the Vaudois, and the Cathari, of whom there were two parties, Manicheans, and non-Manicheans, though of unsatisfactory doctrine. We cannot be surprised, as all were opposed to Rome, at Rome's burning all together. She did not care for truth but for authority, and pulled up some tares contrary to Christ's direction and much wheat (as the blessed Lord foretold) with it. She will have to answer for the blood of all saints. But if we seek to trace out the history of the

Vaudois proper, those of the valleys of Piedmont, it is not very difficult.

It is well known that Claude of Turin resisted what they resisted. He was archbishop of those very valleys. This was in the ninth century. But it is certain that before that the same opposition to superstition was found there. In Jerome's famous letter to Vigilantius, in which he rages with his accustomed abuse and violence against him for resisting superstitions then coming in, he refers to these very districts and states in the most insolent language (the custom of ritualists when opposed, however they fawn on superiors when it suits them), that the bishops there sustained Vigilantius in his opposition to the growing superstition. Thus from 406 and then in the middle of the ninth century the same opposition continues there; and then we find 300 years after the same opposition still, and them and their adversaries tracing it to some seventy years before we find it established there, as proved by Jerome's letter. It was a protest, not there only, but which survived there against the corruption of the professing church after Constantine, when it borrowed the rites and doctrines of Paganism and thus supplanted it. With the testimony we have from Reinerius Saccho and others, it is utterly impossible to think the Vaudois commenced with Waldo of Lyons, though it be very likely their tenets received a very great extension through his means. Reinerius Saccho's inquisitorial activity was sixty years after Waldo's activity began, and he states there were three reasons why the Waldenses or Vaudois whom he was sent to reduce to the obedience of the Roman Church. The first was they were a great deal older (diuturnior) than all other sects; adding, some say from the time of

Pope Sylvester, others from the apostles. It has been attempted to say this is merely “some say,” but it is Reinerius who says they were older than sects; and it is important to see that it was they themselves who thus held it to be from Sylvester at least, soon after whose time we find traces of it in these districts, the evil having really begun in his time by the christianizing of the emperor. Next, that they were more universally spread, there was scarce any land where it was not received. This could not have been in some fifty years. The third was that they lived justly, and held soundly all the articles of the creed.

The Vaudois then were a people, a religious testimony with their Barbes (uncles) or pastors spread over Europe. Reinerius does not speak of Albigenses, who were treated as open heretics, but the Vaudois; and the history is well known, how they had been sought for their integrity by the feudal lords in Calabria, and, after being settled there some time and visited by their Barbes, were subsequently all utterly exterminated at the instigation and under the direction of the Roman Catholic clergy.

That the Vaudois had sunk very low at the time of the Reformation is quite true. They went to mass and were afraid of holding separate meetings. But we have even then the unexceptionable testimony that they had lived wholly apart from Rome. Seyssel, archbishop of Turin, declares in a book published in 1520, only three years after Luther’s theses, that within memory of man no Romish prelates had been in the valleys. He declares that they pretend to date from Constantine but in an ignorant way calling themselves Leonists, from a Leo of

Constantine's time who was disgusted with the largesses bestowed on the prelates by the emperor.

The Reformation roused them up, and (Ecolampadius blamed them much for thus yielding to popery and not having separate meetings. But at this epoch we have Seyssel's testimony that no prelate had dared to go there within the memory of man, and that by faith he ventured there. As we might suppose, oppression and persecutions came with the Roman clergy. Since the Reformation they sank down, with the rest of the reformed, into Socinianism; but with the rest God has graciously revealed the truth amongst them, though of course they have not got beyond the principles of the Reformation which they received from CEcolampadius and Bucer at the time by the intervention of Masson and Moul their Barbes.

Recently Dr. Meila, a Roman Catholic clergyman, has sought to use the efforts of Todd and the recent discoveries (by Mr. Bradshaw) of the Cambridge MSS. to attack their antiquity. The body of the book is simply exposing what was already exposed, the unreliableness of the statements of Leger; and then seeks to prove that the Vaudois were persecuted for rebellion and not religion; but qui s'excuse s'accuse. The oppression is certain; and in another way the answer is no answer at all. There were Waldenses outside the valleys. They were all exterminated in Calabria and brought before the Inquisition everywhere. Rome is drunk with the blood of the saints.

Dr. M. has brought forward only one document of any importance. In 1220 the corporation of Pinerol forbade any to open their houses to Waldenses. He adduced this

as a proof that it was then new. This was some 30 years after Waldo's public activity. This may very likely have awakened the activities of the authorities against the Waldenses, but it is no proof one way or other of their existence or otherwise. Reinerius' testimony, which Dr. Meila entirely misrepresents and which was only 30 years after this decree of the local authorities, makes such an idea impossible. Nay the decree rather confirms the importance of the statement. Reinerius' own words are that it was of much older date than any sect. The particular alleged dates he quotes from others; but that it is "diuturnior omnium" is his own statement. He had been a Vaudois himself before the time of the decree and knew what they said, and turned Dominican and inquisitor. How was it possible, if it had only begun 30 years before in the neighbourhood? could he say that it had existed longer than any sect?

The decree of Pinerol is easily accounted for, the condemnation of Waldo and the Waldenses having just taken place at Rome. Not only so, but in the year 1127 there is a treatise of Peter of Clugny against the heretics of the diocese of Embrun, and in 1164 the mountains are said to be infected with heresy. At the very end of that century (1189) the Pope had embraced Waldo, only bid him not preach unless authorized by the priesthood. Subsequently not obeying this order he was driven from Lyons and went over to the Italian side of the mountains and sowed and drank in heresy, says Stephen de Borbonne. That then the decree of Pinerol should have been made, the Pope in council having now condemned them thus active in spite of popes, is perfectly natural, but proves nothing as to the date of Waldensian principles which the contemporary testimony of Stephen

de Borbonne and Reinerius Saccho prove. One expressly he found already there; besides testimonies of an earlier date still, which say the heresy was there.

My paper has greatly overpassed the limits I had thought of; but it may not (in the presence of these attempts to discredit an oppressed and persecuted people, without any honest search into the truth of the matter) be without interest to some of your readers. It is quite true that Leger and Perrin are not to be trusted, and the attempt to ascribe reformed doctrines to the ancient Waldenses has no foundation. But neither is Dr. Todd to be wholly trusted, and Mr. Herbert's ingenious and prejudiced theories were false. Dr. Todd is obliged to admit it was a monstrous charge, but neither has anything to do with the real history of the case.

Jerome's letter to Vigilantius is of all importance as to the historical facts and the labours of Claude of Turin to keep image worship and superstition out of his diocese. It is also important not to confound the Albigenses and Cathari with the Waldenses, though there is much that is interesting as to the former too.

I may just add that the discussions as to the origin of the term Waldenses, Vallenses, etc., have proved nothing. The Canton de Vaud is spelt with a 'd'; but east of Lausanne there is a commune in the height above the lake which is called Grandvaux with an 'x.' I doubt that Canton Waadh is the same as Wald.

163 The editor of Moneta shews this from Reinerius.

164 See Moneta, 2.5, 247.

Brief Remarks On The Spirit And The Assembly

“Now concerning spiritual operations [or, manifestations]”: this word is preferable to that of “gifts,” because here it includes diabolical demonstrations, as well as operations of the Spirit; and we do not like to call that which is really the working of the devil a “gift.” Such is the meaning of desiring the “best gifts.” They might desire spiritual manifestations. Paul wished them to be able to discern, when any one had spoken with power among them, whether it was the devil or the Holy Ghost speaking by Him. No man can say, Lord Jesus, unless in the Holy Spirit; and no one calls Him “Anathema” if he speaks in the Spirit of God. It seems strange for us to think a person speaking with power should speak by the evil spirit; but it was a common thing with them. There were false prophets, we read. They took the form of teachers, instead of utterances. No doubt the devil has been thus working among Mormonites and Irvingites. “Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God.” The great truth is Himself come in the flesh. The Gnostics said matter was a bad thing made by the devil. It is, in 2 John, Jesus Christ coming in the flesh, not speaking as to the time, but of the character, of His coming. Again, “This is he that came by water and blood.” There was moral power but atonement also. He was real man; and came for the shedding of blood as well as for purifying.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” The great thing here insisted on is the unity of the Spirit, as opposed to many demons, creatures working

by creatures. “He shall not speak of himself.” “Let the prophets speak two or three … if any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace,” 1 Cor. 14:29, 30. The power of the Holy Ghost acts morally on the individual. “The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” If we see a carriage movable by steam, the moment the steam is put on, there is the power; but it wants one to guide. If the one prophet went on speaking, it was not according to the order of the Spirit, though it was by the Spirit. The gift is committed to men who are responsible for the use of it. It is not impulse merely, though there be an impulse given; but then there must be the control over it. If two get up at the same moment to pray, both may have what is of the Spirit to utter, but one is not subject at the moment to the Lord’s order.

There are differences of ministries. The gifts are through the Holy Ghost, the service is to Christ the Head; but the Spirit is the power. In the exercise of the gift one is the servant of Christ the Lord, the Spirit is the energy by which one serves, but God is He that works all in all, doing everything. Though several should speak together, still it is all by one divine Spirit (not several spirits of demons). While I am Christ’s servant and not man’s, still I could not exercise my gift in spite of all my brethren (say against it) without despising Christ’s authority in the body. “Be ye subject one to another.” It is God that is working; and therefore let all be silent before Him.

The thought of the family, which sometimes prevails, is not sufficiently reverential to Christ as the Lord. Service to Christ as the Lord is something more than service in the family. For instance, I feel a difference in going to

my Father, and going to God. Thus, if I go to my father in the house, I go up to him at once, and jump upon his knee; but if he is in court, sitting in public in his official capacity, I do not use such familiarity; I treat him with more respect than that. We are set as servants, and as members (lower down in the chapter) of one body, of which Christ is the Head. It makes an amazing difference in this way. If I have the thought of the Holy Ghost only present to my mind, self comes in, and I almost necessarily attach a certain importance to myself, because I am expecting to be used. I am to speak, or I am to pray. But when Christ is looked to and realized, it is entirely different. Self does not come in, because I am looking to another—to Christ as personally present to faith; and thus the affections are drawn forth to a Person—to Him who has died for me. The whole tone of a meeting will be affected by this.

There are many members, not heads. Again no one is to go beyond his measure. Each is to wait on his ministry, whatever it may be; let him stick to that one thing, and not attend to everything else. He that gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that ministers is to wait on his ministry to do the work he has to do (and let him not attempt anything else), as he that exhorts on exhortation. God may give one person half a dozen gifts. One may be an evangelist only; one may exhort and move the conscience; and another may teach. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal. (See Rom. 12.)

At the first, in preaching the gospel, there was the broad statement of the fact that the Son of God was come. Now it has to be applied, because it is admitted in common as a fact, though the more it is stated again and

again the better. Where there is a gift, if the saints are not in a spiritual state, the gift is but little manifested, and not so easily discerned. What marks the gift of an evangelist is love for souls, not love of preaching. Where the gospel is preached and God blesses it, there is fruit, which gives His servant confidence to go on; but when he is beginning, there may be very little development of the gift and no fruit seen, but still there will be love for souls and the endeavour to get at them. He must work on by faith therefore, until he gets proof in result.

The confession of Christ must not be confounded with the preaching of the gospel. Every one ought to confess Christ in one sense, though he may not be able to preach Christ. We have to act as having received the talent from the Lord, and there should be full confidence in Him and a desire to trade for His advantage. It is sweet to see love for souls in seeking to speak to them, but this does not prove there is a gift for preaching.

He, moreover, that is always speaking of Christ in his intercourse with his brethren and others, is more useful in the church than the man who spoke with tongues.

We are in a defective condition if we are not in principle taking in every member of Christ. There is one body—the whole church; there can be only those who are inside and those who are outside.

Some have spoken of a gift of prayer. It is, I think, a wrong expression. Prayer is not the exercise of gift. Preaching is the Levite service, if you please; but prayer is priestly. Levite service is to end in this world: priestly service is to go on through eternity. One who has a gift comes into a meeting of saints where the Holy Ghost is,

and that which is in him is pressed out by the power of the Spirit in the assembly.

The spiritual man, again, “judgeth all things.” If I am not spiritual, I shall make a mistake. A man’s saying a thing was done in the Spirit or not in the Spirit must depend on his grace to act, and has nothing to do with his power to judge. Of course it is assumed we are in the Spirit or spiritual. If a man is spiritual, he judges all things, and he must be spiritual to judge. If he is not spiritual, he cannot judge; but if he is spiritual, he first judges himself.

When the Holy Ghost is present in power and ungrieved, the simplest speaking of the love of Christ will be enjoyed by the whole assembly. The affections will be lively and fresh towards Him, though the truth spoken may be familiar to all. “Let all things be done to edification.” You may get in one train of thought a happy flow of unity; but you must remember that it is the power of the Holy Ghost which produces it.

Remarks On 2 Timothy

A few remarks on the Second Epistle to Timothy may, I think, not be without their use at the present moment. I will embrace in them, as throwing great light on the second, a short comparison with the first, as to its general character.

We get in both epistles what is evidently of the deepest interest, the confidential communications of the apostle to one to whom, above all, he could open out all his heart, and express himself freely. But their characters are very different, and the rather as he could express all his personal feelings. Besides the interest of this, moreover, the general instruction of the Spirit in them is full of import. The first, as is soon perceived, bears in general the stamp of the quietness which characterizes a peaceful development of what was subsisting, in the main, as it had been first established. The second is thrown into individual duties and earnestness, because that which had been established had departed from all consistency with its original standing.

The first epistle just guards the truth which was possessed, but is little occupied with it. Individuals were to be hindered teaching any other doctrine. Some few, hankering after the law, had already turned aside and gone into vain janglings. But in the main the apostle could speak of the church as being that which is always true to the responsibility of the position it is in, without its suggesting a painful sense of the discordance between fact and responsibility; namely, that it was the pillar and ground of the truth. Individuals had fallen into Gnostic Judaism. The assembly was still practically, as it

always is in responsible position, the pillar and ground of the truth. It had not falsified its character. The church, and the church alone, until judicially rejected of God, sustains the truth before the world, though grace sustains the church. Men may minister the truth, but the church, by its profession, sustains it. This thought brings no present distress to the apostle's mind. It gives occasion.to the prophetic declaration, that in the latter days some would depart from the faith. Timothy was to put the brethren in remembrance, so that they might be on their guard when that came; but the body of the epistle supposes the church, in the main, untroubled in this respect, though there were dangers seen in the horizon, as in Acts 20, and it is occupied, assuming the truth to be maintained, with the order and comeliness of the house of God—how Timothy ought to behave himself in the church, which was the pillar and ground of the truth. It arranges the order of the house in the various practical details of its administration on earth, from the elders who should rule in it, to the care of widows and the church's duty in respect of them, keeping in view family ties and the obligations flowing from them. It is the whole order of the church upon earth, and the due administration of it. The church is looked at as in this world, not as the body of Christ. It is the house of the living God, and assembly here on the earth, the vessel and maintainer of the truth in it.

The apostle looked to exercise still his administrative care himself, but instructed Timothy meanwhile how to behave himself, having his attention fixed on divine things, and exhorts him to fight the good fight of faith in view of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. In a word, it is the due administration of the church upon

earth, awaiting the Lord's appearing as the term of the responsibility. As a whole the church is seen as that to which the mystery of godliness was confided, and it was the maintainer of it on the earth. The danger of running into law and Gnostic asceticism is warned against; but as yet the church, as such, maintains the truth, and has only to be rightly administered.

It will be remembered that Timothy was left at Ephesus to guard against any preaching of any other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3), though instructed in the administrative order of the assembly; and this runs through the epistles, applying that truth withal to practical purposes, shewing it as the truth as it is in Jesus.

In the second epistle the assembly is still there; but it is viewed as a great house, in which vessels to dishonour are to be found. Here the truth, as with John, takes a prominent place, that is the maintenance of the truth, individual faithfulness to the truth, and individual piety. He looks for devoted-ness and courage in the individual, in the man of God. Church privileges are not before his mind. He can dwell on the Jewish faith (the truth in their day) of Timothy's mother and grandmother (and the mother had married a Greek), and that of Timothy, as all running in the same divine channel and flowing from the same divine source.

We have two characters of the assembly. It is like a great house, it has vessels to dishonour as well as to honour, and it would have, in the perilous times, the form of piety but deny its force. As to the facts which gave occasion to this train of thought, they are evident. The apostle had been deserted by the saints, and was looking soon to leave the assembly, and he knew what

would come in after his departure, and warns of it. “All in Asia had turned away” from him: he was glad to have one that cared for him in his prison! The Lord had indeed none. The brethren, some from worldly motives, some doubtless for service, but at any rate all but Luke, had left him. They had not in their hearts to stand by him in his witness. They had not left Christ as to the faith, but they could not hold fast in such an exposed place as Paul’s. So at his first answer on his trial, “no man stood by him,” “all men forsook him”; but he knows whom he has believed. It was to Christ he had committed his happiness, and He would keep it safe for him. A crown of righteousness was laid up for him. He had fought the good fight, he had kept the faith.

Thus strong individual personal faith, with the sense that the assembly had failed and not held on to the ground on which his soul walked, is that which gives the character and key-note to this epistle. Still unclouded personal courage is that which he looks for. But the state of the assembly on the earth may first occupy us, and then individual duty. It did not maintain church elevation in its position. Of this Paul was the representative. I doubt much if Timothy was at Ephesus at the time (Tychicus was sent there); but the epistle to the Ephesians gives, at any rate, what I mean by church elevation in its position. We know how Paul was converted by the revelation of a heavenly Christ, accompanied by the declaration that all saints were one with Himself. How the fact that men, Jew as well as Gentile (for he was a pattern of a Jew), were children of wrath, that man was alienated from God, dead in trespasses and sins, that it was a risen Christ he knew, and did not know Him after the flesh, and that all in Him

was a new creation, a second Adam, characterized the teaching of the apostle. How the elevation of his doctrine, which judged all flesh and shewed what the church really was, awakened the opposition of fleshly religion and human pride. He had first been in bonds for this, he was now on the borders of death, but he had kept the faith—had indeed “not counted his life dear unto him.”

But here the great body of the saints held back. It pressed them out too much against the world, and the world against them; and they shrank back; he was deserted as well as persecuted. It is this aspect of things which he had to contemplate. He was largely like the Lord in it; standing as it were between two worlds, his service finished in one, and yet not passed into the other. Timothy took, comparatively with Paul, John’s place with the blessed Lord on the cross.

In the service of ministry there was a power which raised not only above sin (Christ, of course, was absolutely free from it) but above nature, when it was not sin, but where admission of it would have been a hindrance and so a failure, and incompatible with the undivided service to the Lord. “Woman, what have I to do with thee? “So, when one would bid adieu at home, the Lord says: “he that hath put his hand to the plough and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God”: a man must hate his father and mother. So Paul: “henceforth know we no man after the flesh.” He took no counsel with flesh and blood. But when the Lord had closed His service, He said, “Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother.” So the apostle here returns to the thoughts and feelings of nature (I do not mean as evil, but human) kindly associations. He opens his heart

to Timothy, is mindful of his tears, desiring to see him that he might be filled with joy. He had served God from his forefathers, thinks of the piety and faith of Timothy's mother and grandmother, feels too his isolation, can speak of his cloak and books and parchments. He is, in spirit, passing out of his ministry, in which he was sustained above all nature, into gracious and tender feelings (but not apart from nature), and solemnly commending the charge which Timothy was to take up to his care and responsibilities. He who had represented the church in its higher character, and sustained it in his spiritual energy, was now in prison. This, for any but especially for such a servant of God, is full of touching interest.

But the church had lost withal that character in which the divinely given elevation of his spirit could have found its sphere. He had his own place from God. He was a master-builder; and, however he could prophetically point out what was coming on, and give just warning as to it, one may justly ask oneself, how he could, such as he was, as given of God, have wrought in the declining state of things—the rapidly corrupted church, which did not keep, we may say, a day after his death, the consciousness of the elevation of its position, or the clear doctrine of justification as risen with Christ. It sank down to its conventional place in this world. No doubt the knowledge of Christ in that place made it incomparably superior to the world, to say nothing of individual salvation. But how could Paul have descended there? He would have been more than useless. He would have been in conflict with the whole church, when it was falling—not reviving—or have sanctioned, helplessly, the state he disapproved of. No; God orders all things

rightly. When the church is just turning into a great house, all having abandoned the apostle, the apostle, called up of God, abandons the no longer applicable service, having fought the good fight and finished his course; and leaves to John, in his singularly blessed Ephesus, to record the abandonment of their first love, and to secure individual faithfulness and walk where corporate consistency had failed. Meanwhile, what is ever our duty in our place, he urges on Timothy devoted and courageous faithfulness whatever the state of the assembly may be, and shews the saints' united path in it. This state of the assembly on earth in its elements, its form, and our path of duty in it, I have now to inquire into.

Life and incorruptibility according to grace (given us in Christ Jesus before the world was) are now before his spirit, death being abolished in its power. The Fulfiller of.the promise to the seed of David was raised from the dead. We have to suffer—endure hardness—not to be ashamed of the testimony, nor of its being in prison: a day is coming which will set all clear; at His appearing, and His kingdom, He would judge. There is here, note, no thought of rapture, or church privilege. I will touch on this farther on.

What then is the state of the assembly? What principles govern it? I think I see the form of the settling down of the church into the world, in the doctrine of Hymenaeus and Philetus: if the resurrection is passed already, here we are settled in our ultimate state. It had not been formed into a system, it was only in the form which took away expectation of the Lord and heavenly hopes; for, if the resurrection was passed, Christ, in spiritually freeing His people, had set them down here contented in

their worldly abode. It was, if not eternity, the germ of a kind of spiritual millennium without Christ. The church was no longer a stranger and a pilgrim, a bride waiting for the Bridegroom; she was settled down into a permanent accepted place on the earth. It was a sad, probably unperceived, departure; but unperceived, because the sense of what the church is was gone.

That it marred the character of the assembly on earth as the recognized gathering together in one of the children of God who had been scattered, the manifestation of God's elect ("knowing, dearly beloved, your election of God"), (a decay already hinted at, 1 Cor. 10), and the body of Christ, is evident from what the seal of the sure foundation of God was: "the Lord knoweth them that are his." They were not publicly and distinctively manifested. It was no longer "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," nor the "perfecting of the saints, the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come," etc. This form of truth is gone: the Lord Himself knows, and only He, who His chosen ones are. And the same thought is stamped on the reverse of the seal, man's responsibility to act up to his profession so that it might be evidently real: if a man named the name of Christ (plenty might be doing it), he was to depart from iniquity.

This state of things at once introduces the form it would take. In a great house you must expect vessels to dishonour as well as to honour. That which had, in being formed, been the body of Christ seated in heaven (and in Him seated there itself), and the proper suited habitation of God by the Spirit on the earth, was now a great house, where vessels to dishonour were to be expected to be found. But this, while itself guiding the

conduct of the saints would, in the last days, develop itself into a terrible system of formed evil. Perilous times would come: men (for there was no real ground to call them saints or Christians—whatever their pretensions and claims, the guiding Spirit would not call them so, but “men”) there would be, lovers of themselves, etc., having a form of piety, and denying its power. It was not the church letting evil in, or slipping away from its true heavenly character. To tell the truth as to it, you must begin at the other end. Men, what was really the will and wit of men, would, under the name of Christianity, be as bad as the heathen had been, have their will in wickedness, and clothe themselves in the form of piety, denying its power. Such were the predicted forms of evil, and placed as present things, thoughts for all times, under the eyes of Timothy, as the sphere of his own responsibility—so soon did the church depart from its faithfulness—the outward form a great house; and then the activity of these lovers of pleasure, without a trace of real piety, busy to lead foolish minds astray under the forms of piety!

Let us now see the spirit in which the saint, taught of God and watchful, has to walk, what our divine directions are. The first and most marked characteristic is the way the apostle looks for spiritual courage. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. He was to be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. No shame as to the testimony; no shame as to the shame it brought on those who were faithful. He was to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Personal faith was to grow in the measure in which evil grew, and the saints declined. He was to endure hardness, not to

entangle himself with affairs of this life. He must fight according to rule. There was a power above all the power of evil. If Paul was bound, the word of God was not. God carries on, in spite of all, His own work. He is above all the circumstances which affect us. We do not sufficiently believe that the works that are done upon the earth, He doeth them Himself. Our part is to trust Him. So Paul had walked in enduring energy of love.

See here how like he is to his Master; he uses language (bringing in Christ as the power of it) which Christ Himself might have used. “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” So Timothy was to make full proof of his ministry. If he suffered with Christ, he would reign with Him.

The next point is holding fast the truth in the form taught by the apostle—the first doctrine taught. He was to hold fast the form of sound words heard of Paul, in faith and love in Christ Jesus. We have Paul’s words certainly in his epistles, and nowhere else. There is no progress in revealed truth; in understanding it there is. And it has been formally expressed, and by that we have to hold fast.165 It was a deposit of doctrine committed to him. In these days this is of all importance. The pretext of development, of the influence on the apostles of their age and its habits of thinking, all make this holding the forms of truth given by the apostle supremely important. In fact development was the first path of error; philosophy soon came in at Alexandria, and the simplicity and divine perfection and purity of truth were lost. Full grace, and our being saved, now that we believe, shone distinctly in this truth (chap, 1:9, 10).

Another important principle laid down, when the form of piety reigned denying the power, is faith based on the authority of the teachers then sent of God and the holy scriptures. These suffice to make the man of God perfect. The acknowledgment of the authority of the apostolic writers, and of the inspiration and sufficiency of the scriptures to make wise unto salvation, “perfect, throughly furnished,” is another mark of the sound Christian in the perilous times of the last days. Connected with this is the place the truth takes. There is such a thing as the truth. This has to be held at all cost. The Lord tells us, “the truth shall make you free,” “sanctify them through thy truth”: “thy word is truth.” So here silly women cannot come to the knowledge of the truth, the deceivers resist the truth. These would soon turn their ears from the truth. Timothy was to teach meekly, in hope that God might give repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Thus, known direct apostolic authority (which no tradition can give, for I cannot say from whom I learned it so that it should have the apostle’s authority), truth in the form of words given by the apostle, the scriptures, known truth, and the holding these fast, characterize the approved disciple, when decline and unfaithfulness had come in.

Again, enduring, faithfulness, persecution, as contrasted with ease and profession, practically mark the divine path. Not uncertainty as to salvation, and a laborious procuring of it: we are saved, and called with a holy calling, according to God’s purpose, before the world began. Death is abolished, so that we are not under its fear. Life and incorruptibility are brought to light. We are in the bright and blessed liberty of saved ones, for whom the whole power of death is destroyed. This was

to be fully maintained. On the other hand the gospel brought afflictions: Timothy was to be partaker of them according to the power of God; Paul was suffering for it; Timothy was to endure hardness as a good soldier, be disentangled from the world; so Paul was enduring all things for the elect's sakes.

But it was not merely those ministerially active who would suffer. There was another source of persecution, not Christianity now in itself, but seeking to live godly in Christ Jesus. The form of piety with abounding evil would prevail; but piety, the seeking to live godly, not to join the current of worldly profession, would be persecuted. The professing church being in this state, the assembly in general would be a great house, and vessels to dishonour allowed in it. This leads to ecclesiastical direction, so to speak. Carelessness as to doctrine, departure from the truth, and a worldly carnal state of the professing church prevailing (in which the sense that, risen already in Christ, we were looking for a resurrection to take us out of this whole state, was lost), and what called itself Christian settled into a recognition of man this side death. What was the Christian to do? Purge himself from these, so as to be a vessel meet for the Master's use. He could not leave the profession of Christianity, corrupted as it had become, that is clear; nor was he to sanction the corruption, nor could he correct it as regards the public profession. Nay—evil remained—seducers would wax worse and worse. He was to purge himself from them.

But his practice was to be equally exact. Avoiding lusts, he was to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace. Was he then to isolate himself in his walk because of the evil, in thus pursuing godliness and grace? He was not. He

was to recognize and distinguish those who called on the Lord out of a pure heart. If it be asked, how can he do this? My answer is, the apostle tells us to do it; he does not suppose we cannot. It was to be done. I may not be able to distinguish a person to be such. That is possible. I am not his judge; but he is not one of those who are pointed out as those with whom I should walk. The direction is very simple. The professing church is characterized as a great house containing vessels to dishonour. In that state of things, I am not to rest satisfied with the dishonour; not to think of mending the house nor of leaving it, but of purging myself from those who are so, and recognizing those who call on the name of the Lord (own, and worship Him) out of a pure heart —to walk with them.

Some details remain, which we may notice, but now specially connected with ministry. I start from the holding fast the form of sound words and avoid jangling on profitless questions raised, holding to the truth itself; avoiding strife even in contending for the truth; shunning profane vain babblings— they increase to more ungodliness. This was not the jangling on questions to no profit but error, as we see from the case given. They were to be shunned; nor are we to strive about words to no profit. All these shunnings and avoidings referred to keeping in the simplicity of the truth. From the corrupt profession, forms of piety, and ungodliness, we are to turn wholly away. The former were to be avoided, shunned (it was individual); the latter, left or turned away from.

On the other hand, he was to be watchful and diligent to shew himself a workman approved unto God; a workman not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of

truth: it was to be rightly set out, dissected, and applied, as well as expounded according to the mind of God. Then he was to commit what he heard from Paul to faithful men—not put men in office but commit truth to men, faithful men. Truth all through, and truth connected with unaffected and true godliness, is the leading thought of the apostle, and a suffering place in the world because of it, in contrast with an easy-going church. But all his directions are individual, not to fancy he could correct the body; he was to shun, avoid, turn away, etc., and pursue godliness with them that really sought the Lord (not mere profession) out of a pure heart. The testimony and truth were to be held fast at all cost. We see how soon departure from the truth was the enemy's way of bringing in ungodliness and worldliness. Even when the form of godliness is spoken of, it is propagated amongst silly women never coming to the knowledge of the truth. This laid them open. Finally the Lord would be faithful—could not deny Himself.

I have another remark to make here. The promise of life in Christ Jesus is the very starting-point of the epistle—what is livingly personal, not ecclesiastical. So the fulness of grace, as we have noticed (chap. 1:9); but, all through, personal responsibility is dwelt on; and, hence, we are placed, not in presence of privileged hopes but of judgment, I mean even as Christians. For Onesiphorus mercy is desired in that day. Timothy is charged before God and the Lord Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. So the crown is a crown of righteousness; men must strive lawfully, and, labouring first, partake of the fruits. The Lord, the righteous Judge, gives him the crown of righteousness; so, as to all others, it is laid up for those

who love His appearing. But he had just spoken of His appearing as the time of judging. And so it is, first the quick, and afterwards the dead. How love it? Now this supposes, first, the most complete association with Him and acceptance, judgment being set aside for us.

But more, loving His appearing supposes that its present realization awakens no feeling of anything which would have to be judged, which would hinder our loving that which will set aside evil. It is the time of glory for us. When He shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory. But then it is the setting aside evil; so that, if anything is allowed in us, anything not suited to His appearing, if we are not wholehearted in the setting up of His glory, we cannot practically love His appearing. This gives, in the midst of general decline, a solemn but a very blessed character to the instruction of the epistle; indeed it all supposes great personal nearness proportioned to the general decline.

May we so judge ourselves, and so hold fast by that blessed One!

[End of Ecclesiastical—vol. 4]

165 This is practically a very important direction of the apostle—truth having been formally presented according to divine wisdom, to hold it fast in that form. An apostolic formulary, if any seek that out of scripture, does not exist; as is well known. The creeds are centuries after scripture.

What Is A Sect?

The word “sect” is employed in the English translation to express the Greek word “hairesis.” The meaning of this word is well known. It is used (except in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is found six times) only once in the Epistle to the Corinthians, once in the Epistle to the Galatians (chap. 1:20), and once in that of Peter (2 Peter 2). In the first epistle to the Corinthians alone is it translated by the word heresy (1 Cor. 11:19). It signifies a doctrine, or a system, whether of philosophy or religion, which has its adherents united as adopting this doctrine. Its meaning is a little modified now, because the professing church (at least the greater part of it) has taken the name of Catholic, that is to say, universal. Then every religious body, every Christian gathering, which does not belong to this community (so-called Catholic), is by it called a sect; from this the word is become a word of censure. All the Christian bodies are sometimes called sects, in the sense of divisions, when they separate themselves from the whole complement of Christians, or from those who bear this name. However, the word sect implies in itself always more or less of censure, from the idea that those who compose it are reunited by a doctrine or a particular denomination. We cannot say that this way of looking at it is entirely false; the application may be false, but not the idea itself. But what is important is to discover that which, in fact, is an assembly of Christians justly deserving this name; or, since it is applied to assemblies or Christian corporations, it is necessary to understand the true principle on which we ought to assemble. That which is not based on this principle is really a sect.

Although the Catholics (so-called) have made a bad use of this truth, it is not less true that the unity of the Church is a truth of the greatest importance for Christians, whether the unity of all individually manifested in the world (John 17), or that of the body of Christ, formed by the Holy Ghost come down here (Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12:13). So in John 17 the Lord asks the Father, with regard to those who shall believe through the word of the apostles, “that they all may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me,” John 17:21. We see there the practical unity of Christians in the communion of the Father and the Son. The apostles should be one in thought, word, and deed, by the operation of one Spirit, as the Father and the Son in the unity of the divine nature (v. 11). Then those who should believe by their word ought to be one in the communion of the Father and the Son (v. 21). We shall be perfect in the unity of the glory {v. 22); but we ought to be one now, in order that the world may believe (v. 21). Further, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), baptized all believers of that time into one body, united to Christ as a body to the head, and manifested here below on the earth in this unity (1 Cor. 12:13). We see clearly that it is on the earth, where it says, in the twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, “If one member suffer, all the members suffer; and if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” We do not suffer in heaven. But then it is added, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

The whole chapter shews the same truth; but these verses suffice to demonstrate that it treats of the Church on the earth. See here, then, the true unity formed by

the Holy Ghost: first, the unity of brethren between themselves; and, secondly, the unity of the body.

The spirit of a sect exists when we see disciples unite outside this unity, and when it is around an opinion that those who profess it are gathered, in order that they be united by means of this opinion. The unity is not founded on the principle of the unity of the body, nor of the union of brethren. When such persons are united in a corporation, and mutually recognize each other as members of this corporation, then they constitute formally a sect, because the principle of the gathering is not the unity of the body; and the members are united, not as members of the body of Christ, when they are even such, but as members of a particular corporation. All Christians are members of the body of Christ—an eye, a hand, a foot, etc. (1 Cor. 12:13-25). The idea of being a member of a church is not found in the word. The Holy Ghost compares the Church on the earth to a body, of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18); then each Christian is a member of this body, so of Christ. But to be a member of a particular corporation is quite another idea. Now, the supper of the Lord being the expression of this union of the members (as says 1 Cor. 10:17), when a corporation of Christians recognizes its right to receive its members to it, there is a unity formally opposed to the unity of the body of Christ. It is possible that this may be ignorance, or that these Christians have never apprehended what is the unity of the body, and that it is the will of God that this unity be manifested on the earth; but, in fact, they form a sect, a denial of the unity of the body of Christ. Several of those who are members of the body of Christ are not members of this corporation; and the Supper, although the

members partake piously of it, is not the expression of the unity of the body of Christ.

But now a difficulty is presented: the children of God are dispersed; many pious brethren are attached to this opinion, to that corporation, and mixed up for advantage' sake, even in religious things, with the world. There are alas! many who have no idea of the unity of the body of Christ, or who deny the duty of manifesting this unity on earth. But all that does not annihilate the truth of God. Those who unite themselves, as I have already said, are but a sect in principle. If I recognize all Christians as members of the body of Christ, if I love them, and receive them, from an enlarged heart, even to the Supper, supposing that they are walking in holiness and truth, calling upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:19-22; Rev. 3:7), then I am not walking in the spirit of a sect, even although I cannot gather together all the children of God, because I walk according to the principle of this unity of the body of Christ, and seek practical union amongst the brethren. If I join with other brethren to take the Lord's supper only as a member of the body of Christ, not as a member of a church, whichever it may be, but verily in the unity of the body, ready to receive all Christians who are walking in holiness and truth, I am not the member of a sect; I am a member of nothing else but of the body of Christ. But to gather together upon another principle, in whatever manner it may be, to make a religious corporation, is to make a sect. The principle is very simple. The practical difficulties are sometimes great by reason of the state of the Church of God; but Christ is sufficient for all; and if we are content

to be little in the eyes of men, the thing is not so very difficult.

A sect, then, is a religious corporation united upon another principle than that of the body of Christ. It is formally such when those who compose this particular corporation are regarded as being the members of it. It is to walk in the spirit of a sect when those alone are recognized in a practical manner, without giving themselves out as properly members of a corporation. We do not speak of the discipline which is exercised in the bosom of the unity of the body of Christ, but of the principle upon which we are gathered together. The word does not recognize any such thing as to be member of a church; it speaks always of the members of the body of Christ. But these are bound to manifest unity in walking together. We can cite Matthew 18:20 as a precious encouragement in these times of dispersion, in these sad times of the last days, where the Lord promises His presence to two or three gathered together in His name. He gives us 2 Timothy 2:22 to direct us in the path of His will, in the midst of the confusion which reigns around us.

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