Letters of J. N. D., Volume 1 (1832–1868)

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Section 1

Dearest Brethren and Sisters,

Grace and peace be to you, and mercy from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot write to you altogether as I could wish, for though my heart should flow out towards you all as it does before God, I write with some restraint, for though but slightly ill in itself, yet constant walking on hot sunny flags in a town, relaxes and weakens my eye. I feel, brethren, deeply, all your love towards me, and rejoice to feel it, not for my own sake only, though it has been comfort and refreshment to me, and put thus something of a new feature on my christian life, nor yet for your sakes, dear brethren, only, though I rejoice in it yet more abundantly for that, but yet more because our common Master is honoured, and He rejoices in the prosperity of His people. He must delight in their love, for “he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God.” He must delight in the manifestation of the Father, as He says, “that they may be one in us—made perfect in one.” And I beseech you, the rather, brethren, earnestly to maintain this spirit of love, which is the presence of God. I rejoice, exceedingly, that I have any fellowship with you in it. I know, brethren, that we all have it in great weakness, but though—brethren, I have felt it the rather, because, though I have met with abundant individual kindness, and many dear children of God, yet I have not met the children of God dwelling together so much in unity, but have been a man of contentions rather. God is my witness whether I loved it or not. But it has made me the more anxious that you should bear witness to the power

of the principle, yea, of the healing power of God —I mean, in love. For the disease of sin is separating, and God is uniting, for He is love; and this will be the healing of all things, for they are to be gathered together into one in Christ. Some now of His sheep are scattered abroad. Walk then in love, dear brethren, and you will walk in power, and in the glory of God.

I did rejoice for your sakes, that you sent, as I learned, the money to poor Mrs. ——(and indeed, it was greatly needed, for he, having served the Lord in his generation, had left simply nothing, and a sickly family): as you had all known him, I meant to have mentioned him to you, but need I say how much happier I was that it came unmentioned? and it bore witness to your love here, and to the power of it amongst you, and as the blessed apostle says, did not make me ashamed in. my boasting of you, so that I was the rather rejoiced. We have done what we could here also. And, dear brethren, how shall I thank you for all your kindness to me and care of me? I felt to the utmost some of your provision for me, that I might not destroy the memorials of your kindness, but I knew this would be hardly meeting it, and I bear witness to your kindness in it amongst our brethren here.

The brethren who meet in Aungier Street are going on in much unity and sweetness of spirit amongst each other. I should only fear their getting too comfortable amongst themselves, and sitting quietly down, but they all labour in the Lord as far as I know. In the Bridewell, where cholera broke out, and the first cases very virulent, the matron, a sister, sent for some of them to pray, and they did, and all, when I last heard, were recovering. Two out of them have died here of those attacked, though the number of these are comparatively,

under God, few. A good spirit seems shewn about it, but the people are enraged, and the doctors are in consternation, as far as I see, as to their feeling about themselves. The hand of the Lord is manifest; there have, I find, been two cases of persons recovering under prayer here: in the second, the attending physician requested it might be done, in consequence of the former case, which he had been attending; and medicine was relinquished, and the person grew better—as far as I collected, it was gradual.

Dear brethren, stand fast; and, I beseech you, to abound in the work of the Lord, and by well-doing, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. I am persuaded, that what I have seen published about you, did not affect the weakest among you. Remember the word, “being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed we entreat; we are made as filth of the earth, as the offscouring of all things unto this day.” If you are called Beelzebub, you well know why you should bear it, returning blessing for cursing. It is a privilege we have little of, to be like our Master. For the rest, brethren, be wise, be steady, and throwing everything upon the Lord, and the peace of God shall be with you, which is more, far more, than the reproach of the world. Try all things, and hold fast that which is good.

I am detained here awhile, hoping, if it may be, that something may be done, by which the B. Society may be kept, or rather, the service of God kept up in it; if it be done, you shall hear all about it. Dear brethren, in the midst of abundant kindness here, often the countenances of many dear christian friends at Plymouth, shine across my path, with only increased feelings of kindness and pleasure. I do trust in the Lord,

to see you again shortly; it will be a little longer than I hoped, partly from my eye, and partly because I cannot move others as fast as my wishes. But my heart is with you, dear brethren, and I long to see you all.

Forgive me my harassed letter, arising from over working, as usual a little beyond my strength. I probably, if the Lord will, shall get a week's rest of body on my way to the West, and after I have seen them there, my mind will begin to revert to Plymouth, though many have reproached me with deserting this country. I seek only the Lord's will in it. Grace be with you, dear brethren and sisters in the Lord.

Most affectionately yours in Him, with many prayers that you may prosper with simplicity in His ways.

P.S.—I beseech you to let me hear of you, and that often, specially when anything occurs, even if I should not write, for I am a bad correspondent. I have received ——'s, and thank him for it. I have delayed this to make the inquiries, and answer them now in conclusion…

I think it possible she may have been led, though a child of God, to conceal part of her sin, and this always leads to more want of truth… Remember, as a child of God, one ought to be dealt kindly with, even if erring; if a sheep, to drive her into the world again would be dreadful. If you are not wise, Satan might drive you to this—a sad position to be in.

I heard also, by the delay, from ——, whose account of all, though in a few words, rejoiced me exceedingly; he seemed to think you were growing only in unity and affection one towards another. My eye is all but well, and I hope to proceed very shortly on my journey; meanwhile, the Lord has been blessing me in some

details, and I have written what I am about (with God's will) to have printed, about the Archbishop of Dublin.

A converted Jew (H——), a brother in the Lord, was desirous of proceeding to Plymouth, to see what he could do there: he has nothing of his own. I was sure you would have received him gladly, until, at any rate, it was found there was no place for him there; he wants, I am disposed to think, maturity, but is bold, of a good spirit and feeling, and of a mind by no means without flow of thought, and, I believe, a very true brother: you know I love a Jew (how rarely are they brought) when they love the Lord. But the church here thought he had better not go till your mind was known. I think you would do him good. Would you let me or them know your own wishes about it.

Peace and joy and strength be with you all from the Father, in the Lord Jesus, in one Spirit. Let me hear that you are all well.

Yours ever, even to better worlds, in the Lord.

Dublin, May, 1832.

* * * * *

Dear——, I saw so little of you, from various circumstances, while I was at Plymouth, that I the rather take occasion to write to you, though I steal twenty minutes from the toil of one of our day's meetings. I am anxious, too, to say a few words about my most dear brethren at Plymouth, and to express my love to them. The Lord has been, I think very graciously with us here, not more gracious than He would ever be (but more than our hearts draw Him down, through our stupidness), for His presence is always blessing; but He

has restrained, brought out unanimity, and shewn also a power of His Spirit, in bringing out our minds long apparently hedged in, which is to me quite marvellous. In fact, those things which I have been labouring for in sorrow (partly, I dare say, through my own fault) these years, are now bursting forth in this country, so that I would think that six years had passed since I was last here, so as to meet many from different parts. Though everything is comparatively to be done, it is turning perforce into a missionary country; the character of its state is quite different from in England.

It will be impossible to give you any sketch of the matter here,1 from the immense quantity—not compared with scripture, for it indeed proved our ignorance, but with our individual thoughts: very much of most important matter as to the man of sin, his deceivableness and power, and the power and working of Satan, and of the Spirit, and the opposition of the two, and the Lord's judgments, and as associated with our present prospects, was drawn with the greatest profit. At least, I so felt it; this to me was the most interesting part, but what interested me was the way it was mixed with faith. There was also marked and universal (I may say almost) reference to the Spirit; it characterised in a peculiar way, I think, what was set forth, so as to shew the Lord's hand. We had (a few of us brethren, more immediately known and together) prayer together, morning and afternoon, which helped us much, at least, ourselves; and doubtless, the Lord accepted us; and I found it a great blessing to my own soul in the matter. God's presence and Spirit has, I think, been very graciously with us. I think also, light was thrown (not perhaps quite so bright, but I think there was) on Daniel and the

Apocalypse, and other books of scripture. I do pray the Lord may be yet with us, and keep the flesh down. I wish you had been with us; I am sure you would have enjoyed it.

The Lord has been most abundantly gracious to you at Plymouth. I pray God to keep you from everything which will not stand the large, all-embracing love, and purity of His coming. I do feel exceedingly anxious as to this: I trust dear H. may be the means of keeping you, for I know it is near his heart, in all largeness of heart; and you, dear brother, as the rest, ought to know, with all that join and visit amongst you, and are in the habit of sitting down with you all, that no root of bitterness spring up among you, and that none in any wise fail of the grace of God. This is the true secret of a church well ordered, perfect largeness of heart, as large as Christ's even at His coming, and full consideration of one another to provoke to love and to good works, and that Satan get no entrance or defilement. I beseech you all to watch for this with all the love in which I mention it, that it may be so; surely it is your blessing and privilege. I do trust the young ones of the flock are going on well, and are cheered by every considerateness of their state, that nothing should stumble them (would the Lord own you all as a faithful and wise steward?), and that they in meekness and love are anxious and prompt to learn and to receive of the Lord what He may give. And, dear brother, are you working and watching after the poor souls in K. Street? I do feel very anxious about them, and walking in love with one another.

There were some questions in Miss ——'s letter which I anxiously looked concerning, but- the Lord gave me no answer to give, and I thought I saw why: He was

teaching in another way what I could not. The Lord sent us a blessing, and disposed the hearts of the saints much towards us at Bristol, and many also to hear. We preached in both chapels. The Lord is doing a very marked work there, in which I hope our dear brothers M. and C. may be abundantly blessed, but I should wish a little more principle of largeness of communion. I dread narrowness of heart more than anything for the church of Christ, especially now.

I was arrested in my progress, and now write from the end of Westmeath, being on an important preaching tour, in which we are seeking to bring missionary truth, and I hope more, to bear on a large surface of this country. It is important as introducing lay-preaching, and turning the country into a missionary country; indeed, the importance of watching this country is daily more pressed upon me, that the required service of the Lord, so far as may be, may be fulfilled. I lean upon the freeness and power of the Spirit of God. I shall be detained some time in this country I see, but I hope I shall be able to prove to you when I return to Plymouth, that J have not been idle.

My present tour embraces Meath, Enniskillen, Armagh, Trim (if you can find them), having two or three places per diem, to investigate or preach in, in the space of a fortnight. There are, of course, difficulties in the way, and I do not know that I have the onwardness of manner suited to it, but I shall be able to report for them who may follow. On the whole, I have reason to be thankful in this country.

I find it good for Plymouth, I should be a little from it, but I am anxious for every blessing about it. I shall not

be happy at being away if I do not hear of Plymouth, I trust fully.

I beg my most affectionate love to all the dear brethren; they would not believe how much my heart is bound up in their prosperity before God. But God is their strength, and will be their strength.

Pray let me hear soon, and never mind hearing from me. Direct to Limerick. Remember me very kindly to all the brethren.

Ever, dear brother,

Yours affectionately in the Lord.

[Finished at] Granard, October 15th, 1832.

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Dearest Brother,—I meant to have written to you before; it is relief to me to write to you now, bearing as I do our dear brethren at Plymouth upon my heart, while I do so, for while I have been much blessed, yet I find incessant intercourse with men distracts me in my weakness of communion. I was very thankful to get your letter indeed, in the midst of many anxious services which every one working the Lord’s work now must have. The order and peace of Plymouth is one of my comforts here; I do trust the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, my God, will keep them ever, and I am persuaded He will, walking in good works, and abounding therein with thanksgiving, in humbleness of heart that God thus undeservedly blesses us all. I do pray He may make them all a pattern of believers, yet growing themselves into deep and brighter conformity to Christ, having Him ever before their eyes, and [leading2] also young and old in Christ into the depth of the riches of His grace. I do

remember you—in weakness in my prayer, yet in my measure of faith that it may be so, and trust it may be according to the measure of His goodness, and not any man's weakness—that you grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and none fall in any wise from their own stedfastness. May the Lord keep you all. May the Lord give you peace, always, and by all means, from Himself.

I can tell you for watchfulness, dear brethren, as well as comfort, that your report, whether of weakness or strength, is gone out, so take heed that you walk very close with the Lord. The last place I heard of H—— was in the County Clare, in a newspaper … with no great honour, but that, of course, we may all expect from the world. It assumes to my mind daily more importance, and that which therefore more immediately presses on my mind is, that they may be all kept in humbleness—great humbleness, that they may walk in God's righteousness and true holiness by the power of the Spirit dwelling amongst them, granting too what He will so we honour Christ. Do not marvel if such things as ——'s impatience arise; Satan will try to trouble you by them. But if you walk in the communion of the Spirit in power in any measure, the Lord will help you through it, rebuking the flesh and the enemy in him, if indeed you be separated from it and sanctified; for then you will discern it to be of the flesh and the enemy, while you, being sanctified, will have power to repress it, giving all liberty to the Spirit, but rebuking all disorder. And it may be, some time there may be need to rebuke, as we learn from the blessed apostle by the Spirit. But the flesh cannot rebuke the flesh, nor will the flesh submit to it; but if you indeed walk in the Spirit, you have God's

authority according to, your measure, and Satan will yield to the Spirit, and the sanctioned witness of God's Spirit among you. Pray much for this Spirit; let your prayers abound for it, so shall you be able to discern all things, and the brethren shall grow up soon, unexpectedly, in all things, looking ever towards the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

My heart is with you, dear brethren, while you walk in order, and therefore was your letter such a comforter. You are my comfort and joy, and therefore it ought to be so with me; and, dear friends, I make my boast of you, so (as the apostle says) I hope I shall not be ashamed of the same confident boasting. Yea, I trust it may make you humble and ashamed of yourselves, that you are not more conformed to Christ, when men come to see your ways. The brethren who have met together in Clare, that is Ennis, have much followed your order at Plymouth. Some brethren have met here in weakness, but I trust the Lord will be with them. At Rathkeale they have met, and seem going on well, though in weakness. In Dublin, —a brother I trust, whom you know, has troubled the body exceedingly, as he was about to do before. I pray God it may not produce evil, but it has thrown them into confusion: my God will bring them, out of it into a brighter order and good, if they hear and learn of Him. I know not whether they will receive my word, but I have written—perhaps he will think sharply and haughtily—to B——; but I felt quite assured of what I was doing in love. Pray for them, that all may be well before God. Dear brethren, and you, dear brother, give no allowance to the flesh in any wise, but give all liberty to the Spirit, which is our blessing and power, as indwelling amongst us, and you shall be blest; and if you would be able to

repress and rebuke the workings of Satan by it in others, give it no law in yourselves, but yield yourselves to God as those that are alive, yield yourselves to His Spirit, and seek it diligently. I am refreshed in writing to you, dear brother, and I hope to see you all again shortly, though I have some service here first—I mean, not only in this place, but in other parts, or all of this county. Let me hear from you all again, please; but I reckon on the continuance of blessing amongst you, and if so, I am happy. Kemember me with all affection to dear ——, and all the brethren and sisters, one with another. I do trust you may be all kept positively and actually together, so that your faith may be spoken of, for it is not our going, but our faith travelling, that sends the testimony. The Lord especially lead: I am glad to hear that you think of reaching Sidmouth. It would be well if the Lord lead us there, that is all I look to. Pray for us all here, as I would for all of you, dearest brother. Grace be with you all. I got several of the pamphlets for you; they are of the old edition. There is one defect, the resurrection power is not duly stated in them. I see I shall have to be speedily in England, though my body might say rest somewhere. I dread the responsibility of a new pamphlet on it, not knowing the church to be prepared to receive it— but you say it is. Dearest brother, walk close to the Lord, our witness in strength, and our help. My best christian affection to your wife and children. I am your debtor for much kindness. Grace be with you, dear brother.

Ever most affectionately

Yours in the Lord.

I should tell you this country is much blessed, by the expectation of the Lord’s coming becoming a

wonderfully practical thing in it. I long for the time of retirement, but it is not easy to make it with the work there is. Grace, mercy and peace, be with you. Tell Miss ——, that as I was writing to you I do not to her, but I will, please God, ere long. The Lord is wonderfully gracious to us in an evil world. I have written a paper on De Burgh on the Revelation.

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Dear Miss——, —I was waiting to hear from Miss——, or some of the letters you spoke of before I wrote; for you must remember that you are enjoying the rest and quiet of fellowship, and I am labouring, in whatever weakness, I may almost say, night and day, with almost all around, either opposing, or expecting to be sustained and fed, and one's judgment exercised at every step. So that I assure you, with the danger of being dragged into the world one is working in (which is more than you suppose), or the loss of communion, which success with men is always apt to produce—while I have found my God most gracious—the consciousness and enjoyment of communion with those who are within the reclaimed country is not only pleasant, but profitable, as keeping before one's mind what one is labouring for. They say that those who go as reclaimers into the backwoods, constantly fall into the mere backwoodsmen's life, instead of civilising them. I am much in the backwoods, not indeed as a settler, but leaving the tilled country much to other hands less hardened to suffer, while I could work till all the country be cleared; yet weeds will grow in fallow ground where all has been cleared, and Plymouth is much in my thoughts and prayers (however they may count me careless of them in my absence), that it should flourish as the garden of the Lord.

Indeed, if you would know the truth, what I dread, because of the blessing that is there, is too much concentration of my interest and my prayers where I have found so much christian happiness and kindness too, lest the Lord should say to me of this also, “Lovest thou me more than these?” But indeed, besides that which might be selfish, I am anxious enough about Plymouth to have longed to hear oftener than I have; and my dear brethren and sisters there must remember that my occupation is travelling and preaching two or three times a day, or as here, standing out on the question whether the gospel is to be preached, in spite of all the clergy, or not; and now that the Lord has opened the minds of the people, lecturing nightly, and expected to answer all the questions and hold every ground that anybody might question. Nevertheless, the Lord is wonderfully at work here, but this, of course, does not make the labour less. I suspect the real difficulty is hardly come yet, for the Lord has allowed no felt difficulty yet, but set the tide one way as regards those around m§. In the meanwhile, the meeting at Powerscourt, as it has wrought conscious desires, and inquiry and prayer too, in the minds of many of the evangelical people in this place, there has been a considerable plunge made into the minds of this country by it, and this has partly exercised me, as interested in this country.

Aungier Street, too, as you know, through the captiousness of one person, has caused trouble. But the Lord worketh still His own way. There is a little church here which has caused in an idle town great trouble and confusion of thought, where the preaching of the gospel was made a crime before; yet I communicate there,

preach the gospel, and none to hinder me. We have set up weekly scripture reading meetings, two of them at the two most worldly houses in Limerick. Our only present difficulty is to keep people out. Pray that' the Lord may turn this to His own real blessing in truth. The Lord is working strangely; one's only part is to follow closely in the path of His will, and not be led in anything from the point of blessing.

Pray for me, dear brethren. I feed a little day by day upon scripture, and we shall find something to talk about, I dare say, when I meet you all. Meanwhile, I do commend you earnestly to God, and beg your prayers, that that Spirit, by which alone there can be profit or blessing, may descend, and be abundantly upon me—yea, upon all the church: it is the church's great necessity. I preached a good deal upon it here. Is there much prayer for it at Plymouth? I do trust there is; nothing would I press more. Is there much real prayer there now? May I not be sure there is, and that you abound in reading and good Works; your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Do not let even the enjoyment of your social meeting, pleasant and profitable as it is, trench upon your actual service among those without, specially the poor; as it is harder and less grateful, so when done in the Spirit, the Lord especially meets and blesses them. Be much among the poor, the Lord always owns it, it was always His way, and it has its peculiar importance in more ways than men suppose. It is His order and place of the church, for results are not always from apparent causes. Blessed is the man that considereth the poor.

You may be sure that when my spirit flags I think of Plymouth, as I do also ever, with earnest prayer for the

Lord’s sake. I have been detained here longer than I thought, which will be accounted for by what I have mentioned. The Lord’s hand was remarkable. The bishop was removed. The Independent minister, a real Christian, and labouring, but confined and hindering in some things, away; and——, the minister who is setting up the chapel away; and I brought here in an unlooked for way, and those most adverse turned to be the houses open for the truth. Were I to tell you the detail of these circumstances, you would see yet more the Lord’s hand. All I pray is, that the depth of His purpose may not be hindered by our weakness. I have yet Clare to visit, and perhaps a day’s run into Mayo, but that will be nothing; and then, please God, I shall turn my ways towards Plymouth. It may be, I may go through London and Oxford, or perhaps take it in my way there, and see you for three or four hours and then return there. Such is my purpose; we must think of Bristol also, but that would be at and with Plymouth. I will write to W., please God, speedily, but would yet rather he would write to me, so that I may hear of all (What of the Penitentiary?), though it is a comfort to me ever to write to Plymouth.

Ever, dear Miss ——,

Your affectionate brother and servant,

In Christ Jesus.

I am very well, but a little overworked, as usual.

Limerick [1832].

* * * * *

My dear Brother,—I was minded to write to you a good while, and thought I might have heard from you for I was working and travelling, so as to make my writing a

matter of daily postponement. I should not have had to-day probably to do it, but that I missed the coach, which was to be my first regular stage in my journey towards Plymouth. I dare say—I may be sure it was all right, for indeed I was utterly knocked up; and it gave me an opportunity of visiting some here, whom I must otherwise have passed by. The Lord opened so unexpectedly a door, and gave me so far way here, as it made it difficult for me to leave it. However, I thought it best to postpone further work here till a subsequent opportunity, and I gave up Mayo for the present so as to be able to go to Plymouth. I shall start, please God, to-morrow morning on my way, though my way will be a little circuitous. I expect your happiness and state will give me great rest at Plymouth, for I do not doubt I shall be well glad of it by the time I reach there. I was fain to lie down on the rug to-day and go asleep, from mere fatigue.

The Lord has called several here, I think, to far more affectionate devotedness of heart than they were used to, and with this, blessing; we have had too, readings among the Roman Catholics, with very comfortable success, and some Protestants, who are working among the poor; but save this, generally the place was exceedingly dead. I trust many have been aroused since I have been here, and the Lord’s coming looked for by many, and some brought to peace. We have also some very nice scripture reading meetings, to which any of the clergy who hold the truth, have fallen in, though quite mixed, and every one at liberty to speak. It is chiefly, of course, on what may be called first principles, but I trust thorough ones practically. It is a remarkable circumstance, that a dear young lady, who was

instrumental in setting them afloat for me, and at several members of whose family they were held—who had been only called about a year by the Lord, but was very decided ever since—was suddenly called away the other day in the midst of it all. The people in Limerick felt it a good deal, and I trust it may be the instrument of good to many. The whole family, which was a principal one here, had been all thoroughly worldly a year ago, and herself and her sister at the head of all idleness. A little church has been formed, or rather, body, like the one at Plymouth, for communion, and I think, though in great weakness, much blessed. On the whole, there is much to be thankful for here, and I think the germ of much greater good.

I meant to have written to you at that Powerscourt meeting, which took a very marked and decided character, and where evil and good came into great conflict, the Lord holding the reins, but I suppose—— has told you all about it, and probably you have heard from Lady P. I feel as if I had lived two years since I came to Ireland, in the development of the Lord's work, and seeing that there is nothing, nothing else to live for. The Lord always gave me different work to do from what I lay out for myself almost, and puts me into positions I little seek. This meeting has done so here. I am not surprised at that. So the Lord be with me, I care not where He lead me. The greater the difficulty, the greater the honour and blessing too. I thought to have looked for a few sheep here and there, ministering the love of Christ to them. Perhaps I was not counted worthy of this, for surely it is a pleasanter work than being a man of contentions, with, all these useless [discussions3] of

truth; may others have a free course to run after—that is all.

Grace be with you, my dear brother. I add the less, and make the less inquiry, because I hope to see you all soon face to face, to my great gain, and to know so all about you.

Believe me, ever, dear Brother,

Most affectionately yours in the Lord,

[1833.]

* * * * *

Beloved Brother and Brethren,—I waited awhile to write with an object which has partly indeed been attained, but not attained with the same comfort I might have desired, yet still, with the comfort of seeing one's way rather.

The Lord favoured me with a most quiet and easy passage for such a time of year. A poor soul died on board, and so unlooked for, that though I had intended to speak to him, hearing he was ill, he was gone before the opportunity came; it was a picture of sorrow and evil, but there is One who has remedied all. I do trust the church will feel my undiminished and anxious affection for them all, and as my mind draws nearer the Lord (for daily is our salvation nearer than when we believed), the more does it rest towards them in the brighter necessity of His love. This is the great secret, even His love towards them. I do trust they will walk all together in perfect love, even to the common cause of His love. I do feel that the Lord has been singularly gracious to you all there, in preserving you, and not allowing the enemy to set aside His love.

There is but one thing rests at all upon my mind now, and that has been brought to a mere question of individual profit, and need not, and does not, I trust, hinder the full unhindered flow of the Spirit of God and of love; in that I will employ your service, and I charge any upon whom there might rest any want of it for a moment, that they do not grieve the Spirit by the want of perfect charity toward all. Let me hear what you do about the services please, arid how you all get on.

Here the Lord brought me most opportunely, and in a way of His own order, into intercourse with all those who were the links of my service here; one young clergyman from the north, who has formed a society precisely on the principle we recognise, only as a clergyman not having the Lord’s supper, came to know how he would effect a correspondence between all the other like ones, in order to their mutual recognition as brethren for fellowship when they went into any such places and to get them visited for profit. I hear the north is dotted with little bodies, meeting as you do, though I do not know the places.

Dear H. stood up manfully in a large meeting of clergy, where the practical question was, should they stop when the bishop inhibited them from preaching, and declared his obedience to Christ, and strengthened many hands in it. The old evangelists, of course, thought they ought to stop. The brethren, two of them, had [been] inhibited the preaching in part of the northern mission. Everything is opening rapidly in this country, and the hierarchy, as an evil agency, will go. I am no enemy to episcopacy abstractedly, if it be real and done from the Lord; and I doubt that it will stand here in any other way.

What I pray, earnestly, truly pray is, that we may walk so near the Lord, that we may have all His mind, and then we shall indeed be sure of His peace, and keep up with the real exigencies, the happy exigencies of His service. I feel clear in judgment, but what I seek is that nearness to God and to Christ, which may make me act in the Spirit, and rectitude of heart, will, and character into which it forms, and in which that judgment is made effectual and representative of God.

I would I had you with me, but you are of more importance in England, and at Plymouth; there you should stay. I feel daily more the importance of the Christians at P., and I do trust that you will keep infinitely far from sectarianism. The great body of the Christians who are accustomed to religion, are scarce capable of understanding anything else, as the mind ever tends there. If they become so in their position before God, they would be utterly useless, and I am persuaded, immediately broken to pieces. You are nothing, nobody, but Christians, and the moment you cease to be an available mount for communion for any consistent Christian, you will go to pieces or help the evil. Pray much to God that you may be kept from concessions, acts, in which Satan may get an advantage over you in it. The church at Limerick have so multiplied, that they must seek some place of meeting, and one has offered, and the hour they talk of changing to twelve, the hour for other places—previously it has been eight. This is a cause of anxiety to me, whilst I wait on the Lord’s will, for I feel the importance of the moral character of the step, for unless called for, it would have the same tendency.

A dear brother, and one previously of most faithful conversation, has run into Manichseism, and writes thus: “I have been fasting for nine days, save one cup of tea, and then walked ten miles into London, where I was desired to eat. My mouth and throat were dry and exhausted the whole time, but I was exceedingly jealous of taking anything to eat there, lest I should mar the work of destruction which was going on in my blood—the work of cleansing my blood from the old reprobate life inherited from Adam, and substituting the Lord’s. (See Lev. 17:11; Joel 3:2.) This is what our Lord means when He says, the vessel must be made new before it is fit to receive the new wine of the kingdom.” And I found a notion from the person who gave me this letter, in a paper I hindered, I hope, his publishing, “That the blood of Christ, His condemned life, was spilt upon the ground like water, and that His new resurrection life was what He carried within the veil”; and he I think a true-hearted saint, and his paper full, though this error, of most interesting matter. What a mercy it is to be kept from the vast and endless wanderings of thought with which Satan now seeks to bewilder saints, or else shut them up in systematic ignorance! May you, knowing what it is to be complete in Him, and in all the rich depths in Him, be kept from going out in the profitless mazes of Satan.

I do feel that the ignorance and narrowness of the Church of Fcgland will be what will be judged for all this, and the judgment is at hand, lingereth not. The Lord have mercy on many in it—dear saints. I do not know so ignorant, and ill-formed a body as it is.

My truest love to——, and all the brethren and my very dear sisters in the Lord. May God keep you continually

by the very presence of His Spirit. Grace be with you all from the riches of His fulness. Amen.

Your faithful servant,

And affectionate brother in Christ.

[Received from Ireland] April 30th, 1833.

Very dear Brother,—You might think I was a very unfaithful fulfiller of my purpose of writing, but indeed it was much very anxious trouble that came upon me in service, besides my ordinary labour, that precluded me a good deal from carrying my intention into effect, in which I would I had you with me, though I do not know whether any but my hard heart would have set itself against it, as I felt was the only way. Heresy was infecting many places round, by a very subtle, clever person, who, though he had driven many away by his bitterness, had acquired great influence over the minds of those whom he had not—of the worst character when it had avowed itself without fear, but assuming so subtle a form when attacked, that the poor people could scarce tell what it was about, while it went on in secret in his hands, infecting their minds, though not spoken of to them that had understanding. This was a great trial, for it looked often to others as if I was trying to prove the man wrong, when he was not holding anything particular, and his plausibility was extreme. Save as looking to the Lord the Spirit to secure His own, and walking therein in bounden faithfulness to Christ, I do not know what I should have done, but the Lord kept me through it. The extreme disingenuousness which was apparent to those who had interviews with the person and understood the matter, strengthened one’s hand in the consciousness that it could not be of the Lord in its

liability to bewilder the poor people. However, it was a great trial, but the Lord has turned it to good as I believe, though some are resting s little, as it were, under the effects of it, as he yet seeks to maintain a party; but it will do good to the others, I can see, and I thank God for all. It was a great mercy it was discovered: it was entirely through the Lord's hand, for he never openly preached it, though he disseminated it everywhere he could.

It is remarkable how the reasoning of man fails and comes to nothing in the pursuit of divine truth; but I have felt this a great trial to my spirit, that instead of drawing lovingly from the fresh springs that are in Christ, in whom all fulness dwells, one was discussing whether we were so or so. Now, except as recipients through the grace that is in Christ, we are utterly incompetent to deal with man, or to have anything to say to God; and the tendency of such service, though kept by grace, is to make God the subject—which is impossible—instead of us. This is the real difference between philosophy and religion, and which makes the one all false and the other all true. God cannot be God in discussion. He has lost His essentiality in our minds. He has ceased to be God to us. Hence there is no real philosophy but faith—the realisation of what God is. I recollect being struck with this long ago, when I was a poor dark creature, reading the Offices, I think, at the expression, Subjecta Veritas quasi materia. It makes the mind of God, which it is not, and God subject to its judgment, which is the worst lie about Him that can be told: in fact there is then no God: it is worse than Adam's, "Ye shall be as gods." It is destruction to the mind. Faith understands a great many things about God,

but it sees God in them, and it has truth. Philosophy may talk, even with the same names, but there is no God in it, and hence, what it has is false. If I judge that God ought to love everybody by mere human feeling, I am not vindicating love, but denying supremacy, and its operation in detail, as the potter over the clay, to do all things after the counsel of His own will. The natural man may see no difference, but there is all moral difference if I am or am not associated with God, and this is the grand aim of Satan in all heresy, to take the mind off its state of recipiency into a state of judging of mere propositions; its strength is gone, and being incompetent to speak but from grace so as to confound error, the opportunity of falsehood, from which no grace can be drawn, is introduced; and while the sheep of Christ are starved, those who are not come in in apparent belief— [cannot4] be hindered—the devil's children joining in a falsehood.

The state of recipient grace from the truth of God is the only guard against it, because the mind is conscious then of the communion that it has with God in the thing which it defends. The scripture is the guard against any delusion in this, which if [used] under the teaching of God's Spirit will answer everything; and it is alone to be relied on. It is God's representation of those things in which is the source of grace—Christ the key to all. I have felt great occasion to guard against this latterly… though it has strengthened me in all established troths, and the rather enabled me to see what they meant, when one would have thought of nothing wrong. This person would tell all the truths in scripture, passing by the one point, in which error, fatal error, ran: and hence the difficulty unless the power of God's Spirit was so

upon the souls of all, as to make them practically feel the value and power of this; otherwise it seemed refuting one who held all the fundamentals of truth for the sake of some inaccuracy. I feel that the presence of God's Spirit can alone so bring out the bright value and lustre of the truth, as to detect heresy, and then that grace is not in the matter, and discover the flesh in it. There is the subtlety, and where Satan gets in. You never can wield the flesh against the flesh to any good, and the mere reasonings of our mind are nothing, and no stronger, but the same as the heresy. But the Spirit of God detects that there is no grace in it, and thus the saint is preserved.

Dear brother, I have just re-read your note on the Kingdom of Heaven, and I assure you it refreshed me. It drew me back to the pleasant scenes in which I, with you and other brethren, I mean, have fed together on the refreshing pastures of God's life-giving and heart-satisfying word. And, indeed, while I rejoice before God at the thought of your all walking in love, if you would strengthen me in many trials, and I know you would a poor weak brother, it is just by the love in which, as I trust, you are all walking together. I know, as you know, the trials and comparative difficulties that are amongst you: I feel in your weaknesses as bearing part of them, yet I do see a comfort of love and a blessing from it, which, while I taste the Lord's goodness in many places, I do not find elsewhere, though I see much christian kindness. And it is not merely the happiness that is in it, but I see plainly that it is in this that the refreshings of God's grace and truth come, and are to be found. The Spirit can plant and water there. And while I know all our weakness, and mourn over it before God, as a part

of the desolate, the poor—as it were, as to her own state deserted—church (yet not of God for blessing and inheritance), yet I find the joy of the Spirit and the comfort of the Spirit's teaching among you as my joy; and so I trust I may find you. It makes me feel what may be elsewhere—what fruit the principles bear. Dear Lady P. frightened me by the commendation she gave you, but I know you all better than she did. But I quite fell in with your exposition, and, as I said, feel refreshed by it.

My view of Matthew 13 (of which we may speak more, please God, when we meet—I do not know exactly when that will be—though it is in my hope), was of the results [or] of the principles on which those results were founded; and I feel it a very interesting connecting link of the two systems—"things new and old." I say this, because Christ, who will sit on His own throne, sits now on His Father's throne, and therefore does not exercise that discriminating power in the world which He will when He assumes it, distributing in power, what we ought to be witnesses of, and of which the Spirit is witness in the church, righteousness—but righteousness to suffering, for the truth of the moral glory is to give it the glory. "O righteous Father"—and He went into the Father's glory. I speak of Him exalted as a Man, because He had borne witness of it faithfully on earth—we into His, because we (oh, how weakly) have suffered first on earth, and get into the Father's house-and kingdom because we have known it and done it as sons, for we could not be His disciples unless we glorified the Father; but our share in righteousness is to have the glory, "seeing it is a righteous thing with God." What we are witnesses of we shall be partakers of, so that we may be immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,

forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Hardman, a dear brother in the Lord, a clergyman, was here lately, and he was speaking at large on the Seven Churches. I was not here, but this ground I hear he took. Sardis, the Reformation, on which, “if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know,” etc. Philadelphia, the separation of little bodies of believers with a little strength (there is comfort in that), but the Lord on their side “I will keep them from,” etc. “Behold I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast,” etc. And then the church left in its Laodicean state, its state generally now, at which He stands at the door and knocks—there being still some remaining perhaps amongst them, but He is at the door. What do you say to this? The result to the Laodicean church is to be spued out of His mouth. It is an important consideration in the present state of things. It commends itself morally to one’s mind.

The trial —— met with, and the poor husband, is most grievous; as regards every human feeling, I do not know what I should have done had I been he, unless in deepest instruction the Lord had taught me to bow to His hand. The Lord is always good and righteous, specially to them that know Him.

What is poor—— doing at Oxford? I love that man, much erred as I think he has. Oh, how little have we of the Spirit, to baffle the plans and devices and snares of Satan! The church ought to be not only in possession of truth, but so possessed with the Spirit as, though tried, to baffle all his snares. This is what so humbles me; it is not that I am not ascertained of what is right as regards

conscience, or that I and others are not seeking it in sincerity of heart and simplicity of purpose in God's sight, but no strength or adequate power to keep every saint by the presence of His Spirit out of his power. But the positive work of the enemy I do think most manifest at Irving's, but where was the energy to keep it out? But I must close, dear brother.

I am pressed here beyond my strength; a few like-minded now I find, of those who ought to follow out the Lord fully, though owning it in their own spirit. The Lord is very gracious, and is, in spite of our foolishness, working widely in the country. The clergy are in a position, I think, of great, very great guilt; but there is sufficient grace among them individually—many of them—to make many hold by them, though those that have it see plainly, and can testify of the breaking up of all around them. They are, I think, very guilty. But the Lord is working in another way. There is not enough energy of the Spirit outside them to absorb everything to itself, though there is a very extensive breaking loose; but there is a craving for scripture knowledge, and desire for communion, which they cannot meet in their present state; and by scripture-reading meetings, and by the clergy themselves in many instances making churches, not with communion, but admitting all Christians, and many little bodies springing up, things are assuming a new shape, though unformed, and there will be an entirely new state of things in a year or two. This country will, I doubt not, be practically separated from England, probably entirely. The attempt is making to reorganise the church, and with considerable present influence amongst the clergy who have risen, one may say, against the present state of things. The subordinate,

or, as I should say, the insubordinate, clergy, are trying to get the matter into their own hands. I do not see righteousness in this. I am sure it will restrict them. They exclude laymen from the mission now, and, of course, I do not go on there. The principle of communion in which you meet in Plymouth seems to rejoice the hearts of those engaged in it wherever it has been practised, so that the Lord is manifestly working. He will surely draw substantially His saints together before the end come, though there may be some left in, like Lot. In the meantime, one has only to work on. Adieu, dear brother. My love, very deep and affectionate love, to all the brethren and sisters. Grace, mercy and peace be with you all. I assure you I have much comfort in you all in the midst of many trials. I hope, please God, to see you ere long. I wish I had. some of you over here at Limerick, for instance, for a while, where there is much and nice work.

Ever, dear brother,

Yours most affectionately in the Lord.

I shall be rejoiced to stay awhile with you, when it pleases God to bring me back to Plymouth. I should probably go by London.

Limerick [received], August 19th, 1833.

* * * * *

My very dear Brother,—I received your letter with great comfort, both as witness of your kind remembrance, and as letting me know of my dear brethren and sisters at Plymouth; though now so much scattered, that I miss so many well-known names, I trust only for a while. How much I love them there they, I trust, in a measure, and

my own heart, surely know! The Lord has shewn me many pleasant services; still, the opening out to so much brotherly kindness, and love, and fellowship was, I believe, first at P.; and my heart continually turns there with the fondest recollection of it, though a better place is still before us. I do feel every day the infinite deficiency of one's labour, and do long for the abounding of this labour in myself, and to see the Lord's vineyard continuously dressed and cultivated, so that no need should appear, and labourers in it, whose hearts were in its ministrations. Oh, what wise hearts, what patient hearts, what large hearts, in the scope of all the necessities, and the infinite grace that suits them, ought those hearts to be! What a heart of prayer that ministers to, feeds, and cultivates the Lord's vineyard, and the hearts of the children of His saints, the plants of the Lord's planting; watching every noxious weed, seeing roots of bitterness before they spring up and claim their right by prescription to the soil! Indeed, the Lord has been very gracious to us at P., and I trust will continue to minister there amongst us; for surely He, however gently and lovingly in manner—and how much is it so!—is the great purger of the vine or its branches. I should regret indeed, much, the scattering of the brethren at P. However, the Lord orders all things (and much better than we do), so that I feel disposed exceedingly to bow, sometimes I fear too listlessly—which is not right—to what arises.

It would appear that the thought has arisen in ——'s mind of settling at Limerick, but I have heard nothing from him; he is to be with us, as arranged, to-day. There might be good there: I dread transplanting a good deal; it is not raising up people in the place; however, you are

an argument against that, though only sub modo; he would be hailed there I am sure. So much have I felt the necessity of letting the Spirit of God work in each place, I have sometimes hesitated in having been the instrument, much as it might have been my delight and my comfort, of bringing any of my dear brethren over here. Bellett has just returned from visiting the churches or little bodies, South-west, and came back very happy from them, refreshed by their zeal and grace, which has in no small way comforted me, as you may suppose; he reports much grace, not much gift. I like this; it is a good order, yet I believe that many of them there would be found better informed in most important points of Christianity than most of their neighbours; but their minds have been recently expanded, and want deepening and strengthening in what they have opened to. I have long been quite aware of what he speaks of, nor have I indeed regretted it particularly; it taught them wonderfully to lean upon the Lord, and look for grace, and for-communion, and His teaching, more than mere leaning on ministry, yet He never left them actually destitute, even of this; and indeed, almost all the active exertion in their parts is in their hands.

As to work, I do trust the Lord is surely working there: as to the “Witness,” I think we ought to have something more of direct testimony as to the Lord’s coming, and its bearing also on the state of the church: ordinarily, it would not be well to have it so clear, as it frightens people. We must pursue it steadily; it works like leaven, and its fruit is by no means seen yet; I do not mean leaven as ill, but the thoughts are new, and people’s minds work on them, and all the old habits are against their feelings—all the gain of situation, and every

worldly motive; we must not be surprised at its effect being slow on the mass, the ordinary instruments of acting upon others having been trained in most opposite habits. There is a great effort making in this country to keep the reformation within the church, and not let it go farther than they like; for they are very anxious, as always, to keep God within their own bounds: it will not do in the end, nor, if we are faithful, on the way. There is one advantage in sometimes scattering (not, however, counterbalancing the habit of communion bringing the Lord's presence), and that is the acquisition of the habit of work, a thing much individually blessed ever; but I do feel so utterly our need of leaning on the Lord for these things for the management of the church.

Dear brother, I speak not as though you did not, but for love's sake: seek singleness of eye to our blessed Master's glory above all things, and that that glory which shall be alone and above all in the Father's love in that day, may shine so ever in our hearts even now; we must be the Lord's ministers if we were to beg our daily bread; at least, I feel so, but I equally feel how constantly we must wholly depend upon God's Spirit, to guide and lead one in the path He has ordered for blessing, and the glory of truth in Christ Jesus, that one may meet Him with joy. Grace be with you, my dear brother… I suppose I may go to the north shortly. May the Lord be with me, and make me His wise servant. My kindest love to all my dear brethren and sisters (I suppose Wigram has left you), and also to the poor people in K. Street, and how I rejoice to hear they are going on comfortably; may the Lord keep and bless them abundantly. I rejoice that G. has Deen faithful; he may be assured the Lord will bless him, not but we all ought to

do it, as a matter of course. The Lord bless you and keep you, dear brother, and make you to abound more and more in the only true riches.

Your very affectionate brother in Him.

[Dublin, July 24th, 1834.]

* * * * *

Dear Mrs.——,—With regard to the question of Mr.——'s letter on 1 Corinthians 15:28, I have not myself any difficulty. Any one acquainted with scripture must see that there is a kingdom given to Christ as Man, distinct from His personal glory as God. "And I saw one like unto the Son of man, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him a kingdom." This kingdom given Him as Son of man is clearly distinct from Godhead. But the place from which the passage quotes is Psalm 8. "What is man that thou art mindful of him," &c. "Thou hast put all things under his feet." This we see not yet, says the apostle. (Heb. 2.) The church is united to Him in it, says Paul. (Eph. 1 last verses.) Now this clearly given to man, put under Him as Man, and not yet put under Him, is a matter of dispensation, which does not affect any question of Godhead. This He gives up, and it does not more affect the question of His being God than of His being Man before He got it. He takes it, moreover, as acquired by obedience, though due to Him as Son. (See Col. 1:16. Compare Phil, 2.)

Now the dominion referred to in 1 Corinthians 15 is the dominion of Psalm 8, of the risen Man, which He has so taken that the church may have it with Him, as well as for His own and God's glory. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," that is, the kingdom which He has

received as Man, of which the whole chapter treate — the resurrection of the Man—“that God [not the Father, for that is here left out; but God in contrast with man in the mediatorial kingdom; for “there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus”] may be all in all,” not Christ as Mediator. Now Christ is all in all; but mediatorial rule shall be given up when its end is accomplished, “when he shall have put down all rule and all authority end all power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet: the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” then this will be given up, and the Son subject. This may create the difficulty, but in fact does not touch the great question of this giving up the kingdom, and subjection of the Son, for He had not taken the kingdom, and yet He was subject when He was upon earth. The exercise of the supreme jurisdiction and rule on the part of God as Man, adds nothing to His Godhead; His giving it up takes nothing from it. He was subject upon earth; there it was, I believe, I get, not the fact but, the main proof that He was God, by what He manifested as Man; His natural place of perfection was subjection, and so He was upon earth perfect.

The royal exaltation as Man was an extraordinary thing, due perhaps, but given on account of His humiliation, that all, even the wicked (who would not, when present in grace), should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; but the Lord in His death, I believe, had His ear bored, and became a servant for ever, refusing to go out free because He loved His Master, His wife, His children. Now, whatever special exaltation may be the fruit of His travail as Man, His abiding glory is as Head of the new race, Man perfectly blessed in the place in which man ought to be, in the presence of the God of

blessing. He could not in that perfect state go out of His place as Man, subjection, for all is perfect there. This alters nothing of His place as God, any more than it did when He Was on earth, subject to all, but “the Son of man, oJw]n in heaven,” the Jehovah of His ancient people. To this state I should apply Revelation 21:1-8; the Lamb is not mentioned there; what follows is descriptive, not continuous history. The subjection of the Son thus is to me a glorious filling up of the great scheme of perfection, and the endless fruit of that love in which, being “all of one,” He is not ashamed, though source of all the blessings—“He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered.” This, I trust, may answer your inquiry; if you have with any one any further difficulty, I shall be glad, as far as the Lord enables me, who alone can teach and convince us of the blessed truths of the glory of our Redeemer’s Person, to communicate to you all that has been given me for good. Spiritual communion with the Lord makes these truths, not only proveable, but dear to us, for He who is our portion is unfolded to us in them, in all His unsearchable fulness. They acquire a power and force as a part of our intercourse with God, and as known in Him, which mere reasoning cannot give them, while they have to be simply received on the authority of the word. You will always find submission to the word in question in these cases; that is, of our mind to God, and this is the secret of the question.

The great truth of the divinity of Jesus, that He is God, is written all through scripture with a sunbeam, but written to faith. I cannot hesitate in seeing the Son, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the First and the Last,

Alpha and Omega, and thus it shines all through. But He fills all things, and His manhood, true, proper manhood, as true, proper Godhead, is as precious to me, and makes me know God, and so indeed only as the other, He is “the true God and eternal life.” That there is a God, a heathen might, at least ought to, know: that He was here revealed to me in Jesus is my glory and joy, and eternal life as a Christian: that He who alone could do it and be uncontaminated, laid His cleansing and unsoiled hand on me as a leper, saying, “I will, be thou clean,” is my salvation and my thankfulness for ever. May He, by the Holy Spirit, who gives us fellowship in union with Him and the Father, fill you with the holiness and joy in hope and comprehension which flow from Him, and our wondrous union with Him, setting us in Him above all principalities and powers; and make our union with Him, who fills all things, precious to your soul, and to abound in all your ways to His glory in simplicity of service, to whom alone service is due. Commending you to Him, who alone can keep, and give force and direct.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Your unfeigned and willing servant,

In that blessed One, the Lord Jesus.

Hereford, 1838.

* * *—With regard to speaking, I am quite clear those who speak error ought to be stopped, and those, I think, who speak merely from the suggestion of the flesh, ought to be first warned of it. Any one may do it in love, but those who guide may, if it be needed, take it up, and that for their own sakes who have done it; and if there were from this, habitual unprofitable speaking, I think it ought to be stopped. Those who are active in this, must

car y the sense of the brethren, which if rightly ordered under the Spirit is a real test of unprofitableness, with them; for that is the ground of the act. I never could understand why the church of God is to be the only place where flesh is to have its way unrestrained. It is folly to suppose this. I desire the fullest liberty for the Spirit, but not the least for the flesh. The church, for God's glory, is as bound to stop it there (and more, for it is the place of holy order) as elsewhere, and the means are just the same, the grounds just the same, and it is written, "Let the others judge." Such, I think, is the very simple principle and rule of practice.

On the other hand, I am very jealous of meddling, merely because there is not the same refinement, or people being puffed up for one against another; that is just the flesh in another shape. The poor often get profit, where a refined ear would be offended. It is a holy loving wisdom which must order this. In [cases] of error, the act should be prompt, in cases of profit, patient. But I must say I have not the least idea of subjecting myself to the self-will of another's notion, that he is to speak when he cannot profit the church. I should take the liberty of going away in such an extreme case, and try the question summarily if driven to it. I never knew the Lord desert me, or. rather the act of obedience to His own will. In such a case, I have no right to wrong the whole church of God, making them unhappy, and hindering the gathering of the saints, to humour the flesh of any.

But then, this must be clearly, and if needs be, patiently ascertained, acting in all quietness, though in all firmness; for the other extreme of stopping people unnecessarily, or merely because they do not please the

ear as well, hinders the gathering to Christ equally on the other side.

I only await the signal to leave this, to be up in London. The Lord is working. I do not like leaving uncared for the sign of His hand; but I have learned enough of my own ways and to trust His, not to be anxious to anticipate His plans, nor to press beyond my measure; but I feel the need, and have been a good while myself anxious as to helping in London.

I have my “Revelation” ready too, if the printer could print from my writing, but it is of no consequence.

The great point, if a man were an apostle, as I see from the Corinthians, is to carry the mind of the great body of the people —all, if possible, but the offender—with you in every act of order. This was the first effect of the apostolic action, and when we act in the Spirit we shall ever do so with the spiritual; any for the moment merely led away, will see their folly and be profited.

Ever, dear——,

Very affectionately yours.

Stafford, January 31st, 1839.

* * * * *

[to the same.]

Dear——,—The Lord is sufficient for all things, and not only so, but, blessed be His faithful name, provides for and orders all things to the glory of Him whose interests are made the same as ours… As to your own work… I think the visiting part myself, quite as important, if not the most important part of the work: it is said, “publicly, and from house to house.” In these days, when there is a

good deal of general testimony, though feeble and mixed perhaps, the latter assumes more than its primary relative importance. The clock, of course, strikes the hours, and avails to the passers by, but the works inside make the good clock, and make the striking and the hands right. I think it should be your substantive work, and take all else as it comes; indeed, I do not believe any can minister well without it. The springs of love, and the use and application of doctrine are fed there, minds are understood, the Spirit is led to apply truth to need- spiritually understood and entered into; we are apt to get essays else, theories or thoughts. The Holy Ghost, I believe, teaches people while it teaches truth, and suits the truth to conscience and its known state; and it is good for our own souls besides. I dread much public testimony, and altogether so, if there be not private work.

Grace be with you, and kind love to all.

Ever affectionately yours in the Lord.

Edmondsbury, August 2nd, 1839.

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[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—G., who told me that you are now settled in ——, begged me to write you a few lines, which I do very willingly: indeed, it was on my. asking him for news of you that lie spoke to me of you, and told me that you had some thought of applying yourself more directly to the work of the Lord. Nothing is more desirable, dear brother; there is the greatest need of labourers, and when our blessed Saviour raises them up, it is a sign that He would do a work Himself in this world

of darkness. France presents a field at this moment, blessed in several ways by the Lord. For me, the near coming of the Saviour, the gathering together of His own, and the sanctification and joy of those who are manifested, are always the thoughts predominant in my soul. There is every appearance that the Lord is hastening the time; for the rest, our duty is certain.

It is for you, dear brother, before God, to determine whether the Lord calls you certainly to this work of faith. The more devotedness there is, the more trials there will be, but a hundred times more will there be of happiness and of joy, and when the Lord returns, the crown of glory that fadeth not away. From the circumstances in which you are placed, it is difficult for me to speak, and probably those in which you will be placed would occupy your thoughts. This is a matter of faith. G. committed himself to the Lord, and the Lord has sustained him, and he has always been maintained without difficulty, and has even provided for the wants of those who had trusted men. In any case such a step is always an act of faith, and one ought never to induce any one to follow it.

If, for example, it will be always my delight to help the brethren, whether in England or abroad, as our brethren do according to their power; but if I undertook to do such and such a thing, all that I have might fail me through the providence of God, or a more pressing need might present itself, and I, already bound, should fail, either as to the will of God or my engagements; and, further, I have a very strong objection—I am, in fact, entirely opposed—to sending any one into the Lord’s field with a salary of so much per annum. I can only say that it will be my joy, by the grace of God, to relieve the

needs of my brethren according to my power, but to engage any one to work is, it seems to me, to take the place of faith, at least, if there were not some special direction. I wish to make you understand all the interest I should take in helping you if God call you to the work, on one side, and on the other to prevent you from counting on me or any man whatever.

Perhaps you will be surprised that I have said so much; but I know that this was on the heart of G. I hope that the work of God prospers in your heart. That the Lord may raise up many workmen, and send them out into His harvest—this is the earnest desire of my heart. May God grant me to devote myself to it with all my strength, and may He strengthen the faith of all His servants, so that they may not distrust His goodness.

For myself, I can bear witness that He has never failed me, feeble and faithless as I have found myself to be, but always sustained beyond my expectation by His goodness. You will find it the same, dear brother, if you feel yourself called to work for, the Lord. My faith has been feeble, and the Lord has been good to me; if your faith is stronger, you will gather a more abundant harvest. May God bless you and keep you, and direct your thoughts and your steps. May He ever increase your faith, and make you feel His abundant love. May the Lord reveal Himself more and more to your soul. I think of revisiting Geneva. I do not know exactly the time. I shall be here a fortnight.

Your affectionate brother in Jesus.

Neuchâtel, November 22nd, 1839.

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[To the same.]

[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—I was rejoiced to receive your letter, and to see that you are in fact working in the Lord's field and for the Lord.. Specially that you are able to trust yourself to the Lord to sustain you in your path, and to maintain you as to the things of this world. You have already, dear brother, made proof of His faithfulness, as you told me. Be very sure that He will never fail in it. Oh, for more faith, that we might be able to trust ourselves to His incomparable faithfulness, to His love, which will make us pass without doubt, through testings for our good, but which at least never wearies.

Dear brother, in the midst of much unfaithfulness, I have always found Him faithful—I can bear witness to it—and more than faithful, always full of mercy and goodness. It is a happy thing to be able to be witness to one's God, though in humbling oneself for all one's own wretchedness. When the goodness and will of our God have forced us out into His harvest, we have always need to be well on our guard against the wiles of the enemy, especially when we leave, even ever so little, the ordinary path of Christians. One is so accustomed to trust oneself to men, the habit of it. is so rooted in the ways of Christians, and in their manner of working as to the gospel, that Satan is extremely jealous of those who separate themselves from it, and who trust themselves to our God, and he lays for them all possible snares, and even Christians look constantly to see them fall; so much so, that if we do not keep our spirit carefully, we are always in danger.

There are many Christians who withdraw from us from the first, saying that it is pride that prompts us to walk alone, when in fact they desert us in spite of ourselves; and this increases the danger, because the isolation in which we sometimes are, exposes us to the arrows of the enemy, either by the ordinary trials of life, or by the temptation of thinking too much of ourselves, and of leaning to either pride on the one side, or to depression on the other. Do I desire, dear brother, to discourage you in saying these things? far from it, but only to remind you that it is a fife of faith, and that we cannot pass through this world of sin, when we are put ever so little forward, without constant communion of our souls with God. As you advance in your path of service, as I hope that you will advance, you will find that if you do not walk in the ordinary paths, a very great number of Christians will be opposed to you, an opposition much more painful than that of the world, which one ought to expect. And this because this question is agitated greatly at this moment, whether one ought to walk by faith or not. May God keep you in humility, and give you a firm and quiet faith which, recognising the duty put upon you of serving Him, has nothing to do but to obey Him, and to do His will. As to your temporal circumstances, dear brother, it will always be to me a great pleasure to help you. I am not very rich, but what I have, I hope, through the grace of our God, will be always devoted to His work…

There is still one thing, dear brother, that has come upon my spirit. I suppose that you have continued relations with the established church 5 perhaps I am mistaken, but I-discern the possibility that these relations may be enfeebled if you follow the call to

evangelisation which you think you have received from God. If this come to pass, I hope with all my heart that you will not throw yourself, on the other hand, into narrowness; it is this which has been one of the sores of Swiss Christians. I have nothing to hide from you in my christian ways (habitudes). It is my joy and my privilege to find myself in the midst of brethren who know one another in Christ, and to rejoice in the blessedness of brotherly communion in all the weakness in which it may be found at present; but I could not recognise an assembly that does not receive all the children of God, because I know that Christ receives them. I see the church in ruins: I follow my conscience according to the light that I have received from the word, but I desire to bear with the weakness or lack of light that I may find in other Christians, and do all that I can to unite those who love the Lord. The liberty of your ministry, if God bless it, may be a means to this desirable result; and I, according to the light that I have received, find it impossible to remain in nationalism, but I would rather remain alone and isolated, a position, I admit, not at all desirable, than to restrict the limits of the church of Christ to some brethren, even though they may be more correct in their thoughts than others, and to enfeeble the action of the Spirit of God in uniting the Lord's sheep, scattered by our wretchedness and by our sins.

I have ventured to say these things to you, dear brother, in all frankness, because in all my weakness I have at least the good of the beloved church of my Saviour at heart, and further, because I love, and I ought to love in a special manner, the dear Swiss brethren, in the midst of whom I have received so many blessings, and so much love in Christ. I hope that God will keep you from every

bond save the bonds of Christ, and that He will rivet these bonds of security and joy more and more.

If you are able not entirely to give up your calling, so much the better; the workman is worthy of his hire, but it is my experience that in the existing circumstances of the church, the more one is independent of men the better one is circumstanced. If you were able to apply yourself to it in leisure moments, or to work alone, and could sell what you made, even if you were not in an establishment, I do not know if the thing is possible, but for you even I am persuaded that it would be very desirable. I write in haste, dear brother, but I did not wish to delay my letter any longer. Be assured of the cordial and sincere love of Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Geneva, January 2nd, 1840.

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* * * If we have any right views of what the church of Christ is, every one will be bound by love to serve in some way. The preciousness of the church is shewn in this, “He loved the church, and gave himself for it.” His love never changes— “strong as death” will be marked by-and-by. There is individual love to serve one-another. This is not what is spoken of; but love to the Lord must bind us to wish to be servants to the body. We are bound up one with another. One’s desire to serve is often checked by the thought of how little we can do. Epaphras entered as much as was possible into the mind of God about service— as much as Paul did. “Continue in prayer” &c. (Col. 4:2); making the effect of his ministry hang upon their prayers. Apostle as he was, it might have been thought he could not need prayer. Here is the

zeal of a man, perhaps lying on his face all day— no great zeal it might be said, but having the muster-roll of God's saints before him; feeling wearied perhaps—but no, there's another and another of God's saints I must pray for. This was the particular path of Epaphras (perhaps Epaphroditus the same). We do not find him standing in any other place of service but this; labouring that the saints might be perfect and complete in all the will of God. It may be that in which we are most lacking —no eye but God's—courts no public praise—no bustle —no activities—is like the fibre to the root of the plant. "Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." Closer connection between these three than our souls are wont to acknowledge. Joy will ever rise in proportion to prayer and thanksgiving.

[Date unknown.]

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We must take courage, dear brother, and hold the Head that holds us up. His strength is made perfect in weakness. Christ will be a sure friend, and even if we begin to sink in the water, will stretch out His hand and lift us up. It is sweet to have His hand in any case, even if our failing foot has led Him to stretch it out.

[From an old letter, date unknown.]

1 It may be of interest to insert here the following account of the second meeting, for the consideration of subjects connected with Prophecy, held at Powerscourt House, from September 24th to 28th, 1832, at which this letter was commenced, with a list of the subjects. A comparison with the brief notice in the letter itself, suggests that it was from Mr. Darby's pen- It was addressed to the Editor of the Christian Herald, in which

there is a Review of the Rev. W. Burgh's Lectures on the Second Advent, by Mr. Darby. (See Collected Writings, vol. xxxiii. p. 1.) (The first Powers-court meeting was held on October 4th to 7th, 1831.)

To the Editor of the Christian Herald.

Dear Sib,—If done with the delicacy due to a private house, the importance of the subject, and its association with that which so intimately affects the church, may justify some notice of the meeting held on the subject of Prophecy, and the truths connected with it, at Powerscourt. I shall venture, therefore, to send you some account of it, praying the Lord's blessing upon it; as, for my part, I feel very strongly its importance.

It would be, of course, impossible to go at large into the several subjects which were handled there; I shall endeavour merely to convey to you some character of the meeting. There were a number of Clergy, and several of the Laity, whose minds had been exercised on these subjects; and the Rev. Robert Daly, Rector of Powerscourt, as on a former occasion, unless casually absent, presided. The subjects you will be enabled to state below, should you feel it an object to your readers. The solemnity which characterised the meeting was broken only in a single instance, which needs only to be mentioned for the sake of truth. There was, besides at the opening And closing of each morning and evening assembly, much prayer made elsewhere for the meeting, and this even in England; and the remarkable recognition of the Spirit, I mean practically, was very striking; and, it appears to the writer, met by a restraint on the thoughts and feelings of man, which, considering the variety of the subjects, was very remarkable —more

so even than the elucidation of scripture which was afforded. It appeared to the writer that the progress in knowledge and exposition of scripture was decided, but the practical apprehension of the subjects treated, yet more so. There was, of course, variety of view in so large an assemblage, but scarce anything which did not positively add to the information of all—subject, of course, to the correction which interchange of views ever brings, where there is unity in the general scope. There was but one individual who introduced anything which could have given pain to any on these subjects; and that was a reference to the reception of “the gifts” and the principles connected with it. Little, however, was said upon it; and while the principles were calmly inquired into by a few, it did not, I think, affect the meeting, otherwise than to direct the earnest desires and prayers of many, for the more abundant presence of that Holy Ghost, by which alone, error can be brought to light, and the believer guided into all truth. On the whole, this part of the meeting was, perhaps, the most practically profitable, from the elucidation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit casually drawn out by it; and the presiding presence of the Holy Spirit most marked, by a careful observer; and several defective and erroneous views prevalent (to the writer’s knowledge) in England, met by what appeared to be scriptural light.

The belief in the coming of a personal Antichrist was common, and that amongst many who, at a former meeting, had not received it at all; in this there was a very distinct and avowed change of opinion on the part of some. The discussion of the subject of Antichrist led to an extensive development of scripture, and to much very profitable detection of1 the spirit by which he

might work in the nations; though no definite conclusion was come to upon this; while the recognition of his actings amongst the Jews, in Jerusalem, was more definitely recognised by those more conversant with the subject.

On Daniel a good deal of light was thrown, and though there was some, I think not so much, perhaps, upon the Revelation; though particular parts of it were discussed with considerable accession of knowledge. There was some very interesting inquiry as to the quotation of the Old Testament in the New; particularly on the point, whether there was any “accommodation,” or whether they were quoted according to the mind of the Spirit in the Old; this gave occasion to some very interesting development of scripture. The progress of the Antichristian powers was very fully discussed.

This will give you, after all, but a very imperfect idea of the meeting. Even as to the extent of scriptural information brought forward, while it left the additional impression of how much yet remained to be understood of blessing and of truth, and left upon the minds of many a highly increased degree of value for the privilege of the word of God, many, I am sure, were humbled, and many refreshed; while light was afforded also to many, on points which are exercising the christian world so universally at the present day.

That all was perfect there, Sir, I suppose none there would be disposed to think; but this certainly struck the writer, how remarkably, as he has stated, the Spirit restrained, while it left the strengthened consciousness of all the imperfection and weakness which exists among us; and I think those in the church, who are really in

earnest, must most deeply feel, on the whole, that, spread as that assembly will be over the country, the meeting was one of deep interest to the church of God at large. In the discussion on so many subjects, and many relating so much to the practical position in which Christians are, it cannot be doubted that the views advanced by some may have given pain to a few; but the effect, on the whole, was to knit, in the deepest interests of the church of Christ, the affections of many believers, and to unite them in the surest tie with each other; while the sense of the difficulties in which the church is now placed, would lead them individually (under God) to more earnest seeking the guidance and presence of God's Spirit, and that blessing upon the church, and presence of God's power with it, by which alone it can be brought, in the honour of Christ, through the perilous times in which it is now placed.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully, X.

Subjects for Consideration at the Meeting above referred to.

Monday Evening, Six o'clock, September 24th, 1832.—An examination into the quotations given in the New Testament from the Old, with their connections and explanations, viz.:—Matt. 1:23, Is. 7:14; Matt. 2:15, Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:18, Jer. 31:15; Matt. 11:10, 14, Mal. 3:1, 4:5; Matt. 21:16, Heb. 2:6, Ps. 8:2; Matt. 24:15, Dan. 9:27; Matt. 27:9, Zech. 11:12, 13; Eph. 4:8, Ps. 68:18; Heb. 2:13, Is. 8:18; Heb. 8:8, Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 10:16, Jer. 31:33; Luke 1:73, Gen. 22:16; John 10:34, Ps. 82:6; John 19:3-7, Zech. 12:10; Acts 2:17, Is. 44:3, Joel 2:25; Acts 15:16, Amos 9:11, 12; Rom. 9:25, Hos. 2:23, 1:10;

Rom. 10:5, 6, Lev. 18:5, Deut. 30:13; 1 Cor. 9:9, 1 Tim. 5:18, Deut. 25:4; 1 Cor. 15:55, Hos. 13:14; Gal. 4:27, Is. 54:1; 2 Pet. 3:13, Is. 65:17, 66:22.

Tuesday.—The Prophetical character of each book in the Bible; including the three great feasts of the Jews, the blessings pronounced on Jacob's sons, the Parables in the Gospel, and the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Revelation.

Wednesday.—Should we expect a personal Antichrist? If so, to whom will he be revealed? Are there to be one or two great evil powers in the world at that time? Is there any uniform sense for the word Saint in the Prophetic, or New Testament scripture? By what covenant did the Jews, and shall the Jews, hold the land?

Thursday.—An inquiry into, and a connection between Daniel and the Apocalypse.

Friday.—What light does scripture throw on present events, and their moral character? What is next to be looked for and expected? Is there a prospect of a revival of Apostolic churches before the coming of Christ? What the duties arising out of present events? To what time, and to what class of persons do 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3; Jude; Matt. 24:23, 24; and 2 Peter 3 refer?

2 Copy defective.

3 Copy defective.

4 Copy defective.

Section 2

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Dearest——,—… As to dear——, you must not expect him to stay long in a place: he wins affections, and makes his way much among many minds, but he attaches himself to this, looks to it too much, and consequently does not last in a place for that comes only from attaching oneself to and leaning upon God only. Alas! feeble is he who even unconsciously leans upon man. Were I here to lean on man (indeed I cannot, it has helped to teach me not), I should be miserable enough. I am happy here, and I trust very quiet in the Lord, but were I to look around, I should be dismayed and confounded; error in those who lead, and nothing to hold a feeble heart up against it in any quarter, and I, speaking as a man, a stranger, and thrown all at once into the midst of it all. But the Lord knows the end from the beginning, and how He deals with His church.

I had broken up from Geneva, where, through the Lord’s mercy, though in all possible weakness, I had; a share more or less in all the happy work and intercourse of the place, such as the poor church of God affords to feeble faith now, and was pleasing myself—I hope not after the flesh—that I should soon turn my face towards my old work in England, and what God in His goodness has prepared for me there, and indeed, I long much, the Lord knows, to be on my way thither, or rather at work there; when I find myself suddenly arrested in my course, by what is purely a trial of faith, where, speaking as a man, if blessing I should have no thanks, and another in whom I have no full confidence, though I

trust I am mistaken, would externally step into the fruit, and where the canker, through human affection and ignorance and want of faithfulness, has eaten so wide and deep, that as a human judgment it is pure faith—and with the form of good and holiness, when it was so wanting, that the claim justifies itself in almost all consciences; and I turn into a lodging alone to-morrow, knowing none here but those who now are almost all a weight, and that I have a sort of responsibility for drawing after me. But this is all well: it is my lot, and I bless God with all my soul for it too: and in this sense, little it may be to suffer for Him, only may I be faithful. Probably, almost ere this reach you, something will have manifested itself as to the position of things here, and the Lord, I trust, will give His showers and more blessing than before. I feel happily stayed on Him as to the conscience of my position. All the pastors of the so-called churches—I abhor the name now—stood aloof, and let the wolf do what he might. As I said, did I not lean on the Lord, my heart would sink within me, and I should be ready to say, am not I wrong thus to care for them all, instead of letting them all ruin themselves? You have no idea of the patience which this country demands; there was plenty to try sometimes in England, but it was play compared to this… However, I hope soon to be free, and to wend my way towards work where my heart a good deal is. The brethren of Geneva I left in much peace, and did I seek only acceptance for myself, could rest, for which I thank them much in the Lord, with abundant satisfaction there, for they cherished and followed on my ministry much, and I trust with blessing. Certainly they seem very happy; indeed, they wanted me to take up my quarters there.

I had a meeting when some came, last night, and the brother of the minister who had led them in error came; he had been, in fact, turned off d la dissidence four years ago, and is still much valued by many; so that this apparently throws a light, and in one sense a darkness, as to the position I am in here… But I find a little simplicity goes a great way, and finds no knots, where men have tied a hundred—if God is there.

I did hear of dear J. F., one who was much loved, and whom I had well known and daily more, and valued much. Many as myself will feel his loss, but thus it is they daily pass upward, while we wait to serve on till He come. I must, close.

Ever in affection.

Lausanne, March 23rd, 1840.

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[From the French.

Dear Brother,—I was very glad and thankful to receive your letter, and I bless God for having led you as He has done in His goodness, and am quite relieved to find that our brethren of La 5:are edifying themselves together. It is a favour from God. When we are doing the will of God, God will help those that are cast down and He takes care of them, and the result is that they are greatly strengthened, because they make experience of the faithfulness of God.

Remember, dear brother, that it is dangerous to be raised all at once into a pulpit. It is not that I do not believe it to be the will of God, but you know that when St. Paul had been caught up, even into heaven, from the work of God, that would have been a snare to him,

because of his flesh, but God is faithful to keep us. Man's acceptation is not God's approbation, although God can give it us to favour the propagation of the truth; but if we stop at the result, we are at a distance from the source, and that becomes a snare to wither up out soul, instead of a means to lead us to those upon whom we should pour out His riches. I believe that God has in His mercy allowed you to be tested, that you may know how little and feeble you are, before introducing you to the work. As for —— although I hope it will never lose its attractions in your eyes, if God give you for a time work to do elsewhere, and that His will is clear to you, you ought to entrust these dear souls to Him who alone can —whether you are absent or present—feed and nourish them. No one will go further, I hope, than their faith will lead them. If they make progress in your absence, it will be a lesson, often very necessary, that God can act without us, but up to the present no one has visited them… As to your debts, it is clear you ought to pay them, and a minister of the gospel ought not to suffer the reproach that he is going to work, or rather, according to them, to lead an idle life, instead of paying his debts, I shall be very glad to help you in carrying out this duty, but until I return to England I should hardly be able to do so.

I must stop. May God keep you in simplicity of heart, and always in the sense of your vileness before Him. All our joy is destroyed the moment we lose sight of what we are before Him; and our natural strength, for there is that, becomes to us the means of leading us to some fall like St. Peter. He truly loved the Lord, but he had confidence in that love for Jesus, and in his integrity which, nevertheless, was sincere. He could say, "Thou

knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;" and he fell terribly, led by that very love, from the moment that he trusted it in the time of temptation. I do not suppose such things of you, dear brother, but I tell you these things out of love to you, in confidence that they will not happen. I trust in God for that, assured of His faithfulness. Only be watchful, and pray. Beware of the traditions of men, and of the spirit of the clergy; all that dries up the soul, dishonours the Lord, and nourishes the flesh, by the sense of human respectability, "the pride of life." But at the same time, honour fully all the gifts God has given to whoever it may be.

What you tell me of the B.'s interests me greatly; only, dear brother, in acknowledging the truth of these hopes in general, for probably there are incorrect thoughts as to details, do not depart from the foundation with them. God has been merciful in giving you access to this people; may it be to bring in with all regard to their condition, and with all prudence, the whole truth. Perhaps you will find that fundamental truth will stumble some among them, and you will have some testing in this direction. May God give you all the wisdom, gentleness, meekness, and firmness, that you will need. You will accept, I am persuaded, all these remarks that I make, knowing well my weakness, for the love of Christ.

Affectionately yours, in the work and the hope of this beloved One, our only Saviour.

Lausanne, July 5th, 1840.

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Dearest ——,—I have suffered lately from violent pain in the stomach which … sometimes four nights a week

deprived me of rest… Labouring in extreme heat, and the toil occasioned by the state of Lausanne—where there was no life to walk stayed on the Lord, and if the evil shewed itself elsewhere none that could go and meet it—so that I was pressed above strength, have occasioned this attack…

But, blessed be God, I have been sustained in great repose and unspeakable peace with Him, and that, notwithstanding many things, so that I am in anything but a disposition to complain. Many-of my sleepless nights have been passed in joy or in profit, repassing sometimes the evil which magnifies this immense grace, immeasurable grace of God; but more often I believe in immediate peace with Him, and sometimes prayer for others: of the two first, I scarce know which was the most blessed, though the latter of them surely the most agreeable and I suppose the best. If sometimes sorrow for others, as to others rather, passed across my mind, it was with an indescribably soothing feeling of the perfect goodness of God, while condemning myself, so that I could bless, and see evidently the hand of God in the thought…

But on the whole, above all the circumstances of this place which pre-occupy all minds here, what is eternal, the thoughts of God for Jesus and for us have risen far above all; for me it has been a time, of introduction into the rest of eternity of much blessing. It crossed my mind with much, with very great blessing latterly, in reading the Acts that we should be filled with the Holy Ghost, after the resurrection in glory as. now. We are apt, at least, I, to regard it as a sort of necessary force for resisting the evil, and living above it here, but also shall it be the fulness of unspeakable power of enjoyment

when all shall be glory and rest, the glory and rest of God on high. This in us, in man. There is something in this communion, and certainly I have learned it more here latterly, which is above all power of communication at least, till we get there, and then I suppose we shall have it (by the unity of the Spirit and glory) with one another as with God, with the Father and with the Son Jesus. It is blessed, even in feeble measure, to have the foretaste and earnest of it here.

I see all my weakness here—weakness of conduct, and worse, weakness of faith—but too evidently, and it humbles me exceedingly; alas, it has been very great. It is very distressing when one has the interest of the church and of the saints at heart, to see one's own want of faith and fidelity hindering the inflow of blessing which might be if one had it. Nothing presses on me and humbles me so much. Once too, since I have been here—not that man has judged, or perhaps would judge—my foot has slipped through want of caution, want of patient waiting on His will: but it was a profitable season, through divine and abounding grace, of utter humiliation and renewal to my soul. In truth, I am sometimes astonished at the goodness of God, when I see what wretches we are—all the vileness and misery and pride and unbelief, which work and boil in the heart, and that for want of living in His presence, who is the source of all joy, and only strength of His people.. And we are astonished at a little suffering, our own or the church's, which places us afresh in His presence. But I did not think when I began, to make you a long confession; perhaps it is a sign of good, for it is difficult to unlock my serried spirit. May abundant grace be with

you and all the saints around you, and the power and strength of His presence…

Ever, dearest——,

Yours affectionately.

P.S.—I am, in a measure, for the moment, broken up from Lausanne, and therefore, with some delays of visits on the road, I hope to be among the saints in your country ere very long, but take, I suppose, if the Lord will, France, and also a flying visit to Holland on the way. But I hope to leave this soon. Grace and peace be with you. The Lord, in His infinite grace, direct all our hearts into the love of God and the patient waiting for Christ.

Lausanne, September 15th, 1840.

[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—I wish to write you a few lines… Some days have passed; I had to go to Lausanne, and to interrupt my letter. I rather fear, beloved brother, that we have failed somewhat in the energy of faith; I speak of myself. I fear I have lost some months of service, although I do not well know how; I thought of being in France almost at this time, and I see scarcely any probability of it as yet; perhaps I can say that Satan hindered me. I am not so much troubled about it, because G. and R., who will be much better worth than I, will have gone there, but I am afraid of remaining here a While, because I am like a piece of furniture here. There has been blessing lately, more especially in the valley of St. Imier, Where the work is fresh and happy; and in your own dear Valley, which I hope soon to visit, they are going on very well, and are happy. Perhaps you may

have heard that E. B. has been terribly beaten. I had a letter from him the day before yesterday, or the day previous. He cannot walk, or walks with difficulty; he rather fears it is a chastisement, because he did not go forward in France; it may be so, for when the Lord loves us He is jealous, and he shews it; still it will be for the blessing of our dear friend… I do hot know how our journey will succeed. I shall be very glad to have you with me, if our gracious Father should so arrange things. We are praying a little more, I hope, and through the grace of God this will be done. But what would comfort me, if I remain a little longer in Switzerland, would be to encourage those in the interior, for surely God would have it so in His grace: there is some need of it. May God teach us to give ourselves to prayer: it is easily forgotten in the work itself, and this is the first bad symptom for the work, as for the soul.

As to the ruin of the church, the theory came for me after the consciousness of it, and even now, the theory is but a small thing to my mind; it is the burden which one bears, and which has of late even weighed me down somewhat; but God, who raises up those who are cast down, has comforted me, and encouraged me a little, for indeed, the arm of Him who sustains us is not shortened, blessed be His name, nor is His love enfeebled. Thank God, we are in peace here; our meetings are in general happy, and even, bleated be God, very happy, and the brethren love each other, and but for some dissenting bickerings, there is nothing painful in the country at present; but in Vaud the activity of service is rather wanting.

Good-bye, dear brother. May God keep us very near Him; we need it,, and ineffable joy and peace are there.

Greet warmly our dear D., and reckon upon all the love of your poor brother in Jesus, In great haste.

I had written to G. on the subject of baptism. It is a common phase of modern research, one has but to leave every one to act entirely according to his conscience. 5:has strong feelings about it, but without much ground it seems to me, still very natural. The same thing amongst brethren in England had its day, and, every one being left free, it produced no effect that I know of. If people dispute, it is bad: that tends also to contract the heart and the understanding, but in allowing full liberty this disappears.

Geneva, October 8th, 1840.

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Dearest——,—A mouthful of English, and thoughts of the dear brethren, of whom I am almost obliged to deny myself the recollection, or I begin to hanker after them, and to be discontented with this fart at least of the desert, for it is always this part that is disagreeable to us—but I check this as unbelief and murmuring, which really is not in my heart, against the Lord; for it was not against Moses that Israel murmured.

In truth, there is an evident march of blessing here, though I have been kept to the wheel most painfully, excessively painful in its progress, in order that my joy might be in it and in the Lord, and not in myself.

The Spirit of the Lord has put many dear brethren in movement, out of their cramped position towards better things, two or three ministers among others. Two have given their admission, but all is in transition, though truly if feeble, yet real progress, so that it is difficult to

speak of detail. There needs some one of a faith and energy that I have not, to act positively. I have served negatively in some measure, for Satan would have seized this moment of crisis by the means of Wesleyanism, and that as a system or generality, has not taken place. There are merely here and there a few Wesleyans, much less than I supposed. Probably, in the actual state of the church, it will make its proselytes, and those predisposed by their nature to a certain extent; but in general, it has failed, and though it has very much troubled by its want of integrity, and want of honest firmness of those who differed— for independence of conduct is comparatively unknown in these countries—it, when known, rather retrogrades than advances. The weak state of Christians and the existence of worldly Christianity and Nationalism always leave room for these energies, in which vast evil is mingled with some necessary good. God cannot leave them without the good, and the church is too corrupt to give the good pure, too enfeebled to separate it. The Lord will do His own work: the brethren who were on higher and simpler principles, were not, humanly speaking, of qualities calculated to spread and sanction it. The Lord works Himself. What was in the eye of man steady and of influence, was opposed, but God chooses the weak things, to shew that the truth and strength are His.

I, dear brother, am in a very critical position here, and desire much the prayers of the brethren for me for the Lord’s glory. The brethren who laboured among the Dissenters here, feared the Wesleyanism, and could not come to their defence, standing in the gap. While they feared almost the determination with which it was

opposed, they were yet glad that the battle was fought; but when necessarily this conflict produced other effeets, many Nationals came more or less out, and united. They feared again; for the conflict which had hindered in a measure the progress of Wesleyanism, had produced effects of which they felt afraid to judge, and yet more held aloof. In the meanwhile, the jealousy of the Nationals was natural enough; many many Dissenters in heart desire the union of God's children; others are excessively irritated, and hence, most of the others, or many at least, are timid as to committing themselves with their brethren who are opposed at Lausanne. Then there are now the old Dissenters, partly Wesleyans, among the women, though having protested as a body against it, some saying the pastor who introduced it, but who now denounces it, is their pastor, and some not—and in the meanwhile the principle of leaving their churches, placing the others in a dilemma how to recognise this body: meanwhile they look on. In one place the dissident body is dissolved, or consists of five discontented Wesleyans, and there is a meeting where all the Christians can, and mostly do, unite to break bread with one of the ministers, also whom I mentioned—very happy. At Vevey, Nationals, ex-nationals and Dissenters meet the last Monday of the month to break bread—very happy. It is a beginning. There, also, another National minister has left; a third has quitted elsewhere, but the Conseil d'Etat has begged him to wait awhile till they see what they have to do, which he does for the moment gratuitously—a faithful, upright man, but hitherto buried in scholastic learning, Fathers, &c, but I believe he makes progress out of this lore, and to him that hath shall more be given. Here the old Dissenters, and some who thought to seize the occasion

to establish themselves, hate me cordially, at least, the leaders. You will understand by all this what has detained me here, though my judgment is, by more faith I might have got off sooner, for I am very weak in faith.

Adieu, dear brother. Pray all for me, that having done the will of God, I may also, when He sees good, see you in peace… You will see from what I have said, it is difficult to give much account of what passes here—all is so in transition. There needs, I feel, some one more faithful a great deal than I; but yet I doubt sometimes if others of you would have borne with the inconsistencies with many true and precious principles which accompany this state of transition; perhaps you would have been thus more-blessed in your fidelity than in thus bearing with what I have supported here in these things. The Lord turn all I trust to good. Again I say, pray for me. Salute cordially all the beloved brethren, whom I remember with all my heart in the Lord…

Yours, ever affectionately.

Lausanne, January 11th, 1841.

To the same.]

Dearest——,— … The Lord can speak the word of peace; a little love will smooth all this trouble. I was not united with the brethren for exact opinions on such, or such a point, but by the love of Jesus, though truth be precious; and the Holy Ghost is able to and in love will order this. The word is sure, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule and mind the same thing—if in anything we be differently minded, God will reveal this also. That which is of the flesh will be manifested flesh, and probably there is some of it in all of us, in one as in others; but love is stronger than death. I doubt not that

a little love will soothe the spirit of ——, and irritation on any side is not of the grace of the Spirit of God. If it were a foundation truth for the soul, no peace could be held with error: mistake in the interpretation of Revelation, one may exercise much patience with. These things are always the sign of some other evil; but God will turn it to good. Perhaps knowledge has been too much attended to at Plymouth. The influence I had there was always and everywhere by great fundamental principles, and I trust it may ever be so, while I delight and believe in all the revelation of God as others. More humility will put all this in blessing, and perhaps it is needed to this end. I trust in the Lord for this, present or absent, that He will keep His poor children walking in love. I hold to love much more than to my views, or to those of others, or sustaining or destroying the views of others: hold fast by that, dear brother, for love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God. I fear knowledge has too much prominence at Plymouth, though it be very precious… Grace be with you all, and all that love the Lord Jesus, our blessed Saviour and patient Lord, in sincerity.

Yours ever affectionately.

I am myself in great peace about all this matter; I am sure the Lord is the stronger, and that the enemy shall be found to cede, rather give occasion to a better victory; such is my conviction…

Lausanne, February 3rd, 1841.

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[From the French.

* * * Justification is a point where two things unite: first, that the blood has washed us from all our sins, and this perhaps is justification, properly speaking. But in fact, we may add to it our acceptance in the Beloved. “He that practises righteousness is righteous;” for the practice of righteousness flows from the life of Christ in us; but by this life we are united to Christ, and enjoy His righteousness before God, being made well pleasing in the Beloved. The resurrection therefore is the pivot of it, for it is the proof of expiation; it introduces Christ, according to the power of this eternal life (in which we participate) into the presence of God. Around the Person of Christ regarded as risen, all the truths found in the word revolve. The union of the church with Him is the completion of them. Resurrection leaves behind, in the tomb, all that could condemn us, and ushers the Lord into that new world of which He is the perfection, the Head’, and the glory. Now we are united to Him.

September 12th, 1841.

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[From the French.

* * * I do not quite like that expression, “Christ has detained justification from God,” because it presents God as unwilling and even opposed to the thing, while it is the will and the heart of God which has provided the sacrifice and all. It is true that the righteousness of God required expiation and the sacrifice of Christ. Still it is He whose love has provided for our needs m this respect. And He it is who justifies. (Compare Zech. 3) The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks rather of our acceptance under the form of our presentation to Him, of sanctification in an external sense. “That he might

sanctify the people by his own blood." He has also perfected them; they can stand in His presence, as being His according to the perfection of the sanctuary, without reproach, without spot. Justification is the idea of a tribunal, of a judge, so to speak. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the sanctuary, and of presenting us there.

The foundation is always the same; but we can look at it in many ways, and each one gives us more light as to the perfection of the work of Christ, and the results of that work which we enjoy. 1 Peter 1:19 speaks rather in the sense of redemption, of being taken by a ransom out of the handle of the enemy. The obedience of Christ during His life tended to the perfection of the sacrifice; it was not expiatory, but perfectly acceptable. It was a question of the acceptability of His Person as necessary to His work, but that obedience was not expiatory. He would have remained alone if the corn of wheat had not fallen into the ground; but His entire obedience rendered Him perfectly pleasing to God, as it also was itself. (See Phil. 2)

Under the form of justification, the Epistle to the Romans is the one which most formally treats of the subject of our acceptance. What I meant by making use of the expression, "Christ has obtained our justification," will be understood by comparing the manner in which this epistle is expressed (chap. 3:24), "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." You see how it is presented, as flowing from the free grace of God. This is important for the state of the soul, and for the clear understanding of grace.

October 7th, 1841.

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[From the French.

* * * To apprehend aright the place of the law is a difficult thing, because we must be fully led by the Holy Spirit in order not to be ourselves, in some sort, under law, as to our feelings at least. We must have rightly seized the power of the work and resurrection of Jesus, otherwise one would be lawless if one were not under law. We are in nowise under the law. Grace does not recognise any participation of the law in our hearts; but how is this, if we acknowledge the law as good? Because Christ exhausted it in His death. He was under the law up to His death, and in His death; but evidently He is not so now; He may employ the law to judge those who have been under the law, but we are united to Him. As Adam was not head of the old race until after his fall, so Christ is only Head of the new race as risen from among the dead. He places them in His own position as a risen Man; they begin with Christ there. They quite acknowledge the power of the law, but in that it has put Jesus to death, there where it has lost all its power, and its dominion over the soul. We belong to another.

We can employ the law, if there be need, against the wicked, because, having the divine nature, we can handle the law, and it cannot inflict its mortal wound upon the divine nature from which it has emanated. We can shew where man is if under the law, in order thereby to bring out the perfection of redemption; it is what the apostle does in Romans and Galatians, in order to make it clear that we are no longer under the law, because we are dead with Christ. Through the law we

are dead to the law; we are crucified with Christ. A Gentile was never really under the law. In becoming a Christian he takes Christ at a point where He has done with the law; but, having received the Spirit of Christ, he has no longer need of the law to discern the perfection of redemption: he has intelligence to understand the things accomplished in the history of the Messiah—His perfect work. But this is far from being clear in the mind of Christians, for in fact, the greater part among them have made of Christianity a law, and have pot themselves under the law. They must come out thence in order to enjoy peace; but for them, the discussion as to what the law is is a very important thing, and very opportune on that account. Besides, the human heart so naturally places itself under law, that it is very important for every soul to be well enlightened on the subject. The law, let us always remember, reveals to us nothing of God, except that a law implies a judge; it gives the measure of our responsibility: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God and thy neighbour;” that is the law. It may be said that the gospel gives new motives for our fulfilment of the law; but these motives are drawn from a fact which gives to Christ all that right over our hearts to which the law could lay claim, and by death puts an end to the power of the latter, for we are dead and risen with Christ. We shall do or avoid many of the things found in the law, and the summary of it which has been given us remains the principle, or rather the fruit of the life of Christ in us. It is now fulfilled in all that flows from that life, but we are in nowise under the law, for we are one with Christ, and Christ is not under the law.

The law not only condemns conduct, but men. The law does not only say, “Cursed is everything,” but “Cursed is every one who continueth not.” Thus we must be under the curse if we are under the law. But it is because we are not under the law that we can make use of it, if needs be. The Jews attempted to employ it against the adulterous woman, but they were under the law, in the flesh. The law pierced their hearts to death and condemnation. Christ made use of it, or at least allowed it its efficacy, because, although He was born under the law, it could not touch Him for condemnation, the life of God in Him being perfect. United to Him in resurrection we can make use of it, because we are beyond its reach by the death and resurrection of Christ, enjoying His life in our souls. This is why people are always more or less under the law, until they have understood the resurrection of Christ, and also whenever the flesh obscures the power of our redemption. I hope that you will be able to understand these few remarks.

With regard to the Epistle to the Philippians, it presents another very interesting feature—the affliction and the personal experience of the apostle. He looks at the church as deprived of his care, and he himself is oppressed for the, time by the power of Satan. Thus, in a very touching and very powerful manner, he enters into all that concerns the conflict of the church, and all that is important for it during the period of its abandonment: he also presents the graces which would prevent it from falling into those troubles which sprang up consequent upon the absence of the apostle. Hence the great value of this epistle for the present time. They were beginning to preach Christ in a spirit of contention, not to be of the same mind, to murmur. He shews in what the riches and

graces of Christ consist, especially necessary for such a state of things, a state, alas! which has ripened much since then. Why should I say, Alas? for all this will turn to salvation, and shews that the coming of Jesus is nearer.

Lausanne, January, 1842.

Dearest ——,—As to all speaking, if the brethren prefer all meetings of brethren as such, it is all very well; I have no objection; I would meet cordially with them; but when they do not meet corporately as brethren, then I act on my individual responsibility to God—I individualise myself. If I find it profitable to associate another with me, as Barnabas or Silas (Paul chose Silas), it is all well; but I count it pf the very last importance to maintain individual responsibility, while insisting on unity and discipline. Counsel the individual, exercise discipline if needed, refuse him your room if he preaches error; but where there is unity and discipline in form, if individual responsibility be not recognised therewith, it becomes a petty Borne, and worse, from being narrower. Where charity is warm, there is no difficulty. If brethren who have a room, desire to use it only for corporate meetings, as I have said, it is all well, and I admit the liberty of the Spirit edifying by whom He will; but my position in the body of Christ for service in the responsibility of individual gift is between me and Christ, where not exercised in a corporate meeting; I dare not forego this responsibility (woe to me if I preach not!); and no one can meddle with it—he meddles with the prerogative of Christ. In the assembly, the order of the assembly, or Christ by the Spirit in that, is supreme; out of the assembly, I act on my own responsibility to the

Lord. If I have five talents, I do not necessarily club with him who has two.

I admit fully, alongside of this, all godly counsel; and all discipline as to error or misconduct. Even so, you cannot help a man's preaching alone; only you can refuse to recognise him, or warn, or the like. I attach all possible importance to this individual responsibility (repeating yet again, all just accompanying principle): I would not be of any body where it was touched; I dare not, for I should do just what Rome has— set up something between me and Christ. If the brethren do not like to lend me their place of meeting, where I may exercise my gift on this responsibility, I resist not; it is merely a question of rooms, or of wisdom; perhaps they may be wiser in this than myself. The question arose at——. I replied, as above, that if the brethren did not like me to preach on my own responsibility in the room, and would have only open corporate meetings, I had no more to say, I would hire another; but out of the corporate meetings I was Christ's servant, and I recognised no right in another to meddle with this responsibility, saving discipline if that were needed. The difficulty disappeared, as it always does where there is fidelity; though humbleness alone can save us getting out of one ditch into another.

Ever, dearest brother, with much thankfulness for your letters, Yours affectionately.

Lausanne, July 14th, 1842.

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[From the French.

Dear Brother,—Dear F. has communicated to me your letter. I bless God that you have found the sweet peace of communion with God: it is there that strength is found —our only true strength; it is there, dear brother, that we get hold of, and there alone, the principles which make us pilgrims and strangers here below, because faith is in question when one desires to be a stranger on earth, and to lean only upon God. Happy, thrice happy, he who can do it, but this can be only through communion. And now, whilst encouraging you, and ready to help you, so far as the Lord will enable me, I urge you to weigh the matter well, and to see if with ten thousand you are able to make war against him who comes against you with twenty thousand; if not (it is God who makes all the difference) you must make peace, and be content, if you have peace, to remain on this side of Jordan, instead of trusting to God that which is dear to you, and going to make war against those who still hold the land. But I believe that you have tasted too much what truth is to act thus: you have too much light to be on good terms with God in not following this light. God has acted, dear brother, with respect to you, with so much goodness and tenderness in leading you into His work, and in following you along the road, that I hope your heart will feel its effects powerfully. As for me, I will do what I can to help you, as every brother in Christ. God has stood by you, when you had only Himself and the resources which He Himself placed at your disposal, so that there is enough to lead you to trust His faithfulness…

I say no more, except that I shall be rejoiced to see you walk with liberty in the path of truth and of personal devotedness. I know by my own experience, that those

who trust in the Lord shall not be confounded, and that His service is the only true liberty and joy on earth. I commend you heartily to Him; He is the only resource that you and I have. I rejoice at the peace and the healthy condition of your soul, as if it were myself. Let us remember that communion is a matter of eternity, this sweet and precious eternity which Christ has won for us, of which He Himself will be the centre and the glory. Adieu, dear brother; peace be with you, keep yourself in the love of God, and look only to Him: if your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of. light.

There is much blessing in Switzerland, but a little commotion, because of the new wine, which does not suit well with the old bottles—old at least in many respects, because they are human —and everything is feared about if anything is touched.

Your affectionate brother.

I shall be at Lausanne probably next week.

Geneva, October 10th, 1842.

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To the same.]

[From the French.

Dear Brother,—I have not much news to give you from here. In comparison with what was the case a year and a half ago, the awakening and the results are striking enough, but old Dissent on one side, and especially the old Dissenting ministers, whom the new awakening has laid aside, are jealous, and are bestirring themselves. We have no other difficulty, except this jealous spirit of the ministers. They have taken the ground solemnly in a conference lately, that the church was not responsible

for the condition in which it then was. I feel myself much more, or rather altogether apart, from all official connection with their system; as to individuals, I hope that love will be only the more easy in its exercise; but it appears to me a principle of rebellion against God. In general there is blessing; God has raised up some workmen, and all those who are labouring are blessed. There are conversions, and rather numerous considering our weakness, through the goodness of God, and in general more devotedness. I have not given up the thought of a visit to the Ardèche, but this attempt to revive the old Dissent in opposition to the awakening which is taking place, makes me undecided for the moment as to my duty to leave; the rather because hearts are calm as long as I am here, and are more agitated if they are themselves the object of these attempts. In general, Wesleyanism affects them, save perhaps where they have had too much to do with it.

May God keep you, and us all, beloved brethren, in simplicity and peace, near Jesus. In our Father's presence there is always rest. The work which is the expression of our dwelling.there, of our intimacy with His love, is always blessed and always happy—tried it may be, but happy. The joy which is in Him is infinite and eternal—a joy which only those who enjoy it know, or can conceive, but you know it, dear brother. Let us be of good courage, not alarmed because there is opposition, and not even because there is coldness, which is much more painful. Jesus loved "to the end;" this is the character of His love; it will be so of His love in our hearts, but we must be near Him that it may be so. May Got direct you in your plans; we have nothing but His will to direct us in the short passage of the

pilgrimage here below. What happiness to have such guidance! May my Jesus, this good and faithful Saviour and Shepherd, give you a single eye, that your whole body may be full of light. Reckon upon His faithfulness, and may He direct you. Greet all the brethren cordially. May the God of peace, our God, be with them all; my heart greets them in the mighty and eternal love of Christ. May God bless them and yourself, dear brother.

Your affectionate.

Lausanne, October 11th, 1842.

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Dearest——,—It is always good to hear both of the Lord's work, and the labour of the beloved brethren. I am exceedingly thankful for the prayers of the brethren, and indeed I pray you to thank them that pray for me. I need it, and if I be weak, need it the more.

You must not expect much news. It is not my gift. I have passed through so trying and difficult a path here, that I distrust myself to speak of it, but I am come out of it, I trust, in charity, and it was no easy matter. To be opposed is easy in a certain sense; I have had plenty, and all who would maintain things when the Lord is overthrowing them, naturally count me to do the work of Satan—the reputation I have in general in France and Switzerland—when there is frankness to speak out; but speaking out or acting on conviction, is not generally the habit on the Continent—they complain of it even. Yet there has been blessing. The young men, whom those who would be with us vilified all they could, have been blessed very generally, and there are many conversions through their means, and in general there has been awakening wherever they have been, and joy and

gladness have accompanied their steps. This is a subject of rejoicing, and the Lord has kept them in a most healthful feeling of responsibility with much zeal. At the same time, the dissemination of truth and blessing, and on what are called our principles, thus spreading on the right hand and on the left, without knowing whence it came or how it sprung up all of a sudden, has exceedingly irritated those, who with much effort were doing nothing or spoiling their own work, and I confess, has surprised me; for we are slow to count beforehand on the goodness of God. That He has acted is most manifest. Also I am much more free, for in all their plans, they have planned against themselves., They had what they called a Conference Fraternelle, to judge the expressions of my tracts, which has had the effect of setting me completely at large. They sent to all their churches, that a new system agitated many Christians, and that thereon they would judge if the expressions of my tracts were scriptural. They told nothing of their plan to those who had received more or less the principles contained in the tracts, but invited them when all was ready, saying that the state of Christians was so changed in Lausanne, that they could not offer hospitality to the brethren. At the meeting which I had declined attending, but went afterwards, at the demand of many who were come from far, they admitted the ruined state of the church, which they had denied hitherto, but denied our responsibility, saying that we were not answerable for the evil of our forefathers. I told the two I was most intimate with, that after that I could not go on with their Dissidence any longer, though I was in charity with all. I am much freer and happier since, and blessing is manifest.

In France there is progress, and I found the brethren well, and walking near the Lord in general. There is now a large field open in the Gard… At St. Hippolyte, though others labour equally, several true men (finding that our brethren walked more with the Lord, and had His blessing), who had been exceedingly prejudiced, hare drawn towards the brethren and avowed it. There will be opposition there, at least, on the westward, but there is testimony. In the Isère there is a commencement of blessing, and in the Drôme, at Montmeyran, where they are however weak; this place will bring probably excessive enmity on me. I saw brethren from this place when in France. I could not go there when in the Ardeche. At Annonay and Vernoux they came as much as eighteen leagues to read and confer; this shews the awakening to the state of things which exists. It is chiefly, though not exclusively, among simple brethren; they are devoted and zealous—this is a remarkable feature. One in Switzerland has been severely beaten, but is happy in his work; one who is much blessed, has left all recently (a lithographist), and felt led to go out at once, without reading with us at Lausanne. Five more are come to read, of whom three I trust will be valuable labourers in different ways. The brethren meet to break bread in France, in places of which I knew not the existence before I went there this last trip. Many of them receive next to nothing, being unmarried: their zeal has-awakened the goodwill of those among whom they labour; they receive them, and even give them clothing as presents. In the towns this can be less the case, and in the Catholic population in France—that is, where the work has not produced its fruits. At any rate, all work on their proper responsibility; if they have not

faith, they have only to return to a life of labour like others. Much happy confidence reigns.

I am exceedingly happy with them all, exercising no control but what their own affection claims, and I find that thus cast in considerable difficulties on the Lord, they acquire by the necessity they are in, a rapid ripeness of judgment and prudence according to the Lord. In France many are locally employed, and earn their bread. The married brethren naturally having ménage, need more…

I write up my letters as much as I can; my head scarce suffices for all, but, thank God, I have been very happy in my soul, and helped on in various ways, and though poor and Miserable, conscious that a gracious, faithful and pardoning Lord is with me… Kindest love to all the brethren.

Ever yours, most affectionately in the Lord.

Lausanne, January 21st, 1843.

* * * * *

Dearest——,—I was glad to have some news of you; we must not expect to pass through the valley without combats, also “the husbandman labouring first must be partaker of the fruits.” All we have to seek is to be faithful to Christ in them, and then there results always blessing; it is a purging process, the evil being let out; the secret is to lean thoroughly on the Lord. I pray for you, and not to seek to do good even, in our strength. I do not doubt, dear brother, that you do so much better than myself.

As to heresies, I feel a difference between one who, for want of light or from early prejudice, cannot get rid of

error, and one who propagates it ever so secretly (for in general where there is an evil will, it is secretly propagated at first), because then there is the love of error, and the will of the flesh is at work; they are the fruits of the flesh. What is written as to heresy—not as to every one that is in error, even where the error is grave—is, “after the first and second admonition reject.” But I doubt not, you have been better directed of the Lord in waiting on Him, than anything I could thus write, but I believe these principles correct. But all these exercises are good. Surely it would be happier never to give the Lord occasion thus to exercise us; but it is much more merciful to be put through the exercises, which brings out faithfulness, than to be left in what separates us from the Lord—far, far better.

As to the second point, that of teaching meetings, if I remember, the same difficulty had occurred before, but it appears to me the matter is very simple. I scarcely understand the difficulty, as it seems to me to deny the exercise of a gift, which I am bound to exercise according to my responsibility to Christ. As to the circumstances of its exercise, they are comparatively immaterial. That one teach, or that more than one take part if united in work, is a matter for them to judge of, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Paul and Barnabas assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. He who has the gift of teaching is responsible to Christ for the exercise of his gift; it may be exercised in private; in the meeting together of brethren, if so led, on the Lord’s day; or he may assemble them to teach them if he has the capacity for it, for he is acting then on the responsibility which lies on him to trade with his talent. That this should be done

with the concurrence and in the unity of the brethren, is natural where charity exists, and desirable: but if one has a gift of teaching, one is accountable for its exercise in charity where it can be a blessing to the church. Only, if in the assembly he act in the flesh, that, not his gift, is a subject of discipline—as when tongues were used for vain glory. It is a question of edifying. Charity uses a gift for edifying, but charity is bound to use the gift for edifying. Besides, if there are brethren who in conscience do not approve of it, their path is easy, not to sanction it by their presence; but they ought not to make their conscience or scruple the law of others' conduct, where it is a matter of spiritual judgment.

There has been so much blessing in France, that I cannot regret not having got home to England, though indeed I desired it. Since then I have done little here, having been ill, and I doubt that the Lord has much for me to do here, but the brethren who read with me are all blessed in their work in this country, French Switzerland, and there is awakening in all parts. Yet I long to be back in England. I suppose still that I may make my journey back by France, where doors were more and more open to me the last time I was there. May I be only the Lord's servant, and that within, as well as, and before, being it without. I have been in general happy, and how otherwise with fresh grace; yet I have seen several times lately my deplorable weakness. Yet having been ill, I have been astonished how deeply I felt utter and entire separation to the Lord. Work more or less occupied me with things and people here; when incapable of it, as I have been latterly almost entirely, I found I had nothing but Christ and His importance beyond all our highest and fondest and most sincere

thoughts: it was a sort of experience morally of death, not perhaps all its force on conscience, but all on my position.

Our brethren who have died lately have been in sweetest peace, and have felt in a peculiar manner the importance of the Lord's coming for the church, even when dying, and sorrowed only, where sorrow was, at not having more entirely acted on all principles they had received. The awakening produced by these principles in Switzerland and prance is really deeply interesting.

The anxiety of dear——'s followers to propagate his views, seems to me the flesh. Some brethren and sisters here have the same difficulty, but it does not seem to me as flowing from or accompanied by increased spirituality, but a tendency to bring down the mind to earth. But I have never combated it much. My mind has opened out to many wider views and details. I find many more classes of saints and glory in the Apocalypse than heretofore, though all blessed. It may be some will pass through, but I am more than ever confirmed that it is not presented to our faith, but the contrary, and that the faithful will be kept from it. If some pass through it, it would make a difficulty for those who could not separate the signs of special blessing there, from the evidence of greater faithfulness which made us escape it. This, I believe, happens often. Lot experienced mercies not manifested to Abraham in the same way, and the proofs of righteousness are occasions of sorrow if we go far enough. He vexed his righteous soul; and the Lord knew how to keep. Does this identify his ease with Abraham? But farewell. May the brethren pray for me, for I am a very weak vessel, that feel often my want of discernment in the midst of, for me, an arduous responsibility. Grace,

mercy and peace be with you. Salute all the brethren. May they be kept in lowliness and peace.

Your affectionate.

Lausanne, 1843.

* * * * *

Dear Mrs.——,—You must not be surprised at the seeming long delay in answering your letter, as it has followed me to Lausanne and Geneva. Perhaps the good Lord has given you peace already—at least, before you receive this; but in case it be not so, I answer according to the light God has given me. In the first place, I beseech you to count on the goodness of God, of our God as He has revealed Himself in Christ, and that notwithstanding feelings which may arise. Indeed, I see that He has already given you to do it in a measure. I know it is difficult, impossible to us, not to judge of God by what we feel in ourselves, but it is evident it is not the truth. Our feelings are not the measure of what He is towards us, but to us they often are (when in the state your mind is in).

In the next place I admit freely, that when the conscience is powerfully wrought upon, it is quite possible that many physical and nervous sentiments way accompany them, which to the world, and perhaps to doctors, appears the whole matter, while they are really (while I quite admit the possibility of their existence) but the mere indices of deeper and much more important feelings: and it is of these that I desire to speak. It is sad indeed to smother up our feelings towards God which concern our eternal interests, because they produce certain passing painful effects.

And here I will say a word as to——: I feel thankful that you are fallen into the hands of one who recognises as he does the word of God. There is a measure of truth in what he says; it is true that we have to rest on the written word; there he is quite right, but he does not, for I know well the system in which his mind has been taught, recognise the effects and working of the Spirit of God in the soul, as the revelation of God reaches and requires that we should; so that though he be quite right in exhorting you to rest on the written record, he could not rightly interpret what passes in your soul, nor make sufficient allowance for the work of the Holy Ghost. Nor could you perhaps distinguish now quite between what was a physical effect and the real inward work. Praying God to give you peace and calm as to this even outward physical part, I will apply myself to that which is of God.

It is not surprising when the Spirit of God takes a soul in hand to convince it of sin, to change its whole course and object, to give it a life it had not before, and judge thereon every thought which has had a place in it previously—it is not surprising that in such a case there should be wonderful upsetting and havoc. It is astonishing when one comes to know what is really done, that so many are brought peacefully to know themselves, the Lord, and His grace. And here suffer me to add, dear——, not as a reproach, but on the contrary, as confirming the hope that it is the Lord's own work in your soul, that called as you had been long before, and that call dropped as it were for so long a season, that when the Lord re-visits a soul and takes up His work which has been neglected (I will not say slighted), it is generally with much more painful convictions—with a hand that acts in love, but as forced to make the soul

feel the urgency of the case, and that it must pay attention to God's hand and call. And when the Lord acts thus in grace—is forced by our folly thus to act—Satan would seek the occasion to tell us it is too late, that the Lord is hard and acts harshly, just because we have forced Him to act in a manner to make us feel the position we are in and our need. But be of good cheer; the Lord makes all work together for good to them that love Him. Your case is not extraordinary. Often souls are attracted by the grace of Jesus, or some religious impression, but the conscience slightly touched; a season of neglect ensues, and then the passages which speak of turning back are strongly applied to the conscience, instead of those which speak of ordinary evil, as in the case when the conscience is reached at the beginning. The enemy always seeks to profit by these convictions, when he can no longer hold the soul in bondage by carelessness, and would drive it to despair and hard thoughts of God. The Lord does not hinder this, for it adds to the seriousness of the convictions, but He is faithful in the end to bring us out of it. If our imagination or feelings are at work, our joys and distress will be more apparent and acute, for the flesh mingles with this also, though the ground work be real. When you know Christ and yourself better, you will be better able to discern between what is accessory merely, and real; but it is of little importance to you now, and God is faithful, though you know that when Peter denied Christ with execrations, Christ had prayed for him that his faith might not fail. It was permitted, because Peter had need of this sad lesson as to himself, and this painfully acquired knowledge of himself was the means of his being able to strengthen even his brethren, for all that humbles us is good; but I desire to remark in

the case of Peter, that behind all this scene there was the intercession of Christ which secured the recovery of Peter and the maintenance of his faith, his confidence, and reliance on the goodness of God, instead of falling into despair as Judas; as he says afterwards, “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

But there is a deeper work than all these feelings; not so acute perhaps, but which judges sin in the light of God’s grace. Further, until the mind gets based upon the truth that all is grace, and that thus it is by the obedience of One that many are made righteous, the soul which is sincere is necessarily under the law, and occupied with itself—thinks as you, that it is unworthy to follow Him, and the like. Surely you are unworthy to follow Him, and the Lord is pleased to lead you to make the discovery of this humbling truth. Seeing that we are lost (and you will be tormented till you are completely convinced of that) we think that there is no hope, when it is exactly then that the gospel begins, for the Son of man came to seek and to save those that are lost, and He has done the whole work that saves them.

You must not attach too much importance to your joy, though it were real, for it never reached the height of its object; nor to your distress, though it may have been an effect of the operation of the Spirit convincing you of sin, which after all you cannot measure more than the joy; nor to your indifference, more painful in some sort than the distress, and by which the enemy often tempts us. God has weighed all that joy shall be for us; He has weighed all that sin is, all your thoughts seen beforehand, all your indifference—miserable as all this proves us to be; and knowing beforehand all that we are and all our sin, He has given Christ for us, who has

charged Himself with all, and us such as we are, and has accomplished without us all that was needed by the justice and love of God. It is absolutely accomplished; you can add nothing by joy or sorrow to the perfect work of Christ. All these exercises of soul may be very useful to bring us to the point of acknowledging our own nothingness, so that Christ may have His first place in our rinds by faith, but they can add nothing to Him. Your peace will come from a calm and holy conviction that you are nothing, and that He is all, and that the Lord knew all that you were, and because you were all this, took your place in responsibility and suffered for you.

You will say, but I have neglected Christ after being awakened. It is possible, and it is very sad; nay, more, as I have said, this gives a handle to the enemy to torment us, but does not change the efficacy of the blood and work of Christ in God's eyes, and that is what gives peace. It is not what you think of Christ's work, but what God thinks of it, that saves. Your knowledge of what God thinks of it, by faith, gives peace. God says to Israel in Egypt, not when you see the blood, I will pass over, but "when I see the blood." He it is that has been offended, He it is that judges, and He it is that has accepted the ransom in justice as He gave it in love. He is faithful and just to forgive us.

As we may confound sometimes the acuteness of our feelings with the spiritual judgment of sin, almost always at the outset we confound the work of the Spirit and the work of Christ. Each has its place in the saved, but they must not be confounded. The -Spirit of God may humble, convict us, reprove within and thus distress us, or give us joy, and often we set about to judge of all this in order to know our acceptance with God. But these

things, though they have their place in the mind of the redeemed, are not the ground of his peace. Christ has made peace by the blood of the cross. Christ has done all, and has left us nothing but thanksgiving and praise. If some one has paid my debts, my sorrow at the folly that contracted them, or my joy at their being discharged, adds nothing whatever to the payment of the debt, though both be natural and just. It is sometimes hard to esteem all our feelings as nothing, but it is only a remains of self; but only think what it cost the Son of God in undergoing the wrath of God, and we shall feel on one hand the perfect security of our justification, and the nothingness of all our feelings compared with what our sin really was in the sight of God; but He remembers it no more, as He has said. If Christ had not completely discharged and effaced it, He could not be in heaven, for He could not sit at the right hand of God charged with our sins, though He was charged with them on the cross.

If your heart demands, But how do I know that I have part in all this? I answer, with the word of the Lord which abides for ever, that whoso believeth in Him. That all might be grace, God has willed that it should be by faith, and though faith produces immense effects, it adds nothing to the thing it believes. Christ and the efficacy of His work must be, and be before God, all that I am called to believe them to be, before I believe it. The feelings and distress through which we pass care very important, but only in order to bring us to this, and peace and joy are found in a humble and lowly sense of sin, and of the infinite—— [copy defective.]

Yverdun, March 25th, 1843.

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[From the French.

Very dear Sister,—Here I am then, in this vast and horrible town, but led by the good hand of Him who never fails in His faithfulness, and the haste that I make to let you have tidings of us, ought to assure you on the one hand that I count on the interest you have in receiving them, and on the other hand, that I do not forget Switzerland. In fact, when I arrived here, I felt myself a stranger, and much more at home in Switzerland than here. It was not from lack of affection on the part of the brethren, far from it, for their reception was affectionate, could not be more so. I felt my unworthiness, and attributed it as much to the interest that they take in the work in Switzerland, as to what was more personal. It is not as a compliment that I say this. But they had prayed much for the work in Switzerland, and naturally that had identified me with that work.

There was nothing extraordinary in my journey, unless it be the continued goodness of God. I hoped to spend the Sunday in London, but we encountered a storm in the passage from Rotterdam to London, so that we only arrived the Sunday evening. I have already spoken, on Monday and Tuesday, and we had the presence of God; but half of those who attended were unknown to me, the number of brothers having greatly increased during my absence. There would be an extraordinary amount to do in this country, but at present my heart is in Switzerland, I believe by the will of God. I do not know if you will believe me when I tell you that I feel much more a stranger here than over there, and it gives me

wonderful joy when I meet a Swiss brother or sister. I hope that the only thing that will lead me will be the will of God. I cannot doubt that God has raised up a testimony at the present time in Switzerland and in France, which He gives me, at least I think so, still to carry on in those countries. I feel my weakness and my incapacity, but this does not stop me at all, because I feel that the work is of Him. I am conscious of having but one desire, namely, that testimony should be borne to Christ, to Him whose glory alone is precious to me. I am conscious that that is my only desire, and that makes me happy and inspires me with entire confidence. I do not doubt that I have done the will of God in coming here; and it is very sweet to feel it, and it is this that removes from me all anxiety with regard to Lausanne. When I shall have finished what God wishes me to do, I hope to be there again. I have only the thought of a journey here at present, till the moment of my return. I know nothing about it, that depends upon His will. May He give me the discernment of that will, and of the things that are really of some importance.

As to the brethren of this place, I have not yet spent a Sunday, but this is the impression they have given me. They talk to me much more of God and less of man than in Switzerland, this is a great good; on the other hand I have found, it has seemed to me, much more solemnity and seriousness in our meetings at Lausanne, &c., than here—though I have been happy in the two I have been at. There is more care of souls also here. I am still ill at ease in meditating, and almost incapable of praying yet in English. In Ireland they have been neglected, but in Dublin they are much blessed, more than ever, and they walk in peace elsewhere, but there is no work. There are

some, but few new workers in England, but the work has been greatly extended. The time of returning to Switzerland will be to me a time of joy, although I particularly love the brethren here, and see more and more the solidity and the truth of the work that God has done in these times in this country, and I feel that the links that attach me to them are not of man.

I hope that our dear sisters at Lausanne will not think that my heart does not own all their affection and their goodness with regard to me, although, pre-occupied with so many things and little demonstrative, I received all the testimony to it without saying much. I should indeed be very ungrateful if I were not sensible of it; but the fact is that I am. I cannot accuse myself of failing there, but the best recompense that I can render, is the ardent desire, adding to it my prayers, that they may enjoy fully and more and more, the fellowship and grace of our precious Saviour, the joy and the portion of my heart, and that they may be more conformed, and more acceptable unto Him. My joy when I think of them, is not only that they have shewn me so much goodness and patience, but that they glorify the Lord; it is in this also that I have boasted of them. Can I do otherwise than desire that they may abound more and more in it?…

Greet cordially all our dear sisters, particularly your family, face to face. My object, if God permits me soon to see the brethren again, will be to unite the brethren much more. It is possible I may change my whole manner of living, remaining partly isolated, and receiving the brethren if they are disposed to come. I think it is very possible that I may attain this end by the goodness of God more easily in living thus isolated. That I shall lose much as to my comfort in every way, I well

know. You are assured, dear sisters, I hope, that I am not forgetful of all the regard you have had for me in this, of how much I owe you in every way. If you have spoilt me, so that I have received so much attention and care as if it were all natural, it is your fault. I say this, because I know that often when I count on the sincerity of the kindness of any one, I avail myself of it, as an effect of christian love, without making compliments; but I can assure you that I am very keenly and sincerely thankful for all the goodness which you have shewn me, even though, as I have said, pre-occupied with service, I have accepted it without saying much. Accept my sincere thanks before the Lord. I hope, all unworthy as I am, you have done it to Him. Once more, greet all our dear sisters and the brothers whom you know.

Your affectionate and grateful brother.

I write in haste, at different times, having begun in London and ended in Sussex.

London, August 3rd, 1843.

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To the same.]

[From the French.

Dear Miss ——,—No doubt some habits formed in this country remain, but the native soil has few charms for me; a paternal house, spoilt and dishonoured in the hands of our enemies, has but little attraction for the affections of the heart, and this is England at this moment. Every one is confounded. They do not know what will become of them, nor what will happen. Happy those who possess a kingdom that cannot be shaken; it is our sure portion. Blessed be God for it. I have felt God

more with me than ever in this visit, and the position of testimony in which I am with my brethren more real and true. But the love and confidence of the brethren humbles me extremely, though I bless God for it, as a great happiness. I am, I think, at the end of my journey towards the north, having given up my visit to Scotland, to be able to retrace my steps towards the south. I shall cross England again to-morrow to visit Hull, where the work is beginning (a minister of the national church having quite lately given up his place); and then, if it please God, by Hereford to London. There I shall stay for a little, and make some little trips, which the railways render very rapid and easy now; and if God will, I shall leave afterwards for France, but I do not think of being in Switzerland for some time to come; however, I think, long enough before they disperse for the country. This is, at least, my mind, if God accord it me. We had a blessed meeting at Liverpool; I think that the brethren enjoyed themselves more there than at preceding ones; perhaps less of fresh knowledge, but more solid and more serious, and new souls that found there precious links with the brethren, several localities being newly opened. Brotherly love was without restraint, and very real and blessed, so that we had indeed something to bless God for. The brethren returned like the Israelites from the dedication (2 Chron. 7:10), though it were but an earnest, and even in a poor and miserable assembly. The field also is an open one, and the testimony absolutely sought for. Besides, I ought to tell you this, that whilst hurrying to return to the Continent, I am deeply [convinced] that it is a moment that the testimony is urgently demanded in England, and I think that I must return to work here, that at least a testimony may be borne by the grace of God, before Puseyism

possess the country, and whilst religious liberty remains to us, which I do not think will last too long. The dissenters can do nothing; they hold meetings to know what to do, and what they possess is slipping from their hands before their eyes; they feel it, throw themselves right and left, and avow that all is lost, when they dare to say so. Externally the country is becoming nationalised, and nationalism is becoming Puseyism, and Puseyism no longer hides itself in its Romanist tendencies. It is no longer a question of searching the prophecies in quietness to know what should come to pass, but of acting, of working while it is day; it is a sombre picture no doubt.

The country is prosperous in its temporal affairs; they are building fine Gothic churches everywhere; they are making immense collections for the education of poor manufacturers; but the truth, some moral principle, some energy of faith that can meet the evil, is lacking everywhere. Such is England! I believe it will be my duty to work there a little, without, however, giving up Switzerland or other countries. There is need also of caring for the sheep; perhaps one may be able to do little, but this little ought to be done. What happiness to await the precious Saviour, and to know that His glory that one has so desired, so wished for, is drawing near; what happiness that the dark clouds that are about to burst upon the world will but discover this Sun of righteousness too long hidden (though that has been His grace), this Sun with which we are but one, united to Him according to the counsels of His love! Truly this makes us lift up our heads; besides, we shall be kept as in the hollow of His hand, of the hand of Him to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth. May my dear

Lausanne sisters know how to await thus our precious Saviour, and you yourselves, my dear sisters, among others. Perhaps it is their lot to await Him in peace and quietness, in happy works of charity in the shade (I greatly envy them in this respect)— mine to be compelled to face the winds and the waves of this stormy world, although it be with the Lord, so that all goes well; our life and our portion are in Him. You see what a piece of paper I have taken, without noticing it. I cannot re-write my letter. May peace, mercy and grace be abundantly with you all… God be with you.

Your affectionate brother

And servant in Christ.

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Kendal, November, 1843.

[From the French.

Very dear Brethren,—My heart has joy in turning towards Lausanne, where God has given me to work so long amongst you. And in looking back, in order to reflect upon all the time I spent among you, and upon the work which has been done at Lausanne, I find indeed that for which to bless God; and I think I may say, much loved brethren, that while owning many shortcomings in myself before God, I have never sought anything amongst you but the glory of Christ, and the welfare of you all. I had much upon my heart to say a few words to you the Sunday before my departure, but I had not courage for it, and could not bear the idea of turning looks towards me when we had been occupied with the Lord. At any rate, I felt the need of pouring out my heart just a little, and saying thus to you a word of

affection and of thankfulness. I suppose, dear and much loved brethren, that with more faith, and thus more knowledge of the will of God, one would have done more for His glory, and for the manifestation of life and the power of His grace in the assembly of His children, for His glory in the church. Notwithstanding, I do not doubt, on the contrary I see, and praise God for it, that He has acted in the midst of us, and that it was His work, and I am astonished sometimes at His grace and goodness. Alas, with more faith, one would have much more still of His glory; but if we think of what we are, we shall bless God from the abundance of our hearts every hour, that He intervenes—and those who are working, so much more than the rest, because they know with what vessels of clay the work is done, and all the shortcomings of their own hearts. At all events, dear friends, as I have said to you, I have the sweet consciousness of having only sought your welfare; and now let me urge on you to seek union among yourselves, and to attach yourselves to one another, seeking the presence of God, which makes the strength of His own; that will be (be well assured of it) your strength and the means of His glory. Do not forsake your holy assemblings; profit by that which God gives, while seeking His presence more than any other thing. For my part, I believe that there is something yet to be gained with regard to the assembly. The principles which I believe to be the truth in our present position having been laid down, I believe that we shall have to seek more union, and more being together, and it is to this I shall apply myself, if God permit me to see you again, as I much hope, and that before long; for to tell you the truth, I am astonished to find to what a degree I am a stranger here, and the distance from Lausanne, instead

of separating me in heart, has made me feel how much I was bound to you all. I believe fully that my journey was according to God's will, and thus I am convinced that it will be in blessing to you all, as to myself. It is a very sweet thing to feel oneself conducted by His good hand. I am trying also to get rid of the feeling of being a stranger here, while at the same time being content to feel myself a stranger everywhere. My stay upon the Continent has been blessed to me in every respect, and that one among others. Thanks be to God, the affection of the brethren is stronger than ever, also they have prayed much for the work in Switzerland and in France.

In general, the work here has extended greatly, but it seems to me, from the little I have seen, that in the following out of that, the links need to be made firmer. There are places where blessing continues and increases; some, where the enemy has sought to make ravages, but God, I believe, has turned his efforts to good, although the circumstances were humiliating for all, for hitherto the hand of God has been in a remarkable manner with the brethren. Let Him be blessed for it, and may they also be kept in humility; without that assuredly He will resist them to their face. I hope, dear brethren, if I come back to Lausanne, according to my thought, by the goodness of God, to apply myself more to making fast the links between brethren individually, and to be myself more amongst them. I have sought it when I was habitually in the town, for latterly I was often absent, but I was not yet content, and I will try to make arrangements so as to be able to meet more often among ourselves. I believe that will be the means of strengthening love, of making us all grow, even in knowledge, and of giving more strength and

unity for the glory of Christ, Meanwhile, I do not doubt, dear brethren, that God, will bless you. Seek to tighten the links of charity among yourselves; without making any great external appearance, but in simplicity, attach yourselves to each other, while seeking one sole end, the welfare of all—the being together, staying yourselves on God, and in the seriousness which His presence gives. His presence always gives humility; one is more firm, but self is annihilated when one is before Him.

I beg you to think much of the younger brethren and those less confirmed in the faith, and to surround them with your care and your affection, it is just they who have need of it. I have several upon my heart, but I leave it to your charity to think of them. God adds His blessing when one acts in charity, and that is not only the simple effect of our cares, but He is Himself in the power of His blessing and feeblest hearts are established. I am sure that my absence will be for blessing to you. I have full confidence of it before God in looking to Him. Adieu, dear brethren. Be united, walk in love and unity more than ever, as we have sought to do it in our feebleness, and God will establish you, and add to you still more. Do not think that I attach much importance to myself in venturing thus to give you all these counsels, or rather exhortations, but I desire your welfare, and the glory of the Lord Jesus, because in my feebleness I love you much.

Keceive this at least, as a testimony of my affection. I thank you much, dear brethren, for all that I met amongst you. I am very sensible of it. I salute each one in particular, whilst in my memory passing you all again before me, and ask much your prayers for all the church. May God bless you, in keeping you in the way in which

the Spirit leads those who belong to Christ, in unity and in light, and may it be given to each one to seek to perfect his sanctification in the fear of the Lord.

My heart is with you, dear brethren.

Your affectionate brother

And servant in Christ.

[1843.]

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[From the French.

Very dear Sister,—I believe God has given me more power than ever in my ministry, blessed be His name; indeed, I am very thankful for it. I hope, at the same time, that this has made me more humble than before; no doubt I had need of it, but I have felt myself so unworthy of this grace, and so humbled by the goodness and affection of the brethren that surround me, that whilst being impelled to work, I wished the rather to hide myself somewhere. Oh, how I desire that all the brethren should be emboldened by grace to bear witness to the grace and power of Christ according to its efficacy in those who bear it. And why not? However, there are several who in fact are more blessed than I, so that I believe sometimes there must be some fault in me that puts me forward, whilst others draw souls to God. God knows that I have not the desire for it. May God bless these brothers ever more; but what need the kingdom of God has of workmen who apply Christ to souls by the word, and give them the rest that they need, even amongst the children of God! It is quite possible that I leave England this week, I think of doing so… I have done what I desired in my heart to do before

leaving. Something may always retard us more than we think, but I have nothing now on hand to hinder me… May God in His goodness ever strengthen the bonds of Christ between His dear children… Your affectionate brother in Christ.

London, 1841.

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To the same.]

[From the French.

Beloved Sisters,—Here I am at last at Montpellier, not knowing how long I ought to stay here. Outwardly there is not much to make me remain. However, I believe that God has something in His mind, and though I shall go after a little into the Gard, I do not think of leaving Montpellier altogether. God, I trust, will lead me. I have all confidence in Him, who governs according to His thoughts of grace, and not according to those of man.

But in writing to you, it is rather you, your sister, and your family that I think of, for cold and undemonstrative as I am, you cannot think that after so much kindness and care that you have lavished upon me, I could be indifferent to what concerns you. I was deeply touched by the news, received through——, of the death of your poor nephew. I was ready to complain of you for having told me nothing about it, but that I had regard to the affliction that a blow so felt must have produced. But I venture to assure you of all my sympathy. I know that it is the Lord alone who can really comfort when He strikes us, and the source of our consolation is precisely the feeling that it is He Himself who so loved us, who strikes us, for that which comes from His hand can only

be perfect. We shall not know how to explain it; the heart suffers by it; but it is our Father that has given the cup to drink; that was the only, and it was perfect, consolation of Jesus. One recognises the hand of one who is known; we do not stop at the circumstances that appear to us mysterious, we refer in them to Him, and all is changed; the heart is softened by it, does not wish it to be otherwise, but the will is not in rebellion, and we are comforted near Him, feeling more than ever that He is our all. What a precious lesson, what a glorious position! God alone could have placed us there. Until we are there, the flesh will stir: we must not be surprised at it: and then all will be dark, because we see everything after our own hearts, and light is not in man; but if the life of Christ is in us, we shall see that there is sin in it; it will be exposed; we shall feel that we had need to be smitten; submission will come; we leave ourselves before God. “I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.” Then peace will soon be there. If the soul is already subject, then nothing separates us from His love; and confidence in this love gives us an unruffled peace.

Dear sisters, I can weep with you and the family of your poor dear C. like the Jews with Mary, but I know that He who loves him can sustain your souls. I have confidence in Him with regard to you… I trust this painful blow will be a blessing. Be assured also yourselves of my entire sympathy. I feel that this will operate in a different manner with each of you, but our precious Saviour will do His own work in each of His own. From what I saw three months ago, I thought that—— might be discouraged and cast down by this affliction. If it be so, let her remember that His ways are not as our ways, and

that the heart of Jesus, of Him who smites us, has itself passed through all the trials through which He makes us pass; that He cannot make us taste anything for our good without having drunk Himself all its bitterness to the dregs. He knows what He is doing; He suffers all that He inflicts. It is His love, His knowledge of all that makes Him do all that He does. Let us have full confidence in Him who has been tempted in all things like unto us. Do not impose on yourself the task of replying to me. I think of seeing you before very long. There is an English brother who lost his wife nearly a year ago, who will be with me.

Your very affectionate brother.

Montpellier, March 15th, 1844.

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Section 3

[From the French.

Dear Brother,—I received your letter, and I thank you for it. I found it here on my return from a round I have just been making, with blessing to my soul.

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

to circumstances, you are mistaken; and I think, dear brother, if you reflect upon it before God, you will not be slow to recognise that it is not more pleasing to God either.

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

I have seen the flesh intermingle itself with principles that I find in the word; in the walk of individuals who profess these principles, I have deplored the manifestation of the flesh, but I have not disavowed the principles. I have also seen poor brothers, who embraced them, act in haste, driven to despair by the behaviour of those who ought to have known things, and who should have been guides. I am not speaking particularly of V. I have seen these brothers falsify and

throw these principles into discord, sometimes, with other truths that I myself cherished greatly; but do you think that the course of the others commended itself to my heart and to my judgment more than that of the poor brothers who perhaps lost their way in some respects in the details?

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

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

I do not believe that Dissent is according to the word of God. The more I have read the word of God, the more the thing has been discussed, the more profoundly I

have been convinced of it. If those who leave it, in pursuance of convictions founded upon the word of God, have not behaved well in the detail of their separation, one ought to warn them of it, as of the work of the flesh. My conscience does not reproach me with having failed therein, when occasion required it, and christian fidelity.

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

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

step toward falling back into what one had pruned off by reason of the light being too strong for these things to subsist in it.

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

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

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

Your very affectionate brother.

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

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[From the French.

Very dear Sister,—I hear that some of the sisters have had dreams about the coming of Jesus. This has given me some uneasiness, for although absent in body, I am with you in spirit, desiring and seeking the good of all of you, the dear redeemed ones of our precious Saviour. It is by the word of God, our rule and our light in these last days, that we must abide. I do not pretend to say that God may not give warning by a dream, for he word of God says that He can do so; but we must be much upon our guard.. We have no need of a dream with respect to matters clearly revealed by God.

There is danger of the imagination being exalted, of our thinking ourselves something extraordinary, and of the simple word not having its true importance. Satan is exceedingly busy just now, in disturbing and troubling souls, and in alluring us by his wiles from the place of repose, where it is of all importance that we should be in these days. The apostle alludes to this in 2 Thessalonians 2, where the enemy sought to divert them

from their quiet looking for the Saviour, whose coming had been promised them in the scriptures, and by the testimony of the Spirit, already given.

Satan desired to trouble them by Borne means, and the apostle shews that signs and wonders are generally found on the enemy's side. He would have already succeeded for the moment if he could divert them from a scriptural expectation. "But of the times and the seasons, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them… But ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." You are of the day. That is the position of the Christian. He is.peacefully already of the day. He needs neither signs, nor wonders, nor dreams. He has the word. He ought to possess his soul in patience, humbly keeping his place. You will generally find that sisters are the ones who have seen these things, and I have not, moreover, noticed that this has drawn them, or others, nearer to God. God can use sisters, and often honour them greatly in their service, but it is well that this should be in much quietness and modesty of spirit; lest the enemy, who ever seeks, and seeks more than ever now, to trouble and mislead the souls of believers—lest, I say, he should take occasion from the weakness of the vessel—weakness which demands honour from us, but which, on the part of the sisters themselves, requires patience and quietness. So I beg these sisters to weigh these things well, and not to allow themselves readily to put faith in these dreams, as if they came from God. Let them not allow themselves to be carried away by their imagination, lest they should

fall into the snare of the enemy, and lest he should take advantage of this to shake the faith of some.

We are in times when the enemy tries to surprise us; the word is the great thing for us, and our strength. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation. Thou hast a little strength … hold that fast which thou hast… I come quickly;” this is the direction for our days. May God keep you all, beloved, in His holy keeping. Walk humbly, close to Him, and He will not fail you. My heart is with you; my prayers rise to God for you; and if times are difficult, they are times which keep the children of-God more occupied than ever. If we walk as those who have but a little strength, He will set before us an open door, which no man shall shut. Let us be content with small things, and we shall have all the blessing of the Lord. And do you, dear sister, keep near the Lord, and walk humbly and quietly, with thanksgiving, leaning upon Him. The times are evil, but the Lord is faithful. rejoice in Him.

March 5th, 1845.

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[From the French.

* * * I have lately read Numbers and the Epistle to the Philippians with edification. The setting up of the rod of Aaron, priest in grace, while in authority still, after all the murmurings of the congregation; its use, although this was by Moses; the want of its use on the occasion of fresh complaints of the congregation; all this has singularly instructed me. At the same time, when God has judged and disciplined the people, the way in which He immediately speaks (chap, 15.) of all His promises

and of the land being theirs, as having been given them by Him, touched me very much. His promise and His thoughts for His people are as firm as if nothing had happened. The responsibility, and the food of the priests, as such, and of their families, as families, and the points of difference, I also found very instructive.

What struck me in the Epistle to the Philippians, is the way in which the apostle has his death continually before his eyes; then that the trials he had endured had acted as a wholesome discipline, causing Christ to be everything for him, and himself to be nothing. And what peace that gives! He knows not if he is to be condemned. For himself, the decision of the magistrates does not enter into his thoughts; for himself, he knows not what to choose; but for the church it is good that he should remain: it is decided then. He judges his case by the sole consideration that such a decision will be for the good of the church, and thus Christ will have it decided. Is it thus that we trust in Him, dear brother? Alas! no; at least too often we are not enough divested of ourselves; we cannot say with the apostle, “I have learned.” This is what we need to learn. Well, it is the life of this man, so faithful, so devoted, and so gifted by God, the life of the Apostle Paul, instructed and disciplined in this manner, and the perfect calm which he enjoys as the result of this discipline, which has lately edified me in reading this epistle.

Plymouth, April 19th, 1845.

* * * * *

Dearest——,—I thank you much for your note. My mind did pass through the same process of anxiety as that of which you speak, as far as anxiety went; a qualm

crossing my mind that some work of the enemy, more thorough than I knew how to judge of, was at the bottom. But I found the ground of acting on scripture my resource, and that I had nothing to do with any feeling. I had but to bring them all before God. The result has been, the avowal by N. in the presence of the brethren, of much more than any one charged him with, though I did not doubt it was so—of what no one would adopt, or at least avow with him, and has made those who were not partisans declare their thankfulness that I came down, and that it was fairly brought out. I trust he will yet disavow it, and that all will be peace. At any rate, I believe decided good has been done. My conscience is as clear as the day, as to having avoided the smallest act approaching to hostile or party feeling—quite the contrary. I admit, that in manner I might have been more calm, though quite so in conduct, indeed, I have been not only calm, but as happy as possible, and at large in ministering, for God has been very graciously with me, though it was all very painful. But when I had done what I had to do, my soul had no more to say to it than if there were nothing. We are not yet out of the wood, as I hope we may be, because Newton has not yet disavowed the purpose he avowed, but I trust it may come to this, and our relations be unhindered as before. As to me, I have no complaint, he had done nothing against me. Certain women of our company are, I believe, very angry; but I come across nothing, but go on my way, tranquilly seeking to minister as much blessing to all as I can.

The meetings on Wednesday evenings, when I have lectured, are at least doubled, and that gradually, so I hope there is blessing. I do not hesitate to say it was all

over with the brethren's meeting in unity, if that had gone on which was going on. I hope the common ground may yet be spared to us, but as I said, we are not out of the wood, and I do not holloa yet, but I trust the Lord, and am quite happy in confiding in Him. He has indeed already done more than I could ever have expected, arid why should I distrust Him? Peace be with you all. I do believe that real blessing will result, though I do not say that the neck of party spirit is entirely broken, nor grace reigning in all hearts, but I hope for it, for who can measure the love of Christ to His body? St. Paul judged his own trial and pronounced his own acquittal unhesitatingly, the moment he sees it was for the good of the church.

Yours affectionately.

Plymouth, April 21st, 1845.

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[From the French.

Dear Sister,—How all these things have grieved me! This you will readily understand without my telling you so. I will not leave your letter unanswered, although I have not much to tell you, owing to the distance and the few facts that I am in possession of. Alas! I expected this trial when I left Lausanne. I said so, without going into details, to the brothers who came to induce me to stay, and this was what tried me much more when leaving than the thought of the troubles which are always the glory of God's children, and which strengthen them where there is faith. I was hoping all had passed over without a storm; and here is something new to bring to God, and to put faith into practice by trusting to Him. This is what gives me joy, however much I may be tried,

and this is not a moment when circumstances smile upon me. But that only increases my confidence in God.

One thing that strikes me is, that the persons you name are precisely the ones who had difficulty in following the path at all times, who always hesitated in the path. I only speak from your letter. Mr. G. said nothing to me about it. He communicated to me the letter that the brethren wrote to Mr. F. O. I had written so far when I received a letter from ——, who relates to me a stormy meeting which took place since. You will be surprised to know that I am quite encouraged and made happy in my soul. I am so fully convinced, while owning all my wretchedness, that I have laboured sincerely for the Lord, and for Him only, that I feel the matter is so entirely His own and in His hands, that it has inspired me with full confidence. I am happier and more confident than before receiving ——'s letter. You will be surprised at this, and I am so myself, although I should not be; it is not reasoning upon it, but the sight and encouragement of God; I feel the whole matter is His. It is quite astonishing how joy and confidence fill my heart, so strongly do I feel the affair to be His. I am happy. I do not judge by the circumstances; perhaps there has been a want of discernment, of rectitude of mind, of humility, this would be sad, but faith will be blessed, and those that walk with God, God will walk with them. This sifting was doubtless needed. I attribute to myself for the most part the necessity of it… God knows, but what is most amiable if it is not faith, could not be blessed.

The circumstances are so changed since your letter left Lausanne, that what I might say would perhaps no longer be applicable. But this is what I say; the walk of faith will be blessed, whatever is not will not. Perhaps

there has been a little precipitation at Geneva, although there are some brothers who think they have remained too long, but here there is no question of that. The expectation of such a trial was what exercised me most with regard to Lausanne when I left there. I think I have said so already, but it was necessary in order that one should be placed in the pure atmosphere of divinely given faith, and that one should be happy to be there. The conscience will be at work, and God will bless His own. He turns all into good for them that love Him. That is my thought. I bless God with all my heart and spirit. Perhaps you will think it is because I am at ease that I take the thing so quietly. Inwardly I am, but outwardly I have had exercises of faith more painful even than at Lausanne. But God shews Himself in them. He makes His own feel that His support is worth all the trouble in the world; I am sure of it, and the sufferings, light as they are, do not dim the crown. If we are faithful, we shall relate our days of trial afterwards with surprise at the faithfulness of God and our small faith, even in our best moments. Salute the brethren. I shall probably get some news from them; they shall hear from me when I have something to communicate to them which testifies of the presence of the hand and power of God for us, which can fortify them. Grace and peace be with you….

Your brother and servant in the faith.

Plymouth, September 24th, 1845.

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Dear ——,—You have this account already, but it is so short I send it, still all for private reading. I could have sent you other parts, but I extract for everybody—it is only private sentiments I have not, but which would be

very interesting in private. After acknowledging the receipt of what was sent, and thanking the brethren, in substance saying he had all and abounded, &c.

5“The tribulation is not at its close; last Sunday we had a formidable riot on our meeting in your apartment. The meeting passed in perfect joy; it was very numerously attended, scarce any one was wanting. A furious crowd was before the house, but this time the police, who were on foot, hindered them from attacking us, and protected us going out. After that, the people would have taken possession of the house, but the conservatoirs restrained them, and the gendarmes, who returned, succeeded in dissipating the tumult at past twelve o’clock. Since then our sisters M. have been guarded by the Lord, and nothing has happened to them.

“Already, Friday, the transport of the benches by J. O. caused a real riot, of which J. supported the brunt without accident. They seized some benches from him, which they broke. I do not know if I told you that one Sunday morning the band entered my house also, penetrating close to my rooms where we were, several persons, and the Lord stopped them there. The brethren and sisters are generally happy. We go this morning to your room: the Lord knows what will come of it; in every case we are in His hands…. The persecution seems to arrive at a crisis. Thanks be to God, who has saved us through Jesus Christ our Lord. How sweet to think that our brethren, and above all, Jesus prays for us. Adieu.”

“Since my last letter, the Lord has permitted that we should pass tranquilly through sufficiently evil days. Our Sunday meetings had become for parties, the perspective of an engagement. The conservateurs

pressed us to meet all together, and in case of need they would shew themselves and restrain the populace. From the moment that we became the occasion that parties seized to come to an engagement which might become a revolution, it seemed to me that our assembly was no longer simply a testimony, but a political affair, which we ought to avoid: the brethren were of the same judgment. The government were very uneasy, and we received overtures from members of the Great Council, who offered to ask for us from the Council of State, the German church in the Mercerie, with the proviso of having us protected there… I represented that in going there, we departed from the path of testimony, which offended the people, but was agreeable to the Lord—that this would be made use of throughout the Canton, to make our brethren go into the churches, and that our place was not to be protected but persecuted: the brethren were of this mind.

"The next day the Council of State had us requested through B. (its president), not to have our meeting all together at 22 St. Pierre [the house I lived in, where the riot was], in order not to expose the town to troubles whose issue could not be foreseen. This seemed to us a very simple direction (indice), and we agreed to disseminate ourselves on Sunday in small meetings—we had eleven in the course of the day. All were very tranquil. The Great Council is to be occupied to-morrow with the petitions relative to religious liberty. This question occupied it already Tuesday. The government seeks, in order to flatter the passions of the populace, to adopt a measure which deprives us of liberty, saving appearances as much as possible. It has shewn itself so illiberal, that the most radical of the Great Council (the

government is the extreme radical) have expressed their surprise at it. I do not expect to see religious liberty granted to the children of God in this country. It is very sweet to know that that will happen as to it which our own Lord shall see good for the exercise of our faith. Men are occupied about us without consulting God; and the Lord when He is pleased to act for His children, defeats the designs of men. His counsels will be found to be very firmness itself. We are happy to be in His hands, and to have for our path Himself—not a path which men may make; though they may become the means of our trial, they cannot decide what is to happen to us.

“It is not probable that we can meet next Sunday all together. The government would not be sorry to have an occasion which would justify the measure it desires. People’s minds are in a great fermentation. The Conservatives desire to stop this torrent of passions and violence which threatens everything with subversion. In case of a serious tumult, our meetings would be the spark which would set fire to the powder. We desire to rest strangers to all political conflict, and for that reason we prefer to break ourselves up into small portions while things are in this state. If there had been no danger to run but that of seeing our meetings assailed and our persons illtreated, the brethren were all encouraged to persevere. The Lord has sustained and encouraged and fortified us. He has made us find in the trial great subjects of joy and thanksgiving. The testimony has had blessed fruit. Hesitating souls have been established, and thus have joined us. The brethren are happy, and we see that Christ is precious to us in proportion as men reject us. Adieu, very dear brother; the brethren and sisters salute you. Not being able to

write you word to-morrow what the Great Council shall have done as to religious liberty, if in any case some result is arrived at, I shall only write next week if the Lord permit.

“The grace of the Lord be multiplied to you.

“Your very affectionate,

“G.”

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Somerton, May 27th, 1845.

Beloved Brother,—I answer, of course, your letter without delay. You probably do not know that Mr. Harris has declined further ministry here (though he has not left communion) and proposes to leave the place, and this on two points out of three on which I have acted; he is ignorant of the third. This, of course, modifies naturally the surprise which my step might occasion, though it is neither reason nor justification; but it is so far a proof that there was nothing hasty, and that there were serious grounds for it.

I now proceed to tell you why I did so. I felt that God was practically displaced, and so I told them, and then stated the three following points: the subverting the principles on which we meet—this, I think I may say, is not denied now by any (unless the doers of it on principle); at least, it is admitted that brethren (teachers) were intentionally kept away, and Soltau urges Mr. Harris to stay and resume his place, in order to help him to resist. Some say that they were only tendencies, and not a purpose, but the fact is not denied. I cannot here enter into all the facts, but I am perfectly convinced there were purpose, doctrine, and fact; and

you have no idea of the extent to which it had gone. It was, to my mind, as bad as bad could be in other aspects. Secondly, there was actual evil and unrighteousness unconfessed and unjudged: this Harris does not enter upon. And that thirdly, a meeting which has worked in the guidance of the details of the body and service of the saints, has been not only set aside, but refused to be reinstated. This last was what finally decided Harris before his return here to decline further ministry. I had proposed publicly, as he had laboured in private (and I had also spoken of it) at the re-establishment of this meeting; and the rejection of it occasioned a stay of all moral discipline, unless on the summary judgment of two or three who took it on themselves. This deprived of remedy, for the existence of evil would not in itself be a reason for leaving, but evil unjudged and really sanctioned would, when it could not be remedied. I have only to add, that I have felt the unclouded approbation of God since I have done it. I had not before an idea of the mass of evil, and how many knew it. Yet I believe the great body wholly ignorant of it, and so I stated when I announced my withdrawal. But they almost all felt that there was something which had destroyed spirituality and love. In my judgment it was very bad indeed. I waited eight or nine months before I did this, and till every step was taken to remedy the evil; and I should have felt the Lord against me had I waited longer. I believe it has done very much good; the conscience of a vast number has been awakened, evil acknowledged by some who were' immersed in it fast, I believe, with evil intention, and I hope more blessing may thus come from above. When I say it, I believe the withdrawal of Harris from ministering had as much, and perhaps more effect, than my withdrawal from

communion, from his having been much more here latterly, and the only one who visited, and whom the poor really knew and loved. All the poor, I think I may say, have felt the evil. I told them that I did it with unmingled grief and sorrow, and only wished it might be remedied; that I loved all and valued many very much, that I believed the great body quite innocent of it, but that there was one Table and one bread, and they were all responsible, and that my feeling was that—as evil was not remedied—I could not identify myself with evil that I knew.

It seemed to me you acted quite wisely, having no information as to the sister coming here. I trust the Lord may restore you all, and it is all I desire for this gathering too. I thank you, dear brother, very much for you prayers, and feel that I need them, as I trust you may be enabled to continue them. It has been, I need not say, a time of great trial to me. Still, I have felt the Lord with me, and have been with Him, however feeble; and I am quite in peace since I left the gat Wing. Already many have separated between good and evil, and graciously; up to this, people had gone away, or held their tongues hopeless.

Kind love to all the saints. Very affectionately yours, dear brother, and praying God that light and peace and strength may be with you and all His beloved ones.

I have no desire but that all should be restored in peace here, and it would be much greater joy to return than even to have cleared my conscience in leaving; I wait upon the Lord, and in the enjoyment of the light of His countenance about it. I have avoided everything which would have the appearance of party or lead to it. I do

not believe even that the enemy has ventured to charge me with it. I have no feeling of the land— God forbid I should. You are not aware that many brethren elsewhere feel as strongly, or more so than I do about it. I do not pretend to say they would therefore necessarily [have] taken the same method, but of that I have no regret. I may just add, that I have refrained from breaking bread apart, though many have stayed away, hoping they may come through grace to set all right.

Plymouth, November 12th, 1845.

* * * * *

* * * I write rather because of the importance of the point than for any immediate occasion of circumstances: I mean leaving an assembly, or setting up, as it is called, another table. I am not so afraid of it as some other brethren, but I must explain my reasons. If such or such a meeting were the church here, leaving it would be severing oneself from the assembly of God. But, though wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name He is in the midst, and the blessing and responsibility of the church is in a certain sense also, if any Christiana now set up to be the church, or did any formal act which pretended to it, I should leave them, as being a false pretension, and denying the very testimony to the state of ruin which God has called us to render. It would have ceased to be the table of the people and testimony of God, at least intelligently. It might be evil pretension or ignorance; it might call for patience if it was in ignorance, or for remedy, if that was possible: but such a pretension I believe false, and I could not abide in what is false. I think it of the last importance that this

pretension of any body should be kept down: I could not own it a moment, because it is not the truth.

But, then, on the other hand, united testimony to the truth is the greatest possible blessing from on high. And I think that if any one, through the flesh, separated from two or three walking godlily before God in the unity of the whole body of Christ, it would not merely be an act of schism, but he would necessarily deprive himself of the blessing of God's presence. It resolves itself, like all else, into a question of flesh and Spirit. If the Spirit of God is in and sanctions the body, he who leaves in the flesh deprives himself of the blessing, and sins. If, on the contrary, the Spirit of God does not sanction the body, he who leaves it will get into the power and liberty of the Spirit by following Him. That is the real way to look at it. There may be evil, and yet the Spirit of God sanction the body (not, of course, its then state), or at least act with the body in putting it away. But if the Spirit of God, by any faithful person, moves in this, and the evil is not put away, but persisted in; is the Spirit of God with those who continue in the evil, or with him who will not? Or is the doctrine of the unity of the body to be made a cover for evil? That is precisely the delusion of Satan in Popery, and the worst form of evil under the sun. If the matter, instead of being brought to the conscience of the body is maintained by the authority of a few, and the body of believers despised, it is the additional concomitant evil of the clergy, which is the element also of Popery. Now, I believe myself, the elements of this have been distinctly brought out at Plymouth; and I cannot stay in, evil to preserve unity. I do not want unity in evil, but separation from it. God's unity is always founded on separation, since sin came into the world.

“Get thee out,” is the first word of God’s call: it is to Himself. If one get out alone, it may require more faith, but that is all; one will be with Him, and that, dear brother, is what I care most about, though overjoyed to be with my brethren on that ground. I do not say that some more spiritual person might not have done more or better than I: God must judge of that. I am sure I am a poor creature; but at all cost I must walk with God for myself…

Suppose clericalism so strong that the conscience of the body does not act at all, even when appealed to, is a simple saint who has perhaps no influence to set anything right, because of this very evil, therefore to stay with it? What resource has he? I suppose another case. Evil goes on, fleshly pretensions, a low state of things on all sides. Some get hold of a particular evil which galls their flesh, and they leave. Do you think that the plea of unity will heal? Never. All are in the wrong. Now this often happens. Now the Lord in these cases is always over all. He chastens what was not of Him by such a separation, and shews the flesh in detail even where, in the main, His name was sought. If the seceders act in the flesh, they will not find blessing. God governs in these things, and will own righteousness where it is, if only in certain points. They would not prosper if it were so; but they might remain a shame and sorrow to those they left. If it be merely pride of flesh, it will soon come to nothing. “There must needs be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest.” If occasion has been given in any way, the Lord, because He loves, will not let go till the evil be purged out. If I do not act with Him, He will (and I should thank Him for it) put me down in the matter too.

He loves the church, and has all power in heaven and earth, and never lets slip the reins.

I have not broken bread, nor should do it, till the last extremity: and if I did, it would be in the fullest, openest testimony, that I did not own the others then to be the table of the Lord at all. I should think worse of them than of sectarian bodies, because having more pretension to light. “Now ye say we see.” But I should not (God forbid!) cease to pray continually, and so much the more earnestly, for them, that they might prosper through the fulness of the grace that is in Christ for them…

[1845.]

* * * * *

Dearest Brother,—I take up my pen at last to answer your letter. As to the facts connecting themselves with scripture I had no difficulty as to myself, the difficulty was as to demonstration to others. In the first place, Mr. Newton’s statement in April was to have union in. testimony here, against the teaching of the other brethren, and that he trusted to have at least Devon and Somerset under his influence for the purpose. And this was done most assiduously and perseveringly, so that at last in some places, they had to tell Mr. N. they would bear it no longer; but the saints here had no present proof of this. No person who moved in the sphere of the teachers but knew that they were by calumnies, reproaches, and letters, keeping away other brethren. Nor do those that are honest now deny it. But the body of the brethren here had not seen these letters, and in the (what I must call) audacious state of conscience the leaders were in, I should have been challenged to

produce them. Here their case broke down in April, because McA. had seen them and put them to silence. Each Sunday was as regularly N. and H. as in the establishment, and everybody knew it: there was no arrangement written—nothing to be proved. A poor man gave out a hymn, no one would raise it: whose fault was that? At length the facts were not denied, but they were said to be accidents; though N. had told me at the Bristol meeting that his principles were changed, and B. had been reasoning with me on the ground of it, and declaring the brethren elsewhere who sought to serve the saints cyphers, and five cyphers never could make one unless they were regularly recognised. The persons in authority had been named by Mr. N. here as those he recognised and none else. The Friday meeting had been broken up, and Mr. S., owning there ought to be one, said he could not move in it because Mr. N. would have only those he chose, and it would produce a rupture with him. It had been openly taught by N. and B. that the Lord did not now use poor uneducated men, as those He chose before His resurrection, but after that, such as Paul, Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Whitfield, and myself now. It came to such a point, preventing people speaking in the room, that S. called it jockey-ship; now I confess to you in what professes to be a meeting where the blessed God is, I do not like going on with jockeyship. But what could be proved here? Some one got up too quick, that was all—and perhaps did it in a case where the majority would go with him as to the effect, keeping down some speaker they did not like; and in the particular case the sisters had already tried to silence him by making a noise with their feet. The Holy Ghost was totally disowned, the body of the poor miserable, and utterly despised and rejected. But I did

not leave for all this. It was when all remedy for this was rejected with scorn, that I then said I could not stay. Every attempt by ——, ——, etc., and others to investigate the evil before the brethren has been rejected. You may well suppose the difficulty of dealing with facts before the body, that it was constantly denied in toto, in the face of a settled arrangement (not in words but in fact) to speak alternate Sundays, that anybody was hindered—and at least three cases of prevention by the authority of Mr. N. and those he employed. And as to those without, when S. pressed their having kept away Bellett, and that he felt they had sinned, Mr. N. said—on his asking could he acquiesce in his coming now—he thought he could, because all were sufficiently made up now to resist his teaching. But on the avowed principle of clericalism it was peremptorily refused to let the brethren judge anything about the matter.

If scripture warrants me to separate, from the worst evil as to corporate action I ever met, then I am sanctioned in separating from this. If the unity of the Church is to be the sanction of evil, we are landed in Rome at once. It was taught (not here) that in reference to the noble Bereans, that was Jews searching the Jewish scriptures, and that now God had raised up gifts and teaching, it was quite otherwise. Besides, there are things that sicken one, which you cannot say much about. I never, in all my experience in and out of the church, really met so little truth and straightforwardness; and nothing could be proved which had been said and done twenty times over, unless you had witnesses by, and then others were ready to say it was something else. I would not have stayed in it, my dear——, if I were to walk alone and

have no church at all to the end of my days. But God has ordered it otherwise, and given exceeding peace and quietness to those who have through grace delivered their souls from it. I have no doubt a direct power and delusion of the enemy was there, from which we have been rescued by the Lord's goodness, and are in the blessing and liberty of the Spirit of God, though poor and feeble. The visit of the brethren has, I think, to any heedful mind, left no doubt as to the standing of Ebrington Street. Romans 16:17, is just what I acted upon, on coming to Plymouth. The denouncing of godly brethren as subverting the gospel, by letters sent to India, Canada, Ireland, and everywhere, and. hindering any teachers not ready to receive N.'s views coming here as far as they could, and making a focus of Plymouth, was causing divisions. And it was just—though I shrank from using such a hard word—3 John 9, 10 that was precisely going on at Plymouth. No calumny was too bad to cast on the most godly brethren, to discredit them and hinder their coming here. I dare say if I had apostolic power I might have acted more efficiently, but I have not a regret or a cloud on my mind as to my path being where I was, save that I might have left in April. The Lord never roused the conscience of the body till I left.

But I close: I am most sorry to rake up what this letter does (as I have only mentioned things just as they occurred to me to satisfy your mind) without trying to make out all: for many to me most material things I have not mentioned as to facts and evil—but sorry, because the truth is we, who are come out, have our minds with the happy testimony of the Holy Ghost, completely clear of all this, do not ever think of it, and have no need to

think of it any more. This has been one of the happy features, the subdued, happy, gracious spirit of those who have left; we are in another world as to our minds.

Affectionately yours, dear brother.

Poor dear Mrs. N. is very ill—I suppose dying off, but peaceful. But there is nothing now to distress her. She is now quite peaceful, I hear.

Plymouth, January 20th, 1846.

* * * * *

[From the French.

My very dear Sisters,—I have been much touched by your kindness in reminding me of your christian affection. It seems to me, in fact, incredible that four months have rolled away since I wrote to Lausanne. It is true that I have not replied to M. G. since the month of November, that is to say, I have a letter from him of that date, to which I have not replied. But the time passes so quickly that I do not doubt it, for in fact I have been very desirous myself for news of you, though there has been such a considerable lapse of time. However, I have a confidence in God that keeps me in peace, even when long silence gives me the desire to have news of the brethren. As for my health, to dispose of it as quickly as possible, the Lord gives me the strength that seems good to Him; more than that would not be well. The troubles of this year have worn me a little; moreover, one is worn year by year if it pleases God, though His longsuffering is still salvation; may the time roll on still more quickly—my desires are fixed on the land of rest, this precious rest of God. My heart opens yet more to the thought of the glory, and of the rest that Christ is

preparing for us, and I sigh for the moment, and with all my heart; my heart and my joy are there. The circumstances I have had to pass through, I believe have made my soul more ripe, at least, I hope so, for the joys that are with Christ, have bound me more and more sensibly to Him, and to all that has to do with Him—that is found in Him. All this (though I am very feeble) is better known to me, more felt. I am more cut off, more for Him; it is not that I am deceived as if the flesh and the conflict were no longer for me. I know well it is not so. But my life is more hidden with Christ in God. As to my spirit, my abode is more there, and it is worth while, dear friends. However, I am a poor, miserable, sorry creature. I know it well. But in the measure in which I accompany soul after soul to the gate of heaven, I begin to think that it is almost time I should go in there. I wait. I belong to Him, who has truly the right to dispose of me and of all these things. Till then I work as a hireling that accomplishes his day, and alas, I am but a very bad workman, not worthy to be called such—still, happy to be one.

You must not think, dear sisters, that the circumstances have discouraged or depressed me before God. They have been painful, but not more so than I expected when I left Lausanne, in many respects less. I believe that more faith, less regard for the feelings of the brethren, would have greatly shortened my work. But I trust that He who searches the hearts will find there at least the intention of charity. I warned them of it when I was here three years ago. But God does His work, and I never more felt His faithfulness, and His great goodness. Never has my faith been more encouraged. Never have I felt more sensibly that God was acting, and that I could

count on Him. In looking back, I am struck with all His grace. The sifting is severe, but it is a sifting of love. Since I acted decidedly, my peace and my joy are very great, as well as of all those who have done the same. Consciences have need, as well as the heart of the spiritual man has need, to be awakened; and that has been done. Never have I enjoyed so much communion in worship, and of the presence of God. Oh, how true it is that our Bock is faithful, and that He is near to us, to those who call upon Him with faith.

As to the desire, dear sisters, that you express to see me again, I bless God for it. I need not tell you that I share it; it is what the Holy Spirit always produces. However, I think only of owning how God has been with you, and how He has blessed you. Think what a comfort for me to know that God was keeping you faithful to Him, and in patience, whilst I was being tried here. I hope truly that it will have been a moment much blessed for you all, and that you have learnt to lean more than ever upon His faithfulness. I have the thought of making a run to the south of France, if God permit, this year, spring or autumn. I do not propose anything definitely for Switzerland, not knowing what will be the state of things, or if christian work will not be impossible, or that my presence will but stir up for you the unpleasantness, but I leave all this to the future that God will shew us. It seems that God would that the waves should be calmed a little. I await His will. My affections are as strong as ever for Switzerland, at least, for the work of God in that dear country. I write in haste. For the rest, it is for my brethren down here in great measure that I dispose of the few moments that are at my disposal in a work that I pursue for them; it is this that has hindered me greatly

from writing. Peace be to you in all things, dear sisters. You will have received news that crossed your letters. I would write to some of the sisters in particular, according to the time I should have for that. They must pardon me, if this is a little delayed, and receive for yourselves, dear sisters, my many thanks for having thought of your poor brother, and in commending you with all my heart to Him and His grace, the assurance of my cordial affection in Him, and may the hope of glory be very present to you and refresh you.

Your very affectionate brother.

Plymouth, 22nd, 1846.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—I was glad to get something from you, and glad to get this letter. In reply to it I can only say, without answering for every expression in it, after running it over, instead of quarrelling with it as an objection, as to the general bearing and object of it, I believe that it is having departed from what has suggested itself to your mind which has been the weakness of the brethren. I believe that churches have been merged in the map of ecclesiastical popular hierarchism and lost; but I believe that the visible church, as you call it, has been merged there too. Still there is a difference, because churches were the administrative form, while the church as a body on earth was the vital unity.

What I felt from the beginning, and began with, was this: the Holy Ghost remains, and therefore, the essential principle of unity with His presence for (the fact we are now concerned in) wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the

midst of them. When this is really sought, there will certainly be blessing by His presence. We have found it so, most sweetly and graciously, who have met separately here.

When there is an attempt at displaying the position and the unity, there will always be a mess and a failure. God will not take such a place with us. We must get into the place of His mind to get His strength; that is now, the failure of the church. But there He will be with us. I have always said this; I know it has troubled some-, even those I specially love; but I am sure it is the Lord's mind. I have said we are the witnesses of the weakness and low state of the church. We are not stronger nor better than the others, dissenters, &c; but we only own our bad and lost state, and therefore can find blessing. I do not limit what the blessed Spirit can do for us in this low estate, but I take the place where He can do it. Hence, government of bodies in an authorised way, I believe there is none; where this is assumed, there will be confusion. It was here; and it was constantly and openly said that this was to be a model, so that all in distant places might refer to it. My thorough conviction is that conscience was utterly gone, save in those who were utterly miserable.

I only therefore so far seek the original standing of the church, as to believe that wherever two or three are gathered in His name, Christ will be; and that the Spirit of God is necessarily the only source of power, and that what He does will be blessing through the Lordship of Christ. These provide for all times. If more be attempted now, it will be confusion only. The original condition is owned as a sinner, or mutilated man, owns integrity of conscience or a whole body. But there a most important

point comes in: I cannot supply the lack by human arrangement or wisdom: I mast be dependent. I should disown whatever was not of the Spirit, and in this sense disown whatever was—not short of the original standing, for that -in the complete sense I am, but—what man has done to fill it up; because this does not own the coming short, nor the Spirit of God. I would always own what is of God's Spirit in any. The rule seems to me here very simple.

I do not doubt that dispensed power is disorganised; but the Holy Ghost is always competent to act in the circumstances God's people are in. The secret is, not to pretend to get beyond it. Life, and divine power, is always there; and I use the members I have, with full confession that I am in an imperfect state. We must remember that the body must exist, though not in a united state; and so even locally. I can then, therefore, own their gifts and the like, and get my warrant in two or three united for blessing promised to that. Then if gifts exist, they cannot be exercised but as members of the body; because they are such, not by outward union, but by the vital power of the Head through the Holy Ghost. "Visible body," I suspect, misleads us a little. Clearly the corporate operation is in the actual living body down here on earth; but there it is the members must act, so that I do not think it makes a difficulty. I believe, if we were to act on 1 Corinthians xii., xiv., farther than power exists to verify it, we should make a mess. But then the existence of the body, whatever its scattered condition, necessarily continues, because it depends on the existence of the Head, and its union with it. In this the Holy Ghost is necessarily supreme.

The body exists in virtue of there being one Holy Ghost. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling. Indeed this is the very point which is denied here. Then Christ necessarily nourishes and cherishes us as His own flesh, as members of His body; and this goes on “till we all come,” &c. (Eph. 4.) Hence I apprehend we cannot deny the body and its unity, whatever its unfaithfulness and condition, and (so far as the Holy Ghost is owned) His operation in it, without denying the divine title of the Holy Ghost, and the care and headship of Christ over the church. Here I get, not a question of the church’s conduct, but of Christ’s, and the truth of the Holy Ghost being on earth, and His title when there, and yet owning of Christ’s Lordship. And this is how far I own others. If a minister has gifts in the Establishment, I own it as through the Spirit, Christ begetting the members of His body, or nourishing it. But I cannot go along with what it is mixed up with, because it is not of the body, nor of the Spirit. I cannot touch the unclean, I am to separate the precious from the vile. But I cannot give up Ephesians 4 while I own the faithfulness of Christ.

Now if we meet, yea, and when we do not meet, all I look for is that this principle should be owned, because it is owning the Holy Ghost Himself, and that to me is everything. We meet and worship; and at this time we who have separated meet in different rooms, that we may in the truest and simplest way, in our weakness, worship. Then whatever the Holy Ghost may give to any one, He is supreme to feed us with—perhaps nothing in the way of speaking; and it must be in the unity of the body. If you were here, you could be in the unity of the body, as one of ourselves. This Satan cannot destroy,

because it is connected with Christ's title and power. If men set up to imitate the administration of the body, it will be popery or dissent at once.

And this is what I see of the visibility of the body: it connects itself with this infinitely important principle, the presence and action of the Holy Ghost on earth. It is not merely a saved thing in the counsels of God, but a living thing animated down here by its union with the Head, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in it. It is a real actual thing the Holy Ghost acting down here. If two are faithful in this, they will be blessed in it. If they said, "We are the body," not owning all the members, in whatever condition, they would morally cease to be of it. I own them, but in nothing their condition. The principle is all-important.

Christ has attached therefore its practical operation to two or three, and owns them by His presence. He has provided for its maintenance. Thus in all states of ruin it cannot cease, till He cease to be the Head, and the Holy Spirit to be as the guide and the Comforter sent down.

God sanctioned the setting up of Saul; He never did, the departure from the Holy Ghost. The "two or three" take definitely the place of the temple, which was the locality of God's presence, as a principle of union. That is what makes all the difference. Hence, in the division of Israel, the righteous sought the temple as a point of unity, and David is to us here Christ by the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand church government, save as the Spirit is always power, cannot be acted on.

Let me hear from you, for this is of all importance at the present moment.

Ever, beloved brother, very affectionately.

Plymouth [Received], February 5th, 1846.

* * * * *

Dear Brother,—I thank you for your kind attention in sending me the paper. The form of it would induce me to decline any attention to it—an anonymous circular on such a subject seems to me an anomaly, and of very evil example in the church of God. But I feel bound further to say, that I feel obliged to decline any participation in it (I speak individually, I dare say many may join in it with a true heart) whatever.

You must be fully aware that the things you would confess, and others with whom you think it right to associate, would be entirely contrary to what I could judge right before God; the things that I may judge evil and the root of all this, you probably (indeed, there can be little doubt) would not confess at all; nor can I think there is in the actual state of things, any confession of what I judge to be evil before God, but quite the contrary. Thence I judge that to pretend to join in any common confession —and you must think the same— would be hypocrisy, and really awfully mocking God. I decline it therefore altogether; indeed, I think the whole thing an evil, though I am in full charity towards you, and I do not doubt many in many places will join in it sincerely, and be blessed. I have felt it more honest, and indeed bound to say to you openly what the Lord I believe leads me to by His grace. The plainer the better, I think, in the present state of things; but I remain Yours in sincere affection in Christ.

[About 1845.]

[From the French

Very dear Brother,—I was much pleased, I need not tell you, to receive your letter. I understand well that work prevents one from writing, and that those who labour much do not so much like writing either, but this only makes communications all the more pleasant when one does receive them. Blessed be God that you have been able to give good news; and always, when one can do so of one's work and of His grace, to say in fact that God is working recalls us to Him, and that is what always gives us joy.

Indeed the work has been remarkable at——, but God has been better than our thoughts; this is not surprising, but we ought at least to bless Him for it with all our hearts.

Now as to the questions of doctrine. If Christ is in our hearts and in our words, God uses, dear brother, very imperfect expressions to communicate blessing to souls; and He even uses erroneous expressions; nevertheless, they bring with them into the soul something imperfect or erroneous; also those who observe it are stumbled by it. I can say to an exercised soul that his salvation is finished, because I am only directing him, outside himself and the judgment which he exercises on an internal work of which he is incapable of judging, to Christ, whose perfect work is the simple object of faith. I could not say it to every one; this would be to interfere with the election of God, of which I know nothing: but I can say to all, that propitiation has been presented to God. They have but to look there, and going to God by that blood they will be received; they have nothing to wait for. They will not go unless the Father draw them,

but this is a matter of sovereign grace, with which I have nothing to do in my preaching—in my teaching, yes, but not in my address to unconverted souls.

In the blood which is put upon the mercy-seat, it is not a question of those who are saved or of election, but of the majesty of God, which demands this satisfaction for sin. I can address all, and declare to them that this satisfaction has been made, and that God the Father has perfectly accepted it. But I cannot say to all that Christ bore their sins, because the word does not say it anywhere. If He had borne their sins, they would certainly be justified, and consequently saved by the life of Christ, and glorified.

Thus in Romans 5:18, the gift has come “towards”—not “upon”—literally it reads, “So then as by one offence, towards all men to condemnation” (it is the direction towards which a thing would go if left to itself, not its coming upon), “so by one righteousness towards all men for justification of life.” This is why he says “all.” But in 5:19, “For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners; so also by the obedience of the one the many will be constituted righteous;” here it is the effect, not the tendency, therefore he says “many.” The thing is not limited to the one who accomplished it, but extends in its efficacy to those who are interested in it; the many are constituted sinners or righteous in virtue of these two works. So it is said, Romans 3:22, “[The] righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all those who believe.” It is one thing to put the blood on the mercy-seat, this was God’s lot; another to confess the sins of the people on the head of the goat Azazel. On account pf the one, God can act in the testimony of love towards all,

His righteousness being satisfied; on account of the other, He owes it to Christ never to find those sins again: they have been borne into a land not inhabited. Now this is not true of the sins of the wicked: therefore it cannot be said that it is not on account of the fruits of Adam's sin that men are condemned, for it is said, "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." And "If ye believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins." Thus I quite believe that Christ died for all, but I cannot say that He bore, as a substitute, the sins of all. The word, it seems to me, is very clear on this point in its doctrines, in the consequences that it draws from them, and in its types. So that I take ajntivlutron uJpeVr pavntwn in the simplest and widest sense. Satisfaction has been presented to God for men, but here (1 Tim. 2:6) it is evident these words refer to the desire to make of Jesus, at least of the Messiah, a mediator of the Jewish nation. No, says the apostle, He is so for all. God qevlei (not bouvletai) that all, not the Jews only, should be saved; He has given, therefore, one Mediator for all, who has made the propitiation which was necessary, and demanded by the majesty of God, so that the door is open to all through the satisfaction that He has made to the outraged majesty of God. But God has predestinated His own: He calls them; He quickens them. For if the matter rested there (that is to say, at an open door) no one, not even the elect, would come. But Christ has confessed the sins of those thus brought as if they were His own. He "shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

Farewell, beloved brother. May our good and faithful Lord and Saviour sustain you and us, and guide us; we

need it; and blessed be His name for it, He has it at heart to do it. Yes, we may pass through strait and difficult places, but He is not the less faithful; only let us look to Him, and He is there, even when He seems to forsake us, in order to put faith to the proof, and to make us known to ourselves. However, we have usually exposed ourselves to the enemy before things come to this pass, then He makes us feel within what we have failed in as to watchfulness without. If the enemy is outside, it is not a question of our strength, but of that of the door which keeps him out; if we have opened it, our own is in question. This makes us feel what we are, and also where we have failed in watchfulness and prayer, but He is faithful. Greet all the brethren warmly. I have been very happy during my illness: it has made me feel much more than ever that heaven and the bosom of God is my rest, my home, seeing that I shall be with Him for ever.

Peace be with all the brethren, also yourself, your dear wife, and your little ones. I hope to visit the Continent this autumn. Greet warmly also for. me our brother ——. May God keep him so that he may be content to be little.

Yours very affectionately,

In the fellowship of the Lord.

* * * * *

Hereford, July 4th, 1846.

Dearest ——, —First as to transubstantiation. I have generally found that in sincere Roman Catholics where there was a value for Christ, though in some respects natural, this remained the thought in their mind; it connects itself with a sensible apprehension of Him like

a picture, and seems to be borne out by scripture—respects it though it do not rightly divide or understand it. Yet the scriptural reasons seem to me most strong and plain on the point, yet a person may be a true saint and hold it. If the mass or sacrificial part is given up, this touches the knowledge by faith of the completeness of the one sacrifice, and our known forgiveness by it. There is no need of Syrian or Protestant commentators to know, that it is used for designating things they represent. It is the universal language of man. I say of a portrait, that is my father; that is my uncle. No one doubts an instant what it means. “It is the Lord’s passover.” “I am the true vine.” “I am the door” is the converse. And it is as much and as surely said of the cup as of the elements: “this cup is the New Testament in my blood” —thereby demonstrating the mode of speaking. As soon as the sense attached by the church to it is got rid of, our ordinary use of language would not convey the Roman sense to the mind. It is really an imposed one. Further, St. Paul positively calls it bread we break: why is this not literal? In what follows we have those figures which no language can speak without—”the cup which we bless.” Was it the cup he blessed? Proper literality in the strict sense would make nonsense of all language—is not its known sense. I drink a glass of wine —who ever doubted what that meant? It is not, as men speak, the literal sense to give the physical one. He drew a picture of vice in his sermon. Who thinks he drew a picture! So in a nearer case; a man brings his sin (chattath) to the Lord. Christ “was made sin.” “These bones are the whole house of Israel.” Does any one doubt what it means? There are many such in Ezekiel—only here we have no verb at all. And now as to the scriptural meaning and doctrine.

First, if the Roman Catholic one were true, it would be a sacrament, not of redemption, but of non-redemption. That doctrine holds that the body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Lord Jesus are all contained in each of the elements. But if the blood be thus united to the body, there is no redemption at all. It is the blood shed which is redemption; and therefore we are called to drink it as a separate thing. It is a broken body we are told of, and shed blood. If the blood be in the body there is no redemption. Christ has not a life of blood now, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom. If I take it shed, I own the great and blessed truth of redemption: take it otherwise than separate and as shed, and it is a sign that there is none. And this leads me further: there is no such Christ in existence as that signified by the sacramental institution. There is a glorified Christ with a glorified body in heaven, but this is a broken body and shed blood—that is, it is a dead Christ we, in the power of resurrection, recognise and feed on, that by which we were brought in—that all precious sacrifice. But there is no dead Christ now. There cannot be a broken body and shed blood now. There is no such thing in existence, while faith knows all its value in the one blessed act of the cross. Hence further, it cannot be literal, or rather physically true. “This is my body which is broken,” but it was not broken then. The living Christ did not hold actually and literally the dead Christ in His own hand. And this is absolutely necessary to the literal, or rather (without meaning to offend the feelings of those who have learned to renounce it) the gross carnal sense. The broken body and shed blood clearly represent a dead Christ; we know the unspeakable preciousness of that wondrous fact such as none is like. It is all our hope, the death of the Son of God; but there is no dead Christ in

existence; hence it cannot be a physical reality. It is shed blood I need for my soul—where is that literally?—and further, it was not literally true then. Christ was not broken and His blood shed when He spoke to His beloved disciples. And yet this feeding on death is the very thing that is precious. A Jew dared not; it was death to him. But now Christ is dead, death is life and gain to us. Hence too we must drink His blood; that is, take it as shed out; “he that drinketh my blood.” The doctrine of concomitancy—that is, a whole Christ in each element—fails here; because the very point of power is drinking it, that is receiving it as shed, taking it as such.

Hence, while I find that the literal is merely an imposed sense, contrary to the plain meaning of the words according to all habits of language, I find that it is on scriptural grounds—as to the eternal truth of Christ’s doctrine and Person—an impossible thing; that is, contradicts the truth. There is no dead Christ now; but this is clearly a dead Christ. And further, that it subverts the sense and spiritual power attached by Christ to it — His broken body and shed blood—and makes it really, though unwittingly, a sacrament of non-redemption. Such is Satan’s craft. Further, it cannot be literally true that Christ held Himself dead in His own hand: nor, as the breaking really represents His suffering and death, did He in any sense do this indeed at any time. Though after it He gave up His Spirit to His Father. Hence I lose all, by this pseudo-literal sense, my soul wants, my faith enjoys—a suffering Christ, a dead victim. It is my salvation. I adore the grace in it. My soul feeds on it. I need it: I worship and joy in it, though humbled at what called for it; and my heart goes out to these sufferings, and to Him who endured them. But there is no such

Christ now—no dead Christ to be literally true. If it is not a dead Christ, it is nothing at all to my faith. If it is a dead Christ, it clearly cannot be a literal one, for we all together who love Him through grace rejoice in His exaltation.

The fact is, it is a very modern doctrine. It was never established till Innocent the Third’s time, in the Council of Lateran, and was written against by esteemed doctors just before. And while you find many magniloquent though unintelligent expressions in the Fathers, one of the earliest—if the Roman doctrine be maintained—is a heretic, Irenseus. I remember that he says that after the ejpivklhsi" two things were there, bread and Christ. I attach no importance to this as authority. I think him wrong, imperfectly taught by the Holy Ghost in it; but it is a proof—not of truth, I never would use it as the smallest authority for it, but—that the Roman doctrine was not held by an early saint. Consubstantiation was more the common thought of doctors I think who took a real presence. To me one is as unsound as the other. It mistakes the object of faith, a Christ dead and shed blood.

I do not add the common arguments, “Whom the. heavens must receive” therefore, not here. Nor the ubiquity of Christ’s body being unsound as to its reality. You will be familiar with them. To a faithful soul, though these be true, the meaning of the Holy Ghost will have more power. I agree with you as to “In remembrance of me.” I must give more room than remains to me to the authority question, which (D. V.) I will write about speedily.

Thank you, dear brother, for your news of the saints, and your interest in my poor body. But we are privileged to say—may we be enabled to act on it!—the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. It is a happy thought that even in this (it) is so.

Ever, affectionately yours

In the blessed Master.

Plymouth, July 16th, 1846.

* * * * *

To the same.]

My dear Brother,—There is a fund of grace in dear——, but he has been in a bad school. Really——'s humility (though he be a devoted man of God) consists in counting that they have infinitely more grace than any one else, and shew it in condescension. I know nowhere such amazing confidence in self… This is associated with a kind of latitudinarianism which substituting grace in manner for fidelity, makes the supposed possession pf superior grace a reason for swamping every principle of God. There is a tremendous deal of putting on of cant (forgive me the word, for I own the love under it at——) in it, but being flattery and looking like grace it wins people. It must be met kindly but decidedly, for it is insinuating and mischievous, and I think poisons the springs of christian simplicity and plainness. I should always meet assumption, whether in the form of superior grace or otherwise, as being entirely the contrary to grace. And I should be plain in principle, though not in the way of controversy; for the enemy is seeking to swamp it under this pseudo-charity in many a way. At any rate, dear brother, the exercise will do you

good. You have had none to deal with at all æquis armis, and your own grace and full trusting in the Lord will be tried. Lean on Him, and fight the good fight of faith. Never allow your own importance thus to come into question, while firm as a rock in disallowing all this false pretension. It is all pseudo-grace, though there be real grace in those who have it: much better to get at this and speak plain English than speak about grace and flatter.

And now, while urging you to count on the Lord and fight the battle, His battle, yourself—this is really called for: it is time we should rouse ourselves and buckle on our armour, if we have what is worth contending for, and not look merely to others to help, while I am sure I will render all the help I can; but it is a time of putting faith to the test, and they that quit themselves like men will not lose their reward. But I will now turn to your perhaps more important questions.

Authority in the church is neither more nor less than the power of the Holy Ghost. There may be added at the beginning the apostles as constituted companions of Jesus, and having directions from Him. But now this is simply the working of the Holy Ghost in the church. This may be in an individual, according to the measure of power given to him, or it may be in the body; but it will always recognise the Holy Ghost in the body and in all the members. This is most marked in the epistles. They speak as to wise men who have an unction from the Holy One. This is the whole matter: this once departed from, some mere arrangement takes its place, and the Holy Ghost is in principle —namely, in faith—set aside, and weakness is soon apparent. The kingdom of God is in power; but that power is known only to faith.

As to traditions, no one who has read the Greek Testament can a moment doubt that the word is, in the New Testament, a doctrine delivered, not handed down; though this might sometimes be the character of what was delivered. Tuvpon eij" o}n paredovqhte of Romans6:17 makes this plain. So tradition in the popular sense is in contrast with scripture. But in the passage you refer to [2 Thess. 2:15], it is either the direct word of prophecy in the church there or the apostle's epistle: nothing handed down in the church is secured by subsequent authority. The saints were to keep the doctrine they had been taught— the body of saints. Suppose I were to write to the body of saints in ——to hold fast what they had been taught, whether vivâ voce, or what I had written to them by letter, what would that have to say to the authority of the church or tradition of a subsequent era? Yet this is exactly the case, save that that teaching was divine and inspired, and therefore the exhortation had its peculiar place and weight: taV" paradovsei" a}" ejdidavcqhte, ei[te diaV lovgou ei[te dij ejpistolh'" hJmw'n clearly just to be a doctrine delivered.

Nor do I see what the communication of what he had learned to faithful men [2 Tim. 2:2], so as to form teachers, has to do with tradition. Nobody, unless they deny ministry, could gainsay this, and so far as a man could be trusted as receiving it from St. Paul, it would of course have weight; but that is just the question. It was not authority, but a means of communicating truth; the confounding these two things is the generally unperceived sophism of Milner's End of Controversy. A rule of faith, he says, or means of communicating Christ's religion. It must be plain, etc.; but these things

are not the same. A mother does it to her babe, but she is not a rule of faith, perhaps does it perfectly rightly, but that alters nothing. Now here the apostle is directing the means of communicating truth to others, of course as surely as he can, but not setting up either authority or a rule of faith. When I had a dozen young men reading with me at Lausanne, I was doing this according to my ability. Was I dreaming of setting up authority or a rule of faith in them? Clearly not. The written word is clearly such the moment we own it inspired.

The real question is, Is it addressed to all saints as possessing the Spirit so as to use it? They are the church. Ministry may be a means of communicating, and a very precious one, as Ephesians 4; but they are never a rule nor an authority. A rule must be an existing quantum of doctrine, but this no men are. That as an authority must be infallible, which none is but God. Infallible is not perfectly right. I may say what is absolutely right, but I am not infallible. Whenever the apostles spoke by inspiration, they uttered in revelation what was absolutely right from God, but this did not make them infallible. God is, because in His nature He never can say anything but what is right. When God spoke by them, as every true Christian believes He did, they were absolutely right: but God remained the alone infallible, who never could of Himself say anything wrong. This was not communicated to an apostle, since if he did not speak by inspiration, he was as another man—more experience perhaps, but a man. Inspiration comes from the infallible One, but does not render the inspired one infallible, but only perfectly right and divine in what he utters as inspired.

Further, I believe God will secure by His power that the truth shall not be lost in the church to the end. It may be only in an upright godly few, as when almost all the professing church and Pope Liberius among them turned Arian. But this does not make the church infallible; but it does prove that God will keep His elect in vital essential truth to the end. But being kept is not authority. I am persuaded I shall be kept in the truth for the end—sure of it through grace; but this is not making me an infallible authority; it is just the opposite; I am subject to the truth. So the church, the elect saints, are subject to the truth always. They may have accompanying obscurities on many points, but they will never deny saving truth to the church. Many foolish things may be brought in and added, but it will not deny saving truth.

This the Council of Trent, and hence the Catholic body (I do not say every individual) have pretty much done. Hence the difference of the Establishment. The prayer-book has added a mass of destructive, false, and superstitious errors, but the articles in general, though obscurely, do not deny but proclaim saving truth. Hence the Galatians Paul was afraid of; they were on the point of denying really the saving truths, though recovered. The Colossians were introducing superstitions which led to this, but they were not met exactly in the same way, as they were not denying justification by faith for example, as the Galatians were well-nigh doing. But this is saving subjection to the truth, not authority; and this is the real point of difference.

They say, with a law we must have an interpreting judge. God says, with My word I must have saving faith mixed —the heart must bow to it itself; another cannot do this. No one denies that one can help another according to

the measure of the Spirit—that is, help spiritually the soul in reception; but this is not authority; it is ministry. The truth received has God's authority, and by the truth we are subject to Him. The word of God can have no authority to apply it, nor power either, but God Himself. Its whole object is to bring the soul and conscience into direct and immediate relationship with Himself. Interposed authority as to conscience sets aside God. There cannot be a judge with God's word, because Christ is. (There may be discipline, and, in this sense, judgment in which the whole body acts, but this is another question) but the whole point is the authority of God's word itself on the conscience; and mark, because God has said it, discerning it such, we set to our seal that God is true—not that the church is. The church it is that believes it, and thereby it is the church. So "ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." The church does not judge about the word of God. The word of God judges it, first as sinner then as saint. Whoever gets above this gets into sin—is not a doer of the law, but a judge.

I do not enter here on the external part of the question, that the tradition, nor even the authority is not to be found, though de facto many things are surely believed. It is clear that the local priest is not, though he may be a means of communicating. It is quite clear that the ponderous tomes of councils are not a more clear, or accessible, or intelligible rule of faith than the living word. But the truth is they are not agreed when it resides in a Pope or Council; and this is serious. It will be said certainly in both. But the Council of Constance deposed, and that of Basle set itself above the Pope and

ended without him. Also there were two, and neither owned by the former. And yet more. The Church of Home cannot pronounce with unanimity which are the general councils. There are (I trust my memory) nineteen, but they dispute as to the enumeration of them. What a difference from the pure word of God!

Yours affectionately.

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5 From Lausanne.

Section 4

To the same.]

My dear Brother,—It is very important to observe that Romanism does take infidel ground, and to press this on their consciences; I have often done so in Ireland. God is competent to make men responsible by speaking Himself. This is a most important proposition, and tins is the one thing they have to defend, by His own testimony, that is. In their arguments there is a grand prw'ton yeu'do", namely, that the means of communicating Christ’s religion is the same thing as the rule of faith. This is a fundamental fallacy of Milner’s “End of Controversy.” A mother, a child, may be the means of communicating Christ’s religion, but they are not a rule of faith. These two things may be united, but they are in no way the same things. I suppose the book you have, however, is Wiseman’s.

Now I would take the bull by the horns, and say that there is no living saving faith whatever, but that which is wrought by the operation of the word of God, received on His direct authority without any warrant whatever. If it is received on the authority of the church, it is not believing God. The word of God proves itself to the conscience, and puts man by itself under the responsibility of crediting it, because God cannot speak without man’s being bound to know and hear Him, for none speaks like Him. He may in grace use proofs and confirmations and witnesses, but man is bound to hear Him. God will prove that, in the day of judgment. Nay, the very heathen are without excuse on much lower ground. The reason is plain, too, practically. The word of

God judges, and is not judged—“he is convinced of all, he is judged of all;” and the secrets of his heart being revealed, he falls down and confesses “that God is in you of a truth.” That is not authority, but it is the only saving thing. A man does not want authority to know that a two-edged sword is sharp. A faith founded on miracles, though God vouchsafed this confirmation, is no saving faith at all; Jesus did not commit Himself to it (John ii), He knew what was in man. But then in the corruption of the church and its prevalent power, it may be a reason why none but those who receive the love of the truth should escape. But this power of the word by the Spirit acting on, not judged by, man, supposes the unbeliever; all else is no faith at all. But the church has the Spirit and the word, and the spiritual man judges all things.

Hence then, I first take the ground, that the word of God received on authority, is a rejection of God’s testimony. If I receive an account of another because you put your name to it, it is because I do not believe the person who gives the account. God may providentially make it to be received where this genuine faith is not, but then it is not saving. To be saving it must be faith in God; “he that hath received his testimony, has set to his seal that God is true:” he who demands the church’s authority to receive it has not. God may have used all manner of means of preserving, and even authenticating the testimony, and so He has in many as we might expect; and I believe that the scriptures were committed to the church to keep—not to authorise, but to keep, as I keep a document safe. I give it no authority. It has its own. But I keep it safe. Now God, I believe, providentially has done this. But then the Roman body has decidedly failed in this, because at the Council of Trent, which is with

them of divine authority, (it) has declared that to be scripture which declares itself not to be so. That is for example the [second book of] Maccabees, which concludes by saying, If I have done well, it is as befits the subject; if ill, it is according to my ability. Now it is profane to suppose for an instant that that is the Holy Ghost's inditing. The Prologus Galeatus indeed of Jerome, generally prefixed to the Vulgate, declares that the Apocryphal books are not scripture. Many other passages from the Apocrypha could be adduced, such as that the offerings for the dead were those dead in mortal sin— that there are three contrary accounts of the death of Antiochus —but I prefer the fact that one book of the Maccabees declares it is not scripture, as above. Moreover, it is well known, that Sixtus V., acting under the authority of the Council of Trent, promulgated as the only authentic word of God an edition of the Vulgate, which was suppressed, because his successor Clement altered it in two thousand places; five copies only of it are in existence. Clement's bears in appearance its name. It has been in no sense, what the church ought to be, a faithful keeper of the "oracles of God committed" to it.

But, after all, clever as Mr. Wiseman is, it is a vicious circle he is in; he takes the scripture as an authentic book. This itself then he supposes may be done. But if authentic, in the first place, it is clearly inspired, as any one who reads it may see —that is, it gives us (to say the very least, for I think it goes further) an authentic account of the actual authoritative teaching of Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, and of the Lord Himself. If this be so, I have no need of the church to receive its doctrine as divine. The authentic record of Christ's

words and the apostles' teaching, gives me a divine instruction directly, which no reference to a derivative authority can set aside; because the body which would set aside or call in question the authority of that from which it derives, is not derivative from it at all. If it be then authentic, I have the original divine instructions which founded, formed, and guided the church itself at first. If it be not authentic, then to find that the church was founded proves nothing, for if not authentic, I do not know it is true. If I am to receive the church from it, I certainly can receive Christ's and all the apostles' words from it directly. But I may go further. If it be not inspired as well as authentic, and if I do not know it to be so, I have no inspired warrant, that is, no divine warrant for hearing the church at all. So that on this ground you cannot set up the authority of the church, without setting up previously the authority of scripture itself. The authenticity proves inspiration, or it gives no inspired authority for the church, and I hear all Christ's and the apostles' inspired words, as well as that as to the church. For if I receive something a person says, and not the rest, I receive none of it on his authority.

But indeed, when I examine the point further, I find the authority of this authentic book shewing me plainly a church indeed established, that is an assembly, but quite the contrary to the conclusion drawn from it. I find the test, of being of God, as to doctrine, to be, hearing the apostles themselves, "he that is of God heareth us." But I have their authentic words in this book. I am not of God, if I do not hear them, themselves, as the guard against error. When I turn to hearing the church, I find not a word about doctrine at all, but a case of discipline (any rules of which, according to Catholic doctrine, are

not binding unless where received, though decreed by a Council; though they allege decrees on faith are. The discipline of the Council of Trent was not everywhere received). It is a question of wrong done, carried to two or three, and at last before the assembly, and if the wronging party will not mind the whole body, he may be avoided by the offended one as a heathen. Whereas, I find the scriptures referred (to) as the security in perilous times, and the certainty of having received the doctrines from the apostles, personally,—"knowing of whom." I find the Lord (whose words all of us would bow to as divine) yet preferring, as to the medium of communication, "the written word; "if they believe not his writings, how shall they believe my words" —"they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Now if we separate the rule of faith from the means of communicating Christ's religion—which last all admit may be, and is now fallible (consequently, the individual priest)—where is their accessible rule? Is it in the acts of nineteen Councils (and which are they? For you are aware that Romanists are not agreed which the nineteen, are), acts in Latin moreover, or in Greek? Where is this accessible rule of faith? And now further, Romanists are not agreed what the rule is. Ultra-montanes hold the Pope infallible. Cis-montanes hold he is not. Many, as the Councils of Constance and Basle, hold that they had authority to act independent of and superior to the Pope. At the time of the former there were two Popes. The Council deposed them and chose another, who (Martin V.) dissolved the Council. Is the Council of Constance a general council? If so, it has given an authority in matters of faith quite different from the Papal advocates; and it acted on it and deposed

the Popes; and yet if it had not this authority, the whole succession of the popedom is founded on a schismatical act. However that may be, the authority on matters of faith Romanists are not agreed on. Not only so, but these Councils have decreed things against the Pope's authority, and he against theirs. The acts at Basle the Pope declared void after the departure of his legate, having transferred the Council elsewhere, though only a part left. But further, the Council of Chalcedon declared the equality of the Sees of Constantinople and Rome. This Pope Leo rejected.

Now if a Roman Catholic say, I am not learned enough for all this; then I reply, Where is the simplicity and accessibleness of their rule of faith? For this is it. If you say, But I trust my priest; then you are on confessedly fallible ground. I had much rather trust, with God's help by the Spirit, the writings of Paul and Peter and John, &c, addressed to all saints—expressly so addressed. How fallible this is you may suppose, when I tell you that in the four standard catechisms published by the authority of different Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, there are not the same lists of the seven deadly sins. But this is by the bye. But is not there a fearfully upsetting thing, that the moment I do turn to the Bible—take the Roman translation— I find it sets aside all the cardinal points of Romanism.

For instance, the Mass—I read, there is no more oblation for sin. I am told by the highest authority of the Roman system, that the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Yet take away this, and all Romanism falls. Again, there is one Mediator. Now the Roman system makes many, and in fact more referred to than to Christ. And it is in vain to say that it

is only as praying. Their merits are positively acted on in the Missal, and the Virgin Mary is called upon to save us now and at the hour of death. Nay, so far is this carried, that the Confiteor on which absolution is received, leaves out Christ altogether.

The inadequacy of the scriptures to give unity is a mere claptrap. Has Rome produced it? Clearly not, unless by blood. Look at it from without. Authority, they say, was in the church from the beginning; if not, it is new, and good for nothing. Well, did it preserve unity? Witness the Greeks, Nestorians, Jacobites. Earlier, the Novation system, Paulicians: Protestants —half professing Christendom at this moment is outside their unity. But their authority being alleged to be the original effectual thing, it is clear then it has failed to preserve it. They tried by fire and blood when Protestantism arose, but in half Europe in vain. Present facts then prove its inadequacy to this end. To say that it promotes unity among those subject to it, is merely what the smallest sect in Christendom would say too. I remember a poor Romanist telling me nine-and-thirty religions arose out of the Bible. I told him I suppose his did, or it was good for nothing, which he admitted, and I told him then there were forty. And really the argument is worth no more! Nothing can produce unity, but the teaching and power of the Spirit of God.

Ever affectionately yours.

1846

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My very dear Brother,— …I suspect many brethren have had expectations, which never led me out, and which perplexed their minds when they were not met in

practice. I never felt my testimony, for example, to be to the ability of the Holy Ghost to rule a visible body. That I do not doubt, but I doubt its proper application now as a matter of testimony. It does not become us. My confidence is in the certainty of God's blessing and maintaining us, if we take the place we are really in. That place is one of the general ruin of the dispensation. Still, I believe God has provided for the maintenance of its general principle (save persecution); that is, the gathering of a remnant into the comfort of united love by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, so that Christ could sing praises there. All the rest is a ministry to form, sustain, &c.

Amongst other things government may have its place; but it is well to remember that, in general, government regards evil, and therefore is outside the positive blessing, and has the lowest object in the church. Moreover, though there be a gift of government, in general, government is of a different order from gift. Gift serves, ministers; hardly government. They may be united as in apostolic energy; elders were rather the government, but they were not gifts. It is specially the order of the governmental part which I believe has failed, and we are to get on without that, at least in a formal way. But I do not believe that God has therefore not provided for such a state of things.

I do believe brethren a good deal got practically out of their place, and the consciousness of it, and found their weakness; and the Lord is now teaching them. For my part, when I found all in ruin around me, my comfort was that, where two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, there He would be. It was not government or anything else I sought. Now I do believe

that God is faithful, and able to maintain the blessing. I believe the great buildings and great bodies have been a mistake: indeed, I always did. Further, I believe now (though it were always true in practice) the needed dealing with evil must be by the conscience in grace. So St. Paul ever dealt, though he had the resource of a positive commission. And I believe that two or three together, or a larger number, with some having the gift of wisdom in grace, can, in finding the mind of the Lord, act in discipline; and this, with pastoral care, is the mainspring of holding the saints together in Matthew 18. This agreeing together is referred to as the sign of the Spirit's power.

I do not doubt that some may be capable of informing the consciences of others. But the conscience of the body is that which is ever to be acted upon and set right. This is the character of all healthful action of this kind, though there may be a recourse in present apostolic power, which, where evil has entered, may be wanting; but it cannot annul "if two of you shall agree … it shall be done." So that I see not the smallest need of submission to popery (that is, carnal unity by authority in the flesh), nor of standing alone, because God has provided for a gathering of saints together, founded on grace, and held by the operation of the Spirit which no doubt may fail from want of grace, but in which every remaining gift has its scope; in which Christ's presence and the operation of the Spirit is manifested, but must be maintained on the ground of the condition the church really is in, or it would issue in a sect arranged by man, with a few new ideas. Where God is trusted in the place and for the place we are in, and we are content to find Him infallibly present with us, there I am sure He is

sufficient and faithful to meet our wants. If there be one needed wiser than any of the gathered ones in a place, they will humbly feel their need; and God will send some one as needed, if He sees it the fit means.

There is no remedy for want of grace but the sovereign goodness that leads to confession. If we set up our altar, it will serve for walls. (Ezra 3:3.) The visibility God will take care of, as He always did; the faith of the body will be spoken of, and the unity in love manifest the power of the Holy Ghost in the body. I have no doubt of God's raising up for need, all that need requires in the place where He has set us in understanding. If we think to set up the church again, I would say, God forbid. I had rather be nearer the end to live and to die for it in service, where it is, as dear to God: that is my desire and life…

Ever yours affectionately.

September 24th, 1846.

* * * * *

Beloved Brethren,—I saw so very few of you before I left, and for such a little moment, that I felt anxious to write a line, being separated from you in presence and not in heart.

When I took my place, my heart misgave me a little at leaving you all, but on looking to the Lord I felt it was more my natural heart, and that I was in the path of faith in going to France. I found on going home from the Friday prayer meeting, a letter which confirmed me in the purpose of going speedily, but what at the same time will shorten my absence some weeks at any rate, nor indeed is it my present purpose to be long out of

England; my thought is to visit the south of France and return at once, or at any rate make no stay in Switzerland. The same faith which has led me, and made me feel right to go, gives me confidence, beloved brethren, that the Lord will keep you to the blessed testimony of His own faithfulness and grace.

I would urge upon you walking in thorough unity, shewing all confidence one in the other, and casting all that may arise at once on God. His faithfulness to His church and people who trust in Him is infallible, and He cannot but help you in all for which you look to Him. I do not doubt His care over you. I trust that those who take part in any service needed for all, will do it together with common consultation, and that it will be done diligently as a duty. I say this, dear brethren, because uneasiness creeps in where this is neglected, and soon produces discomfort, which hinders both unity and blessing. It is written, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” There is another thing I have on my heart to say, that is, as far as brethren can, they should visit others; of course, they must wait on the Lord’s leading for it, but it will minister to fellowship and unity in brotherly love, and that is our joy, beloved brethren. For the rest I commend you to the Lord; He will guide you in waiting upon Him. If we assume nothing at all beyond what we are, a company of poor saints waiting upon God according to His will, we shall infallibly meet Him in blessing.

I believe we are not properly aware, few, at least, of the unfeigned importance of the position He has set us in, in testimony of separation from evil and waiting on Him. But the secret of all strength in it is, assuming nothing—

not expecting to be like other Christians, as the Israelites, who would have a king like the Amorites and other nations, and thus falling back into the common path of unbelief, but truly waiting upon God. If there be gift, blessing Him for it, but swift to hear and slow to speak, counting God's presence more precious than all, and—while desiring God's ordinance in the testimony of His word to sinners, and if any can give a public testimony, accepting it—not counting the routine of a sermon necessary to the course of the saints.

Peace be with you, beloved brethren. May the Lord give you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Give my love to dear old S.; I do trust that the brethren will visit him now that he cannot come out. Again, peace be with you all.

Your devoted brother.

P.S.—Since I came up I have other letters which make it probable that I could not stay in Switzerland if so disposed; at least, the French troops are an the frontiers, and the Swiss have been marched to watch them. The brethren at Rawstorne Street are getting on quietly and happily, and though my toil, I doubt not, is not yet closed as to service, of which I am persuaded hone of the brethren scarce know at all the evil met, yet I have been greatly encouraged and comforted.

I have a letter from dear——, who is arrived at Bombay, and happily lodged at a Christian's; he says, "And I pray also the Lord that the brethren at Plymouth, who are simply gathered in the Lord's name, may never be dismayed in looking at their own weakness in meeting, but be glad that there is nothing to look to but to Him

who is in heaven, the only One all eyes are fixed on, and that the brethren may constantly look for Him who will come and not tarry: yet a little while and we shall see Him face to face. In the moment we limit His coming, unconnected with any circumstances, we begin to make our nest in the foliage of this world. And the dear brethren too at Plymstock I do never forget; give to all of them my most affectionate salutations."

It is a long letter, with all the details of his voyage, and some interesting particulars as to his search into the prophetic question, which I cannot here give. Peace be with you, most beloved brethren. Be of good cheer. Glory with Christ is ours; the love of Christ is ours. Only let us trust the Lord, and we know not how much blessing is in store for us, though we ought to know how faithful, how infallibly faithful He is. The Lord has led out several to labour here of the younger brethren, and I have found others whom I trust He is so leading. I trust quite He is working. He has led me wonderfully every step of the way.

Your devoted brother in Him.

* * * * *

London, November 6th, 1846.

Dear Brother,—My head and paper alike warn me to close. I think of being off to-morrow (D. V.) direct for France, and am hurried toe. Peace be with you, and nearness to Jesus, dear brother; that is our strength and joy. Having been in the third heaven did not give the strength; it in a certain sense necessitated the weakness, and then the strength came in. We do not know how to be weak, that is our weakness.

Affectionately.

Guernsey, January 30th, 1847.

Dear——,—There is certainly progress and blessing here, though perhaps there needs some one of energy to pursue and instrumentally give tone to the work. But the Lord will do it in His mercy. He has blessed and been with the brethren, and works in these countries, and the testimony they bear in weakness is telling in a general consciousness that the church belongs to Christ, not to the world, and must lean on Him and wait for Him. There is on the whole very definite progress, and the Lord has been with the brethren—as I said, a little energy called for, but what there is for good has been with the brethren, and people's consciences have been acted on. I have had persons to hear me who never came near before, and many desirous though fearing to break with the world.

It is very doubtful if I should be allowed in Switzerland, that is Vaud. I have my heart quite towards working in England, but feel I was led of the Lord here, and owed it to them. The Lord enable me to fill up my service. I fear I do not make full proof of my ministry. Love to all the saints.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Montpellier, April 3rd, 1847.

To the same.]

Dearest——,—As to me and my work, I have, the Lord be thanked, been blessed in it hitherto. At St. Hippolyte, where it was at a stand in a measure, though the Lord had a people, and there were souls waiting as it were for the fire to be put, there has been an evident working of

the Spirit of God, and that in the hearts as it would seem of the most obdurate. At the Vigau, where I spent some days, I was happy with the brethren. At Montpellier the Lord is working, but things will hardly rest as they are; some will go on, and some I should suppose go back (though I trust I may be mistaken), when a certain quantity of light is sure to call for a certain quantity of self-denial. The work is not altogether in the position I should desire it; perhaps I want faith, but there is much that is interesting and souls desirous. The heat has become excessive. It is generally so ir July and August, but this year in May it is, as their meetings are.in small rooms, become difficult. I suppose I must go to Switzerland, but my thought of work as when I left, is here..

The great difficulty is the desire of Free Churches and Evangelical Alliances to save trouble and conscience. ——declares there are profound evils in the National Church, but they wait for some violent blow which will trouble all their consciences, and they will go out together. By this means it is sought to retain them within the circle of the Establishment; but for plain consciences, under the power of the Spirit of God, this will not do…

We have great need of labourers; may the Lord of the harvest raise them up, for indeed the harvest is great, and the fields whiten for it. It ought to be a subject of our prayers, that God raise up real labourers, such as He loves and can use. It is the great need here; why should we not know how to present our needs before Him, whose glory and work all this is? this is our folly. Dear G., I shall feel his loss, for he loved Jesus much, and I loved him, but I am not surprised at his death nor

his joy. It remains for us to work yet while it is called day. It is our glory also.

I have undertaken again a Synopsis of the Books of Scripture, and written in French on Genesis, Exodus, and half Leviticus— some 70 pages or so already. It runs longer than I thought, and will after all be very imperfect. I fear souls may content themselves with it, instead of using it as a help to read the blessed word with. I feel almost afraid in presence of the task I have begun, though it be full of interest and instruction in doing it, but not to give the aim right, which would be very sad. I feel my responsibility much, though we may have pleasure in the study.

Kindest love to all the dear brethren, both in London and at Plymouth, when you see- them. The Lord has care over these dear brethren; that He holds them under His hand is no sign that He does not love them; whatever of the energy of the flesh there might have been in separation, as often there is, is thus subdued and chastened. I have not at all got estranged from England; the work in the south of France however claims attention. … I wait only the Lord’s will, but it is an important moment for Nismes and Montpellier and all the Gard, but requires to set to work in the sense that there is work to be done, and that the Lord gives something whereby to help them. Peace and blessing be with you, dear brother.

Your affectionate.

Montpellier, June 1st, 1847.

* * * * *

[From the French,

* * * We must distinguish between responsibility and dependence, while fully owning the former, which it is, I think, most important to maintain in its integrity. But if we take this principle alone we are necessarily discouraged. The thought of dependence on God includes the power of Him on whom we depend… Come what may, God is faithful in His love: His grace never fails. Oh that we may have more faith to know how to bring His love into everything, for the blessing of His church, and of His children!

Brethren here needed to be stirred up, but I hope that God is blessing them. It is wonderful how near one can be to the spring, and yet, like poor Hagar, not see it. The bottle does not hold out in the desert… It seems to me, according to my feeble apprehension, that the responsibility of the Christian keeps him constantly on the qui vive, like a sentinel at an advanced post, and that there is for such a soul an exercise which sometimes makes him afraid of failing in it, which must of necessity deprive it of joy and courage. However, we need to be given understanding in all things (2 Tim. 2:7), so as not to lean too much to one side as to responsibility; and so that, while wishing to be led by grace, we should not return to the law. On the other hand, conscious dependence leaves to God all the glory of His work in the soul of the faithful one, as it is said, and the results of this dependence honour the One who gives the desire and the power to walk in it.

July 1st, 1847.

* * * * *

Very dear Brother,—I have heard little in the way of news since I left England. A letter dear—— wrote to me

in April I only received in June. Since then I heard from ——, both of whom, in the midst of other matters, mention that the question of Mr. N.'s coming to Bath had been raised there. As I understand, our brother B. has laid his ground of objection in the doctrines Mr. N. taught. I am entirely ignorant of what brethren at Bath have done, but it is fair that they should know what is in question, if the question be raised. Now I entirely agree with dear B. in the difficulty he raises. I am satisfied that Mr. N. is unsound in the most important fundamental doctrines, so that if no Plymouth question had been raised, I never could consent that souls should be under his teaching. I am perfectly satisfied that he undermines the truth of Christ's Person, and justification by faith, and that he has done so, and made souls miserable by it; but I know that he would deny it all, and state opposite statements with the greatest force, or if pinned to a statement made, explain it all away the moment it was objected to. All these things have happened, and I should be prepared with instances… but it is well that brethren should know that Mr. N. and the whole five stand accused of systematic falsehood where there is no heresy at all. ——has declared that their statements were so utterly false, so entirely untrue, that not only he would not break bread, but that as an honest man and a Christian, much as he loved some of them, he would not sit down in the same room, with them. For my own part, I can only say, I never saw such effrontery and falsehood in all my life. Mr. J. L. H. declared that had Mr. N. been an attorney or an officer he would have been struck off the rolls. Mr. McA. and Mr. N. confirm, as far as they are concerned in it, their testimony. Mr. E. H. declined further correspondence, it grew so bad, and they had to reject the testimony of their own friends in London to

get rid of the proof of falsehood there: the path was such as left no trace of doubt in the minds of brethren…

The assumption of position by these brethren in the assembly is such, that no person who has any conscience could admit of it; it is pure popery. Now it would be very easy to gain a reputation, dear brother, for charity, by passing loosely over all these things. But as I am convinced that it is the power of Satan, and that they corrupt every soul they have to say to, the service of the Lord and faithfulness to Christ are more important than a good reputation and the favour of man. I could easily, being here, avoid the responsibility, but I do not choose to run away from the difficulty when my brethren are in it… This is my feeling as to the dear brethren at Bath. They have a right to know what they are about. A great body of beloved brethren are from personal acquaintance convinced that it is the work of Satan. They can say why; and nothing would induce them to go where these persons were. The brethren, if it is proposed to them to receive them, or even if they come to attract them by smooth speeches and fine words, have a right to know on what ground they refuse to have anything to say to a meeting where they are. Many have declared why, as before the brethren in London, and have entirely satisfied them, the rest refusing to come. Brethren must feel, that supposing they receive persons, whom the brethren best informed and who owe fidelity to Jesus, believe to be doing a work of Satan, it is impossible for them who have this feeling to go along in any way with those whom they judge such.

Peace is pleasant, but it could not be purchased by making terms or being at concord with Satan, or those

who produce his fruits in the church. My own conviction, I need not say, is most decided, and unqualified decision is my only path. The more I weigh, the more decided I am. Four other brethren have declared that they have the conscience of having been under the direct power of Satan whilst giving it to them. I have seen besides many souls delivered from it, where it was as evident as a first conversion. I have not seen one who gave in to it, who maintained his integrity. This will make you feel, however reluctant some may be to say what they know and have said in private, or when the Lord forced them to it, that where there is fidelity there is decision, and that indecision is unfaithfulness, and that is all.

The principles now in print would suffice to deter any one who owned that the Spirit of God was in the assembly of the saints.

Perhaps the brethren have already acted; of this I know nothing. All I desire is that brethren be aware of what is in question—systematic and constant untruth, declared such by very many grave and serious brethren. Any attempt to clear, in the absence of those able to bring forward the facts and question the parties from knowing what it was about, would be far worse than no clearance at all.

Kindest love to the brethren.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

[From abroad, exact date uncertain.]

* * * * *

* * *—As in the Psalms, I do not at all admit that they are aU the language of’our Lord. Even as to some in which His voice is unquestionably heard, there are other voices

also. For instance (Psalm 102.), where the cry of the blessed Jesus is answered in words quoted by the apostle in Hebrews 1, as addressed to our Lord by God Himself. So in Psalms 20 and 21 it is rather the voice of those who pray and give thanks on behalf of Jehovah's Anointed that we hear than His own. At least they express their interest and concurrence in His desires, and then acknowledge how all these desires are fulfilled to the uttermost: I have no doubt that in all the Psalms the Spirit of Christ is to be heard, and that the grand theme of that Spirit's utterance is "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow." But all this does not prove that the Psalms were all uttered by Christ as His own language at the time He was here on earth. Some of them were so uttered without doubt. But as to most of the Psalms, they have evidently a different character.

There is a well-known passage in Romans 8:26, 27, which, more clearly than anything, illustrates, as it seems to me, the character of the Psalms. In Romans 8:the intercession is that of the Spirit in Christians, and therefore according to the place given us and the calling wherewith we are called. In the Psalms it is the remnant of Israel that is in question. But how is the passage in Romans 8:to be understood? We who pray know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the indwelling Spirit helps our infirmities, making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. How are the prayers thus inwrought by the Spirit of God? Not according to the poor, feeble, measure of our personal intelligence and desires, but according to the perfect expression of these requests by the Spirit, and according to the value and acceptance of Christ and His work,

through which it is that the Holy Ghost has come to make our bodies His abode. “He that searcheth the hearts knoweth” (it does not say our mixed, feeble, imperfect desires, but) “what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God.” His intercessions are according to God; while, alas! our apprehensions and utterance of them always fall short of this. Still, what the Searcher of hearts finds in us—that which He hears and receives —is this mind of the Spirit—this intercession of His according to God.

Now it is something analogous to this that we find in the Psalms. The circumstances are different: it is another body of people; and in general the blessings sought for are different. The people are the Jewish remnant; the circumstances in many, perhaps most, of the Psalms, are those of the final tribulation through which these chosen ones are to pass; and where this is not the case, the circumstances are those of one period or another, past or future, in the history of the remnant. The blessings sought for differ in two very important respects from those for which we should seek. On the one hand the supplicants evidently do not stand in the consciousness of God’s manifested favour, as the church now stands; and, on the other, they seek deliverance from their complicated and unexampled afflictions by imploring the execution of righteous judgment on their adversaries. In the Psalms we have the confessions, the prayers, the lamentations, the faith, the hopes, the thanksgivings, the worship of this chosen remnant; not according to the feebleness and imperfectness with which they may be actually uttered, but according to the perfect expression of them by the Spirit of Christ, who did identify Himself with this remnant in a most special manner, and whose

Spirit will as truly incite in them the desires, &c, thus expressed, as He does now make intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered.

As to the remnant, and Christ's identification of Himself with it, several points need to be observed. First, there always was such a remnant, from the time that Israel became apostate, till the time when "the remnant according to the election of grace" became, along with the Gentile converts to the faith of Christ, the church of the living God. I suppose, too, we all agree that there will be such a remnant in the days to come. Further, there have been times of crisis in Israel's history, when the remnant, or those composing it, have been brought into special distinctness. David and his companions, whether in the days of Saul or of Absalom; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and in general, the prophets; and then most especially the disciples of our Lord during Hi$ sojourn below, furnish specimens of what the remnant was in the several critical periods in which they lived. Ezra and Nehemiah, with the returned captives of their day, afford another example.

Now I do confess that, as far as I have any light on these subjects, it seems to me incontestable, that it was with this remnant, not with the nation at large, that Jesus in grace identified Himself. And, whatever may be the measure of the manifested favour of God, or whatever the amount of spiritual intelligence enjoyed by this remnant in any period, past or future; and whatever may be their circumstances of outward trial; and in whatever degree their outward trials may be augmented by the lack of.that assurance of God's favour, in the knowledge of accomplished redemption which it is our happy privilege to enjoy; their relation to God is one of peace

and blessing, and that by virtue of the perfect sacrifice of Christ. They are not at once introduced into the knowledge and power of this relation, as we are immediately on believing in Jesus. They have to endure all the outward afflictions which are contained in their cup of sorrow, with the far deeper anguish of receiving them as the tokens of God's righteous displeasure against the sins of the whole nation, with which sins they identify themselves in confession and humiliation before God. But then, the very fact of their thus confessing their own and their nation's sins, distinguishes them from that nation, and shews that they are the people of God's choice. And, however dark may be their condition outwardly, and even inwardly as to any sense they have of God's dealings with them; and however unheeded their cry may seem to be, and this is surely the bitterest ingredient in their cup; yet, that cry is the cry of the Spirit of Christ in them, and He, blessed be His name! did, in the days of His flesh, and that, too, in circumstances most similar, anticipate all their affliction. He did in spirit, as identifying Himself with them, pass through it all; yea, and more, for He did, as we rejoice to know, bear all their sins as well as ours in His own body on the tree. He thus endured atoningly the wrath which they dread; and the sense of their having deserved it, that is, this wrath, draws forth lamentations and mourning from their hearts. Where now is the difficulty in apprehending how Christ could and did voluntarily enter in spirit into all the depths of their agony and distress, and thus give expression to it all before God according to the perfectness of His apprehension of their state, and of what the claims of divine majesty and holiness are? He thus prepared for them utterances which will be perfectly, because

divinely, adapted to their state when they are in it; and which will constitute a cry as entirely “according to God” as are now the intercessions of the indwelling Spirit in the saints of the present dispensation. This is as widely different a thing as possible from Christ being by birth associated with the natural condition of man and of Israel, so as to be Himself in it, and so as to need to be extricated, or to extricate Himself therefrom.

It is, of course, agreed by all, that for them, as well as for us, Christ made atonement. In several of the Psalms, we distinctly hear Christ Himself pouring out the sorrows of His own soul to God, as thus bearing our sin and theirs, confessing them as His own, and appealing (wondrous, affecting, unexampled fact!) to the God—His God—who had forsaken Him! owning Him in such words as, “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” It is on the alone ground of this atoning work, that any sinner can be brought into acceptable relationship to God. It is on this ground that the remnant we are contemplating are brought into such a relationship. Now it was with the remnant of His day that our Lord did associate Himself when on earth. From the mass of the nation He did entirely disassociate Himself. Even the closest ties of kindred in the flesh had to give way. “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother.” (So also in Ps. 16:2, 3.) There “the excellent of the earth, with whom,” says Christ, “is all my delight,” are set by Him in contrast with “those who hasten after another god.” He identifies Himself with the one class; He utterly disowns the other. In like manner it was with the remnant of every period, that His

sympathies, as expressed in the Psalms, were found. And such were, I doubt not, His sympathies, that He did enter in spirit fully into all that they had, or have yet to endure; but the language in which this sympathy is expressed must not be understood as His language personally, as to His own relationship to God; but as their language, in which, by the Spirit of Christ, what becomes them in their state is uttered; and uttered, not in the measure of their dark and imperfect apprehensions, but according to the perfectness of the Spirit, who incites the desires, and has prepared this perfect vehicle for their expression.6 * * * * *

Dearest——,—Here I should think the exercises they have gone through have acted healthfully, though they have not yet borne all the fruit, and some help is a little wanting to lead them to judge the bearing of the Lord's ways; but we are all happy as far as I know, except two, who I trust may become so, though they would be more or less exercised I dare say if let at once again. But the Lord is infallibly faithful, and never haves His sheep, nor fails in dealing with them, though that may indeed run across our ways sometimes, and so much the better if they are not His. The sifting was, I judge, needed and natural.

I trust the brethren will walk quietly, humbly and graciously. The Lord is evidently working for the deliverance of brethren; however little we have deserved it in glorifying Him, still I believe His testimony is with us. He may cause many to learn things they might not be disposed to, but He will abundantly bless if they wait upon Him and keep the word of His patience. I think through the Lord's mercy things are

getting into more healthful and divine action here, but I am very slow and feeble in my movements.

Ever affectionately yours.

Plymouth, October 25th, 1847.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Dearest——, —I write a line just to say I am arrived here, but before I can pretend to give much detail on the state of things. I trust the Lord will bless the work, but most of it has to be done here; they are slow, but there is good, which encourages.

It appears that in Switzerland two have been killed, but I have certainty of detail of only one, a woman, a wanton outrage of an individual. A man said he would have the satisfaction of firing at a momier's house, and did so; a woman just then came out of the stable, and received two balls, and died in six hours; she had been at our meeting; she died in peace, forgiving the man. They meet, and on the whole there is blessing, and they are happy. The Lord is working on in His grace.

I have received your letter. S——'s confession made me happy. I do not say his soul is fully restored, but what there is is true. I have written to him. I should look always distinctly and jealously that there was a full and definite, honest and clear recognition in small and great that they had been under the delusion of Satan, and were glad when they were out of it, without pourparlers and conditions; but when I saw this real, I should open my arms and prevent them with kindness…

We must wait to see the Lord's hand, and deal with individuals in grace according to God: but what an

instruction and humbling for all! But it is rather a moment to be quiet, unless or until God give some new call to serve in the matter…

People have not seen the end yet, but it will come.

I do not bate one particle of the decision of the position I am in… Act graciously and humbly through the Lord's goodness, but firmly from God. It is not a time to let the enemy in when he has been discovered. Kindest love to all the dear brethren. I trust they walk in peace.

Ever your affectionate brother.

Montpellier, January 11th, 1848.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Dear——,—Matters are changed, as I intimated in my last.

Error and the love of error are very distinct things. The assembly and leaders must be treated as loving error if one has to deal with them now; individuals may be different. But the world and Satan are at the bottom of it all…

I trust the Lord may enable the brethren to walk peacefully in the simplicity of the gospel, through the hubbub the enemy may make about religion. Ebrington Street was an awful school to come out of, but the Lord is mighty and gracious. I reserve all my dealings for the time the Lord may bring me into them, and trust His grace to order by the way… Discipline supposes moral competency. Whatever tenderness I may feel towards individuals, and I trust it is most fully my feeling and my heart joyfully open to them as it is, as to things I feel I

am on the ground of testimony against known and convicted evil, a ground I do not feel disposed to leave, save so far as the evil is done with, and then of course it is remembered no more. I am very glad you spoke so strongly of the Table, it was an omission in mine. But I return with full quiet abiding conviction to my original statement. I do not, as I never have from the time I left, own it as the Lord's table at all, but indeed quite the contrary.

The work opens here, and even at Nismes, apparently the most difficult, but the place for which I have perhaps the greatest confidence. We want a positive testimony in work, for nobody defends what exists—all hold it bad, though not leaving it; but I wait on the Lord. At Nismes I have a growing beginning of work, where it is in spite of the world if they come. In the village large congregations come to get blessing, where a while back they were determined not to let us in, but it is blessing to souls, including growth in apprehension, without question of principles—as far as I am concerned, at least.

Ever your affectionate.

Montpellier, February 16th, 1848.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Dear ——,—As to Plymouth affairs, I am in no hurry to leave this, that matters, or brethren rather, may quietly take their form and path in the midst of the new order of things.

It is very likely that there will be more liberty for meetings now, for the present than ever before, though

all was pretty free here, for God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. This makes more sensibly our place to be and to act for God in this world: the candlestick is only to carry the candle, and if we are thus identified with the Lord, we are in the same barque with Him. But it is a blessed thought to have only His will to do, and to be under His sure and infallible protection. We are quiet, and I trust the Lord. If difficulties arise, nothing is difficult to Him, but I have no fearful anticipations…

The great affair for brethren is to be content to be nothing but a Christian. And it is a comfort to see every one of one's previsions confirmed, and one's principles of conduct established. Were I to set to work with my hands, a thing I am much disposed to do, it is only what I desired a dozen years ago to do as an example; but all this is immaterial but in one respect— doing the will of God.

Your ever affectionate.

Montpellier, March 3rd, 1848.

To the same.]

Dearest ——,—I desire earnestly to meet in the fullest grace, beloved brethren whom I believe the Lord is recalling to comfort and peace. I have my own judgment as to the extent to which they have been delivered, but I have an increasing feeling that all this should not be allowed to drag on, and that I ought to return to restore before the Lord our relations with these brethren. I have difficulty in leaving here, when the doors are open and the Lord at work; and adversaries do not lack, nor speculations on the unbelief and weakness of faith of brethren. Still, if need be, I should trust the Lord, and if

it were His will, return here afterwards, though anxious to work in England, for the times press…

——was always somewhat ministerial—not more than I am for the substance, for it is a work of God, and he earnestly desires and seeks the liberty of the Spirit among brethren, but more in form—he would direct in it more than I should; but Christ being his sole desire, it has never in the smallest degree hindered co-operation: only I think in certain acts he has broken down as not being guided of God. But it seems to me there is somewhat of a want of simplicity in all this beating about. I have made plain accusations of untruth, at the same time avowing that I believed dear brethren were under a delusion of the enemy. Has this been cleared up? Let it be cleared up in the fullest grace, for which my heart could not I trust be more ready, though it may be weak; but do not let us cavil at accounts instead of meeting the Lord. I am willing to answer for my statements, and when grace has solved and cleared it up, put them in the fire. I ought not to shirk the responsibility of having made them; I do not the least, and I desire to act in the fullest grace as regards those to whom they have been made. And the Lord will be with those who seek a healing with and from Him… I rejoice with my whole heart in the comfort of the saints at Plymouth, give them my kindest love. They have been, so to speak, companions in sorrow there, and that is always a bond, and I bear them witness they have walked in much love and grace with and towards me, and certainly I felt it towards them, as they had just claim.

Ever your affectionate.

Montpellier, March 8th, 1848.

[From the French:

Very dear Brother,—I write a line in haste, having at heart the course of the brethren with regard to these elections which are about to take place. I found that the brothers at V. had scarcely reflected at all on the bearing of an act which was making them take part in the course of the world. Thanks be to God, from the moment when that was presented to them they saw the thing, and, I hope, clearly. This has led me to think that perhaps the brothers near you may not have reflected upon it either. It seems to me so simple that the Christian, not being at all of this world, but united to Him who died and rose again, has no business to mix himself up with the most declared activity of the world, by an act which affirms his existence as belonging to the world, and his identification with the entire system which the Lord is about to judge; that I think the truth has only to be presented in order to be acknowledged by those who have understood their position; so much the more that these events7 place the world more manifestly (not more really) on its own ground, but more really near the great catastrophe which is about to fall upon those who rise up against God. Oh how my soul longs that His people should be separated to Him, and even with understanding of what is awaiting the world, and still more of what they ought continually to await themselves! May God give the grace to be faithful in bearing this testimony, and everywhere, according to the door that He will open, in season and out of season; for His own, so dear to Him, need it.

Events are hastening on, dear brother, and yet as to us we are waiting for but one, that our Beloved, our Saviour should come. His coming becomes a resource, as it has long been a joy to us, and a reality still more precious, and more near. May we expect it continually; God alone knows the moment. The Christian takes cognizance of the events which are taking place, as a testimony to the one who understands; but his thought, his desire, his portion, is much more within the sanctuary than all that. But is it not true that this voting, as an act of identification with the world (in the very forms which it assumes in the last days), ought to be avoided as a snare by all Christians who understood the will of God and their position in Christ? Always true (I have been acting upon it for twenty years), it is doubly true now. May peace, grace and mercy be with you, dear brother, and be multiplied to you, and may the presence and the joy of the Lord be with all the brethren who surround you. Probably I shall set out immediately for England, but in the hope of returning. Salute affectionately all the brethren.

Your very affectionate.

I think that at the end of Philippians 3, the way in which we wait for Jesus Christ as Saviour, is to deliver us finally from the whole course of this world, such as it is.

Montpellier, March 24th, 1848.

* * * * *

My dear Brother,—I most gladly answer your letter as far as the Lord enables me: perhaps we shall see each other, the Lord willing, in Dublin soon. I distinguish entirely between the church and prophecy. I do not believe the church is the subject, though it is the

recipient and depositary of prophecy, as Abraham was of what should happen to Lot. The church has its own proper present relationship to Christ, out of which the scripture does not know it, but it (having received the Holy Ghost) has the mind of Christ. You may except the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, but which is really description, not prophecy of events, though connected with, and closing, and crowning them, when the heavenly government is brought into full connection with the earth.

Prophecy gives the career of earthly events, the wickedness of man, or the dealings of God. But the church is not earthly; its life is hid with Christ in God; it has its place with Christ while He is hidden; when He appears it will appear; we await the manifestation of the sons of God. Hence it was hid in God from the foundation of the world (Eph. 3), and the prophets do not speak of it. Only it is true that it maintains (or ought to have maintained) the testimony to the kingdom, during the interval of the rejection of the Jewish witness. As inheriting the promises as being in Christ the seed of Abraham, it comes in and maintains by divine wisdom their constancy and unfailingness. But the age is the same age as that in which Christ was upon earth—"the harvest is the end of the age." Hence the church cannot be the subject of prophecy. It was not—as being a kind of wisdom hid in God and now made known to principalities and powers, and now it is not—the subject, but the depositary of prophecy, not earthly but heavenly, though on earth in testimony of what is heavenly, and of a hidden Christ with whom it is as one. Hence what relates to it is, as I have said, only seen when it comes

down out of heaven having the glory of God. Hence it has no place in prophecy.

We are properly nowhere, save in the extraordinary suspension of prophetic testimony, or period, which comes in between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week of Daniel, or at the end of that age which was running on when Christ was here, the close of which was suspended by His crucifixion; His return to establish it then, according to Acts 3, being precluded by the rejection of the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which followed—finally declared at Stephen's death. Whereupon the doctrine of the church in union with a heavenly Head, without distinction of Jew or Gentile, was fully revealed, and entrusted to Paul, who had joined in that rejection, in a ministry, beginning not at Jerusalem but Antioch. In the Revelation therefore, until the heavenly Jerusalem is revealed, the church is never, properly speaking, seen at all. The living creatures or twenty-four elders may be taken, as to which I do not decide, as a symbolical representation in part of those who compose it, viewed in certain positions, but I certainly apprehend that the period spoken of in the Revelation (or from chap, 4) is the interval between the removal of the church from the place of testimony, and the manifestation of it in a glorious testimony, as already stated, in chapters 21, 22. Whether this has had a partial fulfilment since the church failed in giving a testimony on earth at the beginning, and there were but a few imperfect witnesses, I will not say. I daresay it has, but whatever general principle of a year-day system may be admitted, there is no proper literal fulfilment of it, I apprehend, but in that which is to come, in which on earth as such the church will not be witness at all.

The great point for us is, to get distinctly the church's place, and the church's faith, and the church's own distinctive relationship as bride of Christ, to be revealed with Him, and to be faithful during his absence. What knowledge is given us of others, and of God's ways towards them, and of their witness when the church is not there, is dependent on the sovereignty of God in gift, and our faithfulness in our walk in our place.

The present course of events is not revealed signs to me, but the church ought to discern these times. It is the rapid, but, as I judge, for the present arrested, development of the spirit of the latter day, which will issue in apostasy and delusion on one hand, and in the forming of the Roman Empire on the other, and the preventing collision between northern and western Europe till the great catastrophe takes place in Palestine. Signs, I judge, are for those who have not been faithful enough to keep or find the bride's position (we are "children of the day"), a mercy to those in the latter-day circumstances, but which would not have been needed had they apprehended the church's place, and been separated from the world to be in it, and taken the properly heavenly place wherein we await only the marriage with the heavenly Bridegroom, who comes to receive us and takes us there where He is.

Such, dear brother, is the grand answer to your inquiry. If this, in connection with your own thoughts, suggests any difficulties, I shall be most glad for myself to hear them from you—it is thus we learn—and, if the Lord afford time, to answer them.

I write from the midst of much occupation. I have sixteen long letters to answer besides yours, so I say

adieu. Peace and grace be with you. Salute the beloved brethren with you, though I know them not by sight. In Jesus we shall know each other.

Very affectionately yours in Him.

Plymouth, May 1st, 1848.

* * * * *

Dear——,—I think there is a rather increasing impression on reflection that the Dublin Meeting was a happy one, that is, that it was not merely the joy of the moment, but blessing from God.

I feel for the Compton Street brethren, but I think that their path might have been.a simpler and happier one, and that they have somewhat complicated it themselves; however, this does not take it out of the way of the Lord's grace, nor hinder others meeting the case as it is in the wisdom and grace of His Spirit… I should trust the Bath meeting was decidedly useful; but I judge the brethren in general have moral position to recover. It seems to me that, from the character of the evil in certain points, when ascertained, they ought to have said, Mr. Darby or Mr. Anybody is not concerned here; God is in question, and the dishonour done to His name is what we have to think of as between us and you who have used it, for it was used in the most solemn way to support what is now admitted untruth. Here I think the brethren were not on the high ground the church of God ought to take. I do not speak of the evil in individuals now, but the ground the brethren were upon; they allowed themselves to be led into the question of blame to me, which was a mere subordinate question, an escape from the great point. However there it is. I feel what they did not take up, and which, in the position

they had allowed me to be put in, I could not help them in, I must take before God; that is, recognise the fact as to the state of things as work yet to be done by His grace, which I wait upon Him to do. As to myself, the Bath meeting, however disagreeable, could hardly have been more mercifully satisfactory; but I think, as I said, there was a want of moral dignity. These form elements of judgment in one's path.

The Lord is working most graciously here, and, I judge, really reviving the brethren's testimony in these latter days; but I see He will not allow half positions. How sad, but how necessary, that any should be forced to the division. Peace be with you. I wait upon the Lord to direct it all to a quiet issue—His own in grace. As far as any love on my part to the Compton Street brethren could do anything, I think I can say it would not be wanting, waiting only on the Lord for spiritual judgment.

Leeds, May 31st, 1848.

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[From the French.

Here at length, dear sister, is your turn coming, rather late, you will perhaps say; but I assure you that the letters absolutely requiring an answer are so numerous, in addition to other occupations, that I can hardly get through it, and then the consequence is, that my answers when I do write any, are so dry, that I am sorry for my friends who receive them; but I did not wish to leave yours without replying a word, and I seize a moment I have gained by dint of working. Thank God, I am very happy in my work, so that I have nothing to complain of in having work. But we have more than three hundred in communion, and the responsibility of

the course falls upon me, and you know something of what that is. They go on well, and confidence exists, and I hope increases, but it is just by paying attention to a thousand little things, and by bringing them to God, that this takes place, things that no one else perhaps hears of, but if the details of them were not cared for there would be difficulties and uneasiness, and when it is done they think all goes on by itself. This is not all I desire, but there is much happiness, and I so love to devote myself to the welfare of the dear children of God, that I am encouraged in Him even when painful little matters arise, as always happens. However, when there is confidence, every one looks to God, and these cases do not injure the general health; on the contrary, they become an occasion for unitedly seeking His wisdom and grace, and He helps us and blesses us with a sense of His presence. You know a great number of those who were still at Ebrington Street left it, being convinced of the bad doctrine, which indeed was dreadful; among others the principal teachers. This occupied me very happily, but in renewing bonds which had been so long interrupted.

As for dear Switzerland, I am indeed rather a stranger there now. My affections are not weakened, God knows; but I am His servant, too happy in being so, and in being permitted to be so, and I have had the conviction that, for the present, France is the field for labour, not at all to prevent me from going to see our dear Swiss brethren, but as a field of work. God ha3 brought several over there, and all I believe have felt it. This might easily change. Circumstances had somewhat decided the case for the moment, and God led me.

When I felt that I should pay them a visit I did so, not knowing whether I should not be sent back from the port of Ouchy itself, and all was guarded. For the present we have been able to hold our meetings, even at the Casino, a remarkable intervention of God. Now I do not know how it would be; if I thought it to be His will, I would return as before. Meanwhile I have been labouring in France. I have felt constrained to leave that country also for the moment, although doors were open on many sides, and God blessed me, and has arranged for the work being done without me, and better done I doubt not. Here I have everything to bless God for, I have seldom been able to do so much in as little time. I hope all the same soon to leave for the south, and if it is God's will, and He opens the door, it would be a great joy to me to revisit Switzerland..In these times it is doubly happy to have this precious gospel to announce to this poor world. I felt it so in our manufacturing districts, where society is really morally quite disorganised by selfishness—the masses restrained, it is true, but no bond. How happy to be able to tell them, "There is one at least who loves you," and to present Jesus to them, and Jesus in all His sympathy, as a remedy for even deeper evils than luxury and the greed of gain plunge them into.

What a world we are living in, if one knows something of the details, and views them with the eye of God. It is surprising what peace the thought of the return of Jesus gives, and not a selfish peace, for He will restore happiness to the world, and re-establish moral relations according to His mind; judgment will unite with righteousness, and then the goodness of God will shine forth in happiness. However, in the midst of the French

Revolution, where all was disorder and alarm, I was afraid of losing in some measure the height of my expectation: I had been very happy in the thought of His coming, from the point of view of the heavenly home, united to Him where He will be. When the Revolution broke out, His return became rather a resource than a purely heavenly joy. I blessed God that there was such, but I feared that would lower the feeling a little, but I was very happy. The only thing I found rather troubling me, was the reports of all kinds which were filling minds, but I refused to listen to them any longer, and I never (so) felt how God keeps His people through everything, and that His care was independent of everything, and above everything; this did me much good. The Christian passes through the world happy, if he does so through love to the Lord, when the world is peaceful, and then there is nothing to lose, when the world is against him. But I felt deeply that not a hope, not a joy, nothing was lost if everything broke up. As for personal danger, there really was no question of that unless some unexpected circumstances arose; but as for complete ruin here below, it was never seen so near, and it is well. But one learns in all circumstances that Christ is all. What I desire is that He may be so completely everything in the secret of each day, that it may be an accomplished fact in the outward relations of life; that faith may detach, so that there is nothing to break, nothing to lose, except what God recognises in a certain sense, our bonds with the church here below, for Christ exercises our affections in this way to make Himself everything to our souls in every way; but our hearts are so dreadfully frivolous that we need it.

I have been happy and blessed in writing in French on 1 Samuel since I have been here. One ever learns more, and learns it everywhere, that all is spoiled here below; Ichabod is written on the relations of God Himself with the world, at least, of men with Him. But then one finds that faith finds its way through all. Jonathan could act, and David could suffer, and acting with an energy that had no equal, silence it when the divine instinct of the Spirit's leading shewed him the way, and retire towards God, instead of being driven from His presence by evil, or revenging himself when an opportunity occurred. The fear of God is a very remarkable element in the power of faith in his character; and in what a touching way God came to his help in the case of Nabal. Abigail had got further into intelligence of the ways of God, it appears to me, than Jonathan; the latter is a remnant more purely Jewish: he does not suffer with David, whereas Abigail apprehended his position. Saul is only a man in her eyes, and she takes part in his (David's) sufferings; when God has judged Nabal she has much more the character of the remnant which becomes the church.

But I must stop; I am using your mind as a piece of blank paper, on which I jot down my thoughts, and it is quite possible there are better ones, but you see what a letter for a man who has no time. I have only one precious word to say to you: keep close to Jesus, you know you will find there joy, strength, and that consciousness of His love, which sustains everywhere and makes everything else become nothing; there is our life and our happiness…

I am really too much of a stranger, but the circle enlarges, and the difficulty of visiting them all increases.

Peace and the love of Jesus be with you, dear sister. Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Plymouth, June 11th, 1848.

* * * * *

Dearest ——, —We are, thank God, very happy here, though there is much to gain, yet I believe He is working really, and there is a happy spirit… What a mercy when the blessed Lord acts in the church—rest of course we cannot expect here; the trial of faith is connected with praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. But there is that kind of rest which is in going from strength to strength, a rest to refresh for journeying in the wilderness. And hence the importance of that kind of faith that works in the dark. It is not met, as the reverse is, by “he shall not see when good cometh;” but when this is rested in, it soon wanes; God will not give us what would take the eye off the end, because this alone fully gives the moral trial which exercises and purifies— yea, gives intelligent capacity for the end. The Christ, seen, leads into the capacity for enjoying and being with Him at the end. This I believe was absolute and perfect in Him; hence, “the author and finisher of faith.” The point for us is to rest-in the arm pf the Lord, whatever may be, and not run to get help elsewhere, or before, as He meets in power moral perfect-ness, whether full as in Christ, or in degree or detail: this is the great burden of the Psalms. The judgment of God in this sense is but the bringing the display and sanction in power, of principles acted on, when apparent power—nor its open exercise—was not seen.

And this, I take it, is the bearing of prophecy. Some will have principles in it, some naked facts as testimony, but I apprehend that the facts, which we have to take quite simply however, are the display of God's power in judgment of, and public sanction of, certain principles as approved of Him. I nave the principles, I have them, but have them in practice by the way, and then judgment returns to righteousness; and so righteousness and peace meet. All this is connected with prophecy; but we have a higher thing, the affections which flow out of relationships with Christ—present, though not fully accomplished relationship. And these affections do form morally, and in the sweetest way, more than in mere righteousness. And to this, I take it, the coming of the Lord and the marriage of the Lamb is the answer, not judgment: still, the other is true, and hence I distinguish between the coming of the Lord and prophecy (though this last by the way), though one acts on the other, because He has associated us with His competency to judge the world and all, though the authority is with Him. But this shews what a very high place the church is in.

Ever very affectionately yours.

Plymouth, July, 1848.

Dearest ——, … And now to the other point you ask about. It is well to remember that symbolical statements are a language, but a language, like others, modified by the context. I have no doubt that [Revelation] 12 begins a new subject. That is, the definite bringing out of the details of the introduction of divine government in the Person of the Son of man, King of kings, and Lord of lords, not the mere general preparatory actings of

providence, but the immediate agents in the scene. Verse 19 of chapter 11 is rather introductory to chapter 12, than in its right place. The temple of God is opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant which secures the blessing of His people is seen there. It is not merely the throne there, nor the rainbow, but the ark of the covenant; of this on earth Israel we know was the centre; this, in which we know the government of the earth is concerned, is what we now enter on—chapter 12, introduces the parties. A woman clothed with the sun and twelve stars on her head, and ready to be delivered, and the dragon ready to devour the child. The child then is born, caught up, and the woman (now seen in her actual condition) flies into the wilderness for 1260 days; this I judge is the last three and a half years. This, note, closes this part. Verse 7 begins another division. In the opening part the woman is seen in the thoughts of God, and I apprehend is the vessel of the accomplishment of His purpose, perfectly weak in herself, but out of which strength is to come, and which is to be clothed with supreme authority, the twelve stars being perfection in humanity (as seven, spiritual things), or rather completeness, as twelve tribes, apostles, &c. The moon—I have somewhat more difficulty, but will say a word in a moment of it. Now this is, in fact of accomplishment on earth, to be in the Jews, and I Judge that when we arrive at the historical fads, we get into the Jewish people as owned of God. Now to them Christ the Son was born (though they owned Him not at first, but now we are speaking of God’s view of the matter). The Son and the strong one who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, was born to this people in the view of God, and as Benoni in anguish and agony (Benjamin is, I doubt not, a type of Christ in strength as head of the

Jewish people, as people of His exaltation—meanwhile over Gentiles and to God's throne), but when born He does not use the power, nor deliver, but is caught away; but then as Israel is the matter in question, nothing is introduced of church connection, and the woman (Israel) owned of God on earth, but not delivered, flies, and is the object of Satan's rage, the Man child having gone where he cannot touch Him. Now the church is only brought in as being identified with Christ Himself, here according to the promise of Thyatira.

Thereupon the historical course of events is gone into, which leads to the driving out of the woman, and the real character of the period, from verse 7 to the end of verse 17.

Now as to the moon under her feet, I take it, it relates to the entire setting aside of the old phases of Israel, as responsible to God; without the man, and security of Messiah, this character she had lost; she was not. to blow up the trumpet in the new moon—God's restoring the reflection of His power or light rather than keeping up the light where the sun was not. She was permanently clothed with the sun itself; she was not the sun, but she was clothed with it, weak as she was in herself. I do not know that I have more to add as to the general principles; the setting up the power of the kingdom, though not yet applied to the earth, is when Satan is cast down, on the war in heaven —not saving grace—this is power, but the accuser is cast down. This puts the church, if the man child refer to that (also out of the scene and historical course of events)—out of the scene, nor does it take the warrior power. The angels act here. I leave open the question how far there would be application to any who enter into the heavenlies, as the

second class who live and reign, of chapter 20. The general view I think clear: as far as I see, the whole analogy of prophetic truth and order sustains it, but I shall be glad to give any further details I may be able, and to search out any points (the Lord leading) that further questions may suggest. We are at peace, and I trust enjoying blessing here. Some seventy or upwards have returned among us since the last move and inquiry. Peace be with you, dear brother, and the Lord's near presence—our only safeguard and joy the sense of it.

Yours affectionately in our blessed Lord.

Symbols have this character, that they give the moral character as well as the facts.

Plymouth, July 15th, 1848.

* * * * *

Dearest ——,—… I cannot acquiesce in the want of faith which sets aside God's original testimony. It was just this that made me think it a very important point,8 because God is jealous; and giving up what He has purged, and so very mercifully rescued and set up again, would not be recognising and honouring His goodness; but then when you do it, as your cover shewed me, individually, that was merely a question of individual state or condition, and the question before God as to owning His goodness was dropped. If there is faith to join with the purged and renewed testimony, it is well. I do so, and have no difficulty, and I feel He is at this moment doing it, as Plymouth in its locality is witness. That the restoration is feeble on our part is true, but as such better quiet in fact as it is here. They are all coming quietly as they get free…

I have, when maliciously hinted at abroad, always openly said, the devil has done his best to upset the testimony, but, thank God, has not succeeded. Now if you or any person called of God to it, has faith for it, it might be, and I suppose would be, very right before God to consider whether any publication should be taken up on this ground if done modestly, for I think that becomes us. It would honour the Lord's goodness I believe in the way of faith; but if not, I have no difficulty as to an individual publication of papers that might profit saints on its own bottom; I see no harm in it at all. I see no need that it should be collectively done (that is, the other)—collective faith you would find hard to find now. You must have in a measure in the present state of things, faith for them, not with them. But then that sometimes begets it in them, because it brings them before God, and they find God answers it. Were I mixed up with it as editor, I should look to act upon the faith I have as to the Lord's goodness—poor enough it is after all. But I have no difficulty as to individuals acting on their own, in individual acts. As I said, as to any papers I might have that would profit, they would be for one or the other equally, nor is there any good in any one attempting to go beyond their faith…

Affectionately yours.

Plymouth, July 18th, 1848.

[From the French.

* * * Let us be happy in the thought that in cleaving to Him we shall enjoy all the brightness and the joy of His light. How happy one is to belong to Him, and. in His light to see light! How brilliant and glorious is this light to those who are from home, awaiting the rising of the

morning star and the coming of this precious Saviour, who will set them in heaven as the rays of His glory, and the jewels of His crown, as the intelligent sharers of His glory, as the bride of His heart! This star has already risen in our hearts; may it not grow dim there! May brethren learn to enter into all that Christ is in suffering and. in patience, that thus they may enjoy morally His glory when it comes. May the peace and the presence of our precious Jesus be with you all, dear brethren. He is in every way our infinite blessing.

I have been struck of late, by seeing how much more interesting David is than Solomon; for if the latter shews us more fully the time of blessing and peace under the reign of Jesus, the former presents to us the Person, the afflictions, the sufferings and the heart of Jesus, and to us this is worth all the rest.

Keswick, August 14th, 1848.

* * * * *

[From the French.

* * * The truth of God is ever more precious; it strengthens and nourishes the soul, for it abides for ever, and because it reveals Jesus, and attaches us to Him, the source and power of all good.

The misery of man unfolds itself more and more before my eyes in the word, but accompanied by this truth, that it is fleeting. I speak of the history of the world; His goodness abides for ever. What a difference there is between the history of the kings and that of Abraham! This struck me long ago. What freshness in the patriarch’s relations with God in comparison with what appeared later. One is weary of man, but on the other

hand, what patience on the part of God! For, happily, He is not wearied by man, though even an Elias was. Yet He had to save man by Himself, and in His own way. He has in no respect failed of what His counsels and His love had determined to do on his behalf. I think my mind runs a little in this direction—only we must rise above everything, and work while it is day, bearing witness to His perfect grace. We must try to rise to the height of this, and this will be in forgetfulness of ourselves.

Hull, August 20th, 1848.

Dearest——,— … The Lord is gracious, and gave perfect quiet while I passed through the Canton de Vaud. I had meetings every evening I was in it, and not a word was said. The gendarme looked at my last visa, but did not even ask my name on going into the Canton. I went through Neuchâtel and Vaud, once arrived on the scene of work, save the top of the mountain where we were on sledges, on foot with my haversack.

I confess I like this, I like it morally. The simplicity of a life of faith has charms that they do not know who never tried it. I do not speak of suffering; save taking things as they were in a cottage, there is none, but one is on simply christian ground. In the Canton of Neuchatel there is a great deal of blessing. In Vaud, the persecutions and lack of visiting have produced some languor. I trust the brethren may pray for these dear brethren. By persecutions, I mean the difficulty of meeting together. There is no particular evil, but slackened energy. We get on more simply. It is soon known one is going to pay a visit, and the brethren most able to profit, go off with their haversacks some twenty or thirty miles, and are lodged and fed as they may by

brethren, and we spend a day or two with them in reading and conference, and go on, the labouring brethren perhaps all together, to some other centre, then disperse, and visit gathering after gathering, who soon assemble if not warned already, and any persons really interested. The next morning, these able meet to read, and after eating something, strap the haversack and go to the next gathering. Such has been my life for the last three weeks, and though I have felt my feebleness, and it was on a small scale—and little notice on account of difficulties—not without sometimes most happy blessing, I trust, good and always peace.

I have understood that the effort through Bethesda is strong, but though I have felt some things a little, I have been quite at peace in the path I pursue of leaving this matter to the Lord. I wrote a line to——, as an individual. When my own judgment is clear, I am generally peaceful, and everything has confirmed it hitherto. If I am called on at any time to take any step. I shall take it with better face. The times are very serious and the enemy very active, and perhaps more immediately concerned in all these things, than many, in their earlier course at least, are apt to imagine, perhaps, as to most at any time…

Germany is religiously in ferment; oh! for labourers, who after God's heart might present Christ to souls. It is the testimony that is wanted—after that—judgment. The wickedness of the world brings grace and testimony—the failure of testimony, judgment. And we are living in serious times. A poor half-way testimony without faith is what is sought for now, when certain truths cannot be denied.

Peace be with you. Kindest love to the brethren.

Your affectionate.

Geneva, December 8th, 1848.

* * * * *

My dear Brother,— … Here there is blessing. 1 write from a small mountain town, where I have met with the workmen of some ten departments to study the scriptures together, and the Lord has been very gracious to us, and even a good many of the townspeople have come to hear the gospel, though the reproach is excessive. In the country round there are some six hundred brethren, and the work still continues. Further south the work goes on, and all are sensible that though men are slow and there is nothing very extraordinary to attract attention, the Spirit of God is at work through grace, and souls are constantly brought to God, numerous new villages and towns open, and the saints comforted, and in general walking in peace and godliness. It is certainly—though, as I said, there is nothing very outwardly remarkable—a time of blessing, and He has raised up one or two new workmen.

I am off for a five hours' walk up the mountains, to speak (D. V.) to-morrow, Lord's day, at another centre of the work on the skirts of Ardèche and Haute-Loire.

Yours affectionately.

Vernoux, March 17th, 1849.

Dearest——,— … The Lord is working for an entirely different purpose, I am satisfied, than those who are active in the matter, think. Confidence in His acting is what made me desire it should be left to its own developing… Wisdom is not always with the prudent;

“The fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil that is understanding.”

I will (D. V.) send you the Genesis. I found the first number here on my return; I have just looked at it, only having returned yesterday, having been up the country to meet the brethren at Ardèche and Haute-Loire, and the workmen of some nine or ten departments, with whom I studied for two weeks, besides the general meetings, with much blessing I hope and good to all. I think of sending you an original paper on Antichrist, in the way of inquiry… Be of good courage, the Lord is evidently working. In these countries it is evident to all. Do not be anxious about the church, as if the Lord did not care and act for it—be anxious for it. It is our life. The Lord is working for good in England, I do not the least doubt, and in waiting His time His hand will be seen, and with my whole heart I desire it may be in blessing on many I believe to be going wrong. If not, they will suffer sorely, though doubtless ultimately blessed if His, as I doubt not. But a sifting must be. I feel no surprise whatever as to any one. My only surprise, if such a word be permitted, is God’s own abundant grace to myself. But it is a sorrowful thought that many whom we cannot doubt to be saints are blind to the privilege and testimony of God. The Lord give us grace to know how to win, as how to be faithful ourselves. Nothing but His Spirit can guide us. I am again at chamber work, so I hope soon to be able to send you the papers I mention.

Ever your affectionate brother,

In our perfect, blessed Master.

Montpellier, April 3rd, 1849.

6 [Year uncertain. Published in 1859 as an “Extract from a Letter written long ago,” probably occasioned by “Observations on a Tract, entitled, Remarks on the Sufferings of the Lord Jesus,” etc., London, 1847. (See Col. Writ. vol. 15 p. 52.)]

7 [The Revolution.]

8 [The title of a paper to take the place of the original Christian Witness.]

Section 5

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[From the French.

Dear Sister,— … I am glad that you are making experience of the value of that inner life which is developed in communion with the Lord. The outward life, however blessed it be, can never give us that which is here communicated. It is the knowledge of Christ that matures the soul. It is true that to neglect our duties is not the means to make progress in it. For He communicates Himself, and we cannot command communion outside the path of His will, while in the accomplishment of that will, we dwell in His love. However, the blessedness that accompanies it never produces the effect without that which flows from having the soul exercised before God, who places it, such as it is, in connection with Himself, and with all the resources of His grace, by making it feel its condition to which that grace applies—or rather, finding occasion in that condition to communicate the knowledge of the grace. Thus the soul is more established, distinguishes better that which is of the Spirit, that which belongs to Christ from that which assumes the form of it, and knows infinitely better how to say I know in whom I have believed. But God chooses His opportunities to teach us these things, and when He has accomplished His end, the special communications of His wisdom and His love no longer continue, for He desires we should walk by faith, according to what we know we possess in Christ; but it is none the less true, that our path is in company with a Christ much better known, and in much more

communion with Him. But after having received the instruction, we have to return to the ordinary activity of a life of duty, and to those relations with our brethren in which charity is developed and exercised, as it is put to the proof, either in the assembly or in individual intercourse; unless God takes us away to enjoy the happiness for which He has prepared us by His grace—an easier and happier change. His will however is always perfect, and His grace and wisdom are found in our return to ordinary life.

Peace be with you, dear sister; I have still for some time probably, work in this country in the region of the Gard. There is a great stir there, as you may suppose, and the truth is a resting-place desired by many hearts—rather they need it, and are happy in finding it; but this takes place in spite of many prejudices—our part is to work, in grace while it is day… Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Orthez, May 6th, 1849.

* * * * *

[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—Here I am in the Pyrenees, and happy enough with the brothers, considering the short time I have seen them. I have passed one Sunday with them. There is simplicity in their meetings, which B. has cultivated. There have been conversions, and in general I see that there is a sincere desire to glorify the Lord: it is not, I think, a deep and experimental study of the word that distinguishes them, although they have received a degree of light through B.’s means. But there is a measure of freshness in their affections. I also spent nearly eleven days in Pau, where I truly felt much the

leading of the Holy Spirit, which has done me much good. One saw the word of life and truth laying hold of souls and forming them and fashioning them for Christ; I speak of souls converted or attracted. It is remarkable when God works, the manner in which the truth becomes as a living part of the soul, and this refreshes the heart… Up to what point all will persevere is what I cannot tell. Many had been of the national church before my arrival, and it was they in general who gave me the greatest pleasure, the truth had been received with the heart. Some will leave Pau, but it is a place for which we must pray, for there are people opposed who will seek a middle course suitable to lead away souls. But I have left them however with joy, feeling that I can trust them to God. This visit has refreshed me. We also read together every day. I have also been at Clairac; there is some good there, and a few persons who feel the need of something better, and I hope that God is working there also. Good is being done also it appears at Nerac. I was not able to go to St. Foy. But these places are worth the trouble of caring for them, and praying for them, for God is working there.

It was only yesterday that I returned here, and I hardly know the state of the work, but I believe that doors and hearts are open to good, but that the actual measure of it is small. Anyway, there has been an evident movement of the Spirit. What need we have to cast ourselves entirely on Him in the work, and how simple it is when we do this! There is one thing that gives strength, it is to keep close to Christ. God works at the same time for us, and gives us refreshment, but our part is to keep close to the Lord. The pressure of the work without that, even of that work which is our duty and our business down

here, contracts the heart, tends to make us lose that largeness of heart, that capacity of presenting the love of God freshly to souls, which alone can truly introduce into this world the element that it needs—that these poor souls, withered and unhappy through sin, have need of; and if one has a heart large and full of love apart from this nearness to Jesus, the love evaporates itself into mysticism, in that which is human under pretext of being divine. It is not that I believe that in the work one will be always in that liberty which sees all in the light. It is necessary to walk by faith, sometimes. Alas, tremblingly at least, the best workmen have borne witness to it; a St. Paul, an earthen vessel, himself responsible, placed in a contest between the Lord and the enemy of souls, will feel sometimes the shock of the battle, seeing that it takes place in him and by him and the forces that are engaged. It is true that the Holy Spirit always places us beforehand in the pure and fresh region of a redemption which leaves no longer any question of sin for us. The flesh being in us, we shall be all the more confused, if there is not practical diligence, but we are there.

After all, it is but for a little while, and to form us for the enjoyments which surpass all that we can conceive, but of which we have sometimes glimpses as to their nature; and. being rooted and grounded in love, we possess the place and source of it all. It is a profound source of joy to know that the God whom I know, who is mine, is He whom I shall know for eternity, and that I do not need another. I know Him in Jesus, I have known Him as Father, it is He whom my heart desires, and whom my heart knows. There is not another, nor could be, that one should desire or know—the only true God. There is a

difference between desire and love. Desire has need of something for itself, holy though it be; love possesses and delights in that which is its object. Now God in revealing to us the perfection of our salvation, has placed us in this latter position; only being infinite, He is always in Himself that which gives this energy that seeks the knowledge of Him—depths in Himself beyond what we possess of Him. But it is in Christ that all our thoughts are adjusted, set right, judged and purified; for the infiniteness of God Himself staggers the littleness of the heart of man when Christ does not give him a sure support; without depriving him of anything of the fulness which is in God, but quite the contrary, it is in Him that we appreciate what He is, and near Him. This is what is found in St. John; we dwell in love, in God; where do we find ourselves? By this we know love, because He gave His life for us; what more true, more simple, more real, more near to the heart? and a love accomplished, proved, and that certainly is ours.

I close. I am constantly thinking of Nismes, but I wait on God. I have been so retarded in my work and movements, that I hardly know how to arrange for the season of work, but God will shew us, and I have always a visit to the mountains at heart, to see those dear brethren. Salute them warmly for me. May the blessing of God rest on your family.

Your affectionate brother

In our dear Saviour and Master.

A sort of meeting for worship that had been sought to be formed here near us, is already affected. It appears that God will not recognise these efforts to form half-and-half things. What a motive for us to seek with faithfulness

and energy His full blessing., and to seek it near to Him! I am sorry to write to you with so little profit, but I did not wish to defer longer my reply to your note.

Montpellier, 1849.

* * * * *

[From the French.

Dear Brother,—While travelling I read your “Life of Madame de Krüdener,” and I must tell you that it did me good. Occupation, without any relaxation, tends, if one is not very near the Lord, to impair the most intimate affections; and when the details of the work constitute the chief part of such occupation, they tend to narrow the heart. It is not so, the moment one is near Him; then, on the contrary, such details exercise the best affections, and we delight ourselves more in Him. It was so with Christ, because His life of details flowed from the fact that He lived by His Father, and was nothing else than the perfect manifestation, in Man, of what the Father was; the produce of a heart filled with perfect love, the expression of an infinite love.

The life of Madame de Krüdener, which was passed outside the narrowness of secondary questions, recalled to me this love; for she certainly had a heart of spiritual love for the Lord; and, for my part, I have no difficulty in judging the things that are to be condemned in her walk, so that I need not dwell upon them. The one who is constantly a working bee within the hive, is free to gather only honey when he alights on flowers in the open air, whatever they may be. But I will say a few words as to what strikes me when I consider mysticism, as it is found in its best forms in M adame de Krüdener and others.

Desire and love may be very exactly distinguished. Desire supposes the capacity to enjoy the thing we desire, that is to say spiritual affections, which as to their very nature, have God for their object; it supposes one to be born of Him, though Satan often, in an astonishing manner, imitates this class of feelings; but this state also supposes that one does not possess what one desires. Love supposes that we have full possession of the object of our desires. It is no longer a need for oneself, but it is enjoyment, appreciation, in delighting in it, of the object itself. Now mysticism, while boasting much of its feelings, never gets beyond desire; while simple Christianity, giving the knowledge of salvation, puts us into full possession of the love of God. I know that He loves me as He loves Christ; that love has saved me; it was He who desired me. In love He had need of me; and this love is perfection in Christ. In peace I contemplate this love, and I adore it in Christ. I dwell in Him and He in me.

I have never seen a mystic whose idea of love was not entirely at fault in its very nature; it was something in man, which needed to be satisfied, instead of being something in God, which satisfied the heart profoundly, infinitely, and perfectly. Thence, unheard-of efforts to abase oneself, to vilify oneself, and to speak evil of oneself, as if a saved one could be anything in the presence of a Saviour, instead of being nothing and forgetting himself in the presence of so much love. When one is truly delighted in the presence of God, and beholding His excellent beauty in His temple, is one occupied with the hideous forms which hide themselves in the heart of man? I think not. We think of Him. He has given us the right to do so, by a grace which has really

set aside all that we were as alive out of Christ, as in the flesh. Do we then make no humbling experience of self? I say not so. Yes, there are moments when God reveals to us the frightful secrets of that heart in which no good exists; but we do not boast, we do not say much of it, if we have truly seen God. If we try to find in man, in his love to God, something as good as the love of God to us, then we talk about it, and fancy we are humbling ourselves. This is but the vanity of the heart which knows not God, and knows not itself either; it is the true character of mysticism.

But does not such a sight of God produce a humiliating knowledge of self? Yes, when we have not known what we are, nor known the gospel which gives us the right to say, “It is no more I that live.” Such was the case with Job, as with many others. He had thought of himself, of the grace in him; then he had to learn himself in the presence of God. But the gospel is the answer to all these disturbances in the soul, by the revelation of what God is, and of what God has done for him whom He knew to the bottom, just as he was, and who has learned, in the cross of Jesus, what the love of God is when there was nothing but sin, and sin seen by God as we could not see it, but seen only to be the occasion of a perfect work of love.

God, His holiness, His majesty, His righteousness, His love, has found His rest in the work and Person of Christ: I have found mine there. The mystic never has rest, because he vainly seeks in man what he ought to seek in God, who had accomplished all before he ever thought about it. This is why they seek a disinterested love; but where? In man! Poor worshippers of man, deified in their imagination; of a man who will never be

found. Here, sin is in him; in heaven he will think only of God. This is why the imagination plays so great a part in mysticism, and Satan can so often deceive by it, because the imagination and the heart of man are called into play. I do not say that spiritual affections are never there: far from it; nor that God never reveals Himself to such affections. I doubt not that He does, and thus renders the person happy, but you will find him, after all, occupied with these affections and not with Him. It is the chief defect of mysticism. In a word, I see in it an effort of the human heart, trying to produce in itself something strong enough in the way of affection to satisfy a heart awakened by the excellence of its Object: for I am now supposing a true awakening of the heart.

In Christ I see a divine heart, reflecting the perfect certainty of a love whose perfection cannot be questioned. It is peace. Now He says to us, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” What peace is expressed in those words:— “I know that thou hearest me always, but because of the people that stood by I said it.” This peace is ours. (1 John 5:14, 15.) What peace even in those words, “I know whom I have believed,” as well as in so many other passages.

Are there not, then, these exercises of the soul’s desire before God? Yes; but this again brings out a marked difference. Before having understood redemption through the cross and our portion in Christ, which is its consequence, the awakened soul is exercised; it often seeks peace and rest in a spiritual progress and love for God which are never found: but the effect of all this exercise, under grace, is to bring the conscience into play and to produce the conviction of its uselessness; that in us, that is in our flesh, dwells no good thing.

Conscience takes full account of what passes in the heart and of what we are, so that we are brought to renounce all attempt to find peace in the state of our souls. We need to be pardoned, saved; we place ourselves at the foot of the cross, but not as having immutable affections. We have discovered that we have them not; and it is not only the heart which is troubled by this, although that is the case, but conscience knows that we are lost, dead under condemnation. We see things as they are in the presence of God; we need to be saved. We no longer seek good in ourselves, under the form of divine affections, but we find it in God, in His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus; we have peace.

Have the deep affections with which the cross inspired me ceased, because I am no longer crushed with the sense of need? No; conscience has intervened, and has set me in my place. What God has done, what He is, has given me peace; and now I have divine leisure (because nothing is uncertain in my relations) to contemplate that which is perfect in the object of my affections, without being occupied with myself.

The mystic humbles himself because he still hopes to find good in himself, or he occupies himself in this, as if there might be some, and he finds only evil. The Christian is humble (and that is quite another thing), because he has given up seeking good in himself, to adore the One in whom there is nothing else. Now it is not that he deceives himself, but that the intervention of conscience, by the light of the Spirit and the truth, has put him in his place. I believe, for example, that Madame de Krudener only fully reached that position in her last illness. This is what often happens. The Moravians, while sweetly enjoying Christ, often remain

at this point. She was under the obligation of love; a true thing, but she did not know it. She knew that God was love, but she wished to be it also; and this is closely allied to pride of heart, until we have taken our place, as dead in our trespasses and sins, and have understood love towards us in that Christ died, and that we are dead and risen in Him.

The truth is this: there is still conflict, because the flesh is in us, and the Holy Ghost has sometimes to occupy us with ourselves, and to humble us. God being infinite and His work perfect, there is always in Him, even when our peace is perfect, that which awakens all the energy of an affection which cannot satisfy itself, although perfectly assured of the love of Him whom it beholds. This suits the relations of a creature with God, and it is happiness for us and does not detract from our peace. It is quite a different thing from the mystic desire to love, which is true, but which turns upon self, because it knows neither God nor self. Yet I find my heart so cold that it sometimes does me good, because I know well enough that I was lost and am saved, not to mix this with my knowledge of a free salvation, accomplished without me, and which fully glorifies God, and God alone: but it often does harm to souls who have not been emptied before God, not having had the work transferred from the heart to the conscience in His presence.

It is astonishing from how many errors this delivers, without a word being said. My human affections may attach themselves to the Virgin, but conscience … ? Is there any blood-shedding there? The Virgin is no more, as to that, than the most miserable sinner: she is a creature before God. Purgatory, the pretended repetition of the sacrifice, absolution, holy unction, and many other

things vanish without controversy, like shadows, like apparitions of darkness in the face of the light, before a conscience which has already found itself, such as it is, in the presence of God, and has there been thoroughly purged by the knowledge of His work in Christ. The needs of conscience may throw a sincere soul into these superstitious practices, but for a purged conscience which knows God they are nothing. This is what gives me such horror of a system which traffics with the terrors of conscience to hide the love of God; manifestly the work of the enemy. But see, to say no more, in the Epistle of John, which touches the borders of mysticism, but with the finger of God, in what a manner, side by side with the highest elevation of communion with Him, he always replaces the soul on the simple ground of salvation by objective faith. This is what corrects the heart of man with his wings of Icarus. (Chap. 4:7-10, and even the whole chapter.)

Now, a few words upon your work. You are conscious that it is rather intended for the world, so that it must be considered with respect to this. A life of Madame de Krüdener carries us into the midst of emperors, queens, and titles. I make up my mind to it. One loves to see grace everywhere; that grace which despises neither great nor small. However, the ways of God are different when He acts in the power which is proper to Him. The world is then left in its true place, and His Son, and His apostles, and His servants, are arraigned before the great men sitting as a tribunal, and this turns for a testimony. It is thus that God causes His voice to penetrate into places most distant from Him, while preserving, in its perfection, the character of His own, and of that which belongs to Himself. I admire His grace

which deigns to act otherwise; but I admire His perfection such as He has Himself presented it to me.

I have said that I take for granted the worldly form of the book, and that thus you have left to each the responsibility of forming a judgment for himself on the worldly life of Madame de Krüdener, by passing lightly, and without remark, over her wanderings; the grace which pardoned all, being the true contrast to the evil. It seems to me, however, that while admitting the principle that it is a life you are writing and not a sermon, the fact of having left her husband a second time, after his great indulgence towards her—of having again formed painful connections at Paris (and I would insist even more on the first step)—shewed a want of conscience and of moral spring in Madame de Krüdener, that the world even could and ought to have felt. Her husband, it is true, was no husband as to the inward ties of her moral existence; but the kindness which replaced her anew in a moral position ought to have awakened the sense of it if one had it. I think that this reproduced itself, and is found again in her spiritual wanderings, for the ways of God are righteous.

I have yet another objection to make to you. It seems to me that your desire to win the world, has led you to the mistake of introducing the letter from Monsieur de Fregeville. I do not admit that even the world calls such things “a pure homage.” After these remarks, which I make in all freedom, I come to her life after her conversion.

Her devotedness inspired me with the deepest interest. It is refreshing in this selfish world, the slave of formality, which is of use to hide itself behind because it

is too ugly to be seen, and to preserve its selfishness as intact as possible without avowing it—a world without heart—a world without independence because it is without heart—it is refreshing, I say, to find something which overleaps the barriers and acts from motives which shew heart and love—that love which is the only true liberty.

Thus the devotedness of Madame de Krüdener interested me much, and also humbled me. The little that I have had of it in my life makes me enjoy hers, and it has been so little that it makes me admire what I see in her. But here also I find the ways of God. When the devotedness came directly from Him and was manifested in her ways, the energy found there became realised in a result which was altogether of Him, and was preserved from the seductions of the enemy. Now God can never abandon His ways. If man abandons them, even while devoting himself, the complement is of the enemy under one form or another. One sometimes wonders that a good part of the life of a devoted and spiritual person should be spent in mistakes and wanderings; one asks oneself how the presence of the Spirit of God, necessary to produce this life, comports with these mistakes. I say, on the contrary, that as regards the government of God, it is a necessary consequence. Can God place His stamp of approval upon that which is contrary to His thoughts? Will He refuse blessing in answer to real devotedness, because there is error? He cannot sanction the former, nor refuse Himself to the latter. What is the consequence? Blessing is found, as well as His tender care. He maintains the foundation even through ail the wanderings, but He abandons to their natural consequences the evil, and the

false confidence which accompany it; otherwise He would be justifying evil.

If the work of Madame de Krüdener had had the character of that of Paul, the seal of God would have been upon that which was contrary to His will. The mercy of God does not permit this. An ardent woman, hasty, full of imagination, acting under impressions and influences, subject to the excitement of circumstances—such was Madame de Krüdener. The principle at bottom being divine, that is found in the work: Satan meddles with it; he always makes use of the flesh when we allow it to act. This is the history of all these eases. If people judged themselves healthily, if they were in the truth before God, there would be no difficulty in unravelling them. But God does not explain these things to those who have them not; this would be again to sanction evil, although He may bring us out of this state by grace, and He is faithful not to allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. If we wait upon Him there is no danger. If we rush on, He must let us see the consequences of it. If there exists the foundation of that which is spiritual, it will be found again in eternal happiness; but, in the government of God, each thing brings its own consequences. He can, in grace, and honouring the instrument, make use of a repentant and devoted woman; He has done it in His grace; but an excited woman, and one who it seems to me was little sensible of what she had been, is not a perfect instrument according to the ways of God, for carrying on a work. We see the consequences of this, in order that the perfection of the ways of God may be known.

I believe even that a certain state of things in the kingdom of God, in Christians, does not admit of a

perfect instrument and mode of action according to the thoughts of God. It would be out of place; it would not even do His work. It may remain an extraordinary thing, but I do not know what the apostle Paul would do (or rather Paul would not know what to do) in the actual state of things. God always knows what to do, because He is above all. He will judge at the end. He will cause His grace to shine forth by translating into the glory those who are faithful in the confusion; but the creative energies of a perfect order are not suited to the confusion and moral culpability which result from having spoiled that order. It would be to dishonour that fresh light of a new affection of which Christ is the centre and object. Christ Himself begins with—"Blessed, blessed;" it was natural that this should come forth from the heart of Him who came from heaven; but He ends with "Woe unto you, woe unto you." Was it that His grace had diminished? No indeed, it had but been tested, approved more glorious, His unfailing faithfulness more than ever assured to our hearts. But He could not be at the end what He was at the beginning. It is the same with the work. But, the love and blessedness of the one who understands this grace are greater than before. Paul, in the Epistle to the Philippians, is more matured, knows himself more profoundly in Christ, than when in all the energies by which he confounded his adversaries. His experience of Christ is more complete, and his heart thus more perfect in its feelings. Elias can be compared with Moses, for they were together the companions in glory of the Saviour on the Mount; but Elias, in presence of the golden calves, could not make a tabernacle as Moses did. He was, for that very reason, a still more striking witness of the grace of God.

One more remark about Madame de Krüdener, without doubt less important, but that I believe to be true. There was with her a lack of spiritual originality, not of sincerity; this serious defect betrays itself also in her work, and, among other things, has given it its character. She received impressions from Jung Stilling, from Oberlin, from Tersteegen, from Maria Kummrin. Perhaps this was natural in a woman, but that is why a woman cannot be a principal agent in the work. It is foreign to the ways of God. She may help, greatly help, but not be a principal agent; she may do things a man could not do, but not do what he does. This is true in a more important point of view. She could not receive directly from Christ, impulsion for a position which He did not give her. The love of Christ was there; the impulsion came from elsewhere. Now, when it is Christ Himself who sets the heart in motion, He acts upon the new man, as He also forms in us that new man which the wicked one touches not. His presence acts upon the conscience, silences the flesh, reduces the man to nothing—his vanity, his self-love, and his good opinion of himself; the whole man is judged in His presence, and the work produced is of Christ Himself, whatever may be the vessel. If there is danger of its being otherwise, a thorn in the flesh is sent.

When we receive our impressions, our impulsions second hand, the flesh and the heart are not judged at all, although the love of Christ may be in us. The flesh and the heart are reproduced anew, and the agent is exposed, by the very fact of his activity, to all sorts of snares of the enemy, which, on their part again, are reproduced in the work. This was the case with Madame de Krüdener; but she certainly will not lose the fruit of

her devotedness, of-which I do not in the least, for my own part, doubt the sincerity. But there was too much of man with her, and man is always false. This is so true (it is important to notice it) that, while tasting the love of Christ, she never really knew the gospel, as being herself in the presence of God, until her last illness; and then she immediately perceived that she had often mistaken her imagination for the voice of God; for it is only there that man dies, and that God is seen alone, such as He is. Now as long as man is not dead, Satan can make use of him, and spiritual discernment is wanting. The fact of the accomplishment of the visions proves nothing in these things. All that also accompanies the power of the enemy; but the spiritual man, being humble, easily judges these things when God places him before them, and when he takes the word of God as the absolute guide of his judgment.

These, you will say, are remarks on Madame de Krüdener, and not on my work; except a few words of blame, you have said nothing about it: this is a poor compliment. You are mistaken. Compliments, it is true, I do not make; but the best, the true praise of a work is, that it produces thoughts in him who reads it, and such has been the effect of your work.

I have pointed out to you the defect, which has appeared to me to spoil it a little; then, from the point of view of the book itself, I believe it unimprovable except the letter of M. de Frégeville; for I do not think that at this moment you could place yourself in the presence of Christ, to relate the things and present them from the point of view that you have done in this work.

In our state of imperfection, every moral position has its own season; where, instead of starting clear from the perfection and riches of Christ, we work ordinarily in purifying ourselves, and reproduce ourselves, alas, in our work, while thinking to judge everything.

In the life of Madame de Krüdener, it would be important to know what formed her habitual reading; it betrays itself sometimes. Oberlin may be recognised. He was a devoted man, but with an unbridled imagination, a noted heretic, whose errors bear their fruits now, when what man, and even the church admire, is lost and forgotten; for the judgment of God is not that of man. Tersteegen also may be recognised: I do not know if one could trace any others; but this would be one element of that which formed Madame de Krüdener's public character. It is well, in order not to feed the vain curiosity of the public, that your volumes contain so little of the views which acted so powerfully upon her life; yet in order to judge healthily of it, we should need to know a little more…

Montpellier, May 29th, 1849.

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[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—It is indeed the force of Ephesians 4 that you particularly point out, but you must not forget to what the church is destined in the age to come and for ever, when there will be there no power to counter-balance, as in 1:11, 12, 2:7, 5:2/7, &c.—our own relationships with the Lord; but what you say is truly what ought, to be at the present time, and it is this which has failed so sadly. Alas, my heart is always most painfully affected by it; but we await His glory. We must

remember that priesthood does not apply to the church as seen in Christ, but to individuals such as they are in fact; and it maintains the relations of such beings with, or in a position such as, that of the church seen in Christ; that is to say, perfect, leaving out of count that which is down here in it. Here may come in the idea that applies to every thought of God", with regard to that which is down here, that is to say, as having sentiments, movements of heart, &c, in view of what is passing; and in a certain sense the expression of it is human, but it is the imperfect expression of a reality. Priesthood does not touch the question of our perfection, save that that perfection has placed us in a heavenly position before God in Christ, in regard to which it is a question of maintaining poor feeble creatures on the earth. Sometimes the idea of our heavenly perfection in Christ obscures the thought of priesthood; for me it is the basis of it. Is it your thought; or only that that which is done necessarily and perfectly in heaven is presented as a function which is in exercise? The word of God speaks in fact as to children, but it is in order that that which is true may thus be within the reach of children.

As to my movements, dear brother, I am more than ever ignorant; I have just had a short but very severe illness. I had an attack in my head by the hand of God, in such a manner as to cut the thread of my moral life; of what will result from it for my career I know little. I was habitually throughout that illness in deep peace, which has done me good, but it has greatly separated me from the course of my ordinary life, and I do not know when that will be resumed. I am better, but I do not yet apply my head in an orderly way. The mountain would do me good, but there are two accounts on which it is possible

that God will raise up work to me, and until I set to work I can hardly say. Also I am very poor for travelling at this moment, but I will write you a line, God willing; but I should like you, beloved brother, to develop a little your thought as to priesthood.

I do not doubt that there is a divine manner of seeing, which differs from the communications made to us who understand but in part, but the communication that is made to us is divinely suited to produce in us, as far as that can be according to our finite capacity, the effect and idea of the reality of that which is seen divinely above, so that it is the truth as far as we are capable of it, the truth for us. Nothing else would be expressed: otherwise in its elevation we should understand nothing; in a lower way the height of the divine thought would not be expressed. It is like Christ Himself, God manifest in flesh; God, but within reach of man, always such that He could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”—so with divine communications. I do not know if this is your thought, tell me in one word. I have not F.’s address, otherwise I should have written to him. Tell him there are many things to cause joy in the winnowing, though one may be feeble in it.

Your very affectionate.

I am still feeble, but much better.

Montpellier, June 12th, 1849.

* * * * *

To the same.]

[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—It seems to me that what you present as the thought of the Epistle to the Ephesians, is

one of the most striking, but it is not particularly that of chapter 4. There is yet another very important one, namely, that Christ, and the church by Him and united to Him, will have dominion over all things, all the works of God, in blessing, when Satan is outside the scene. In this is the difference on this point, between this dispensation and that which is to come. During this one, by the power of the Holy Spirit we glorify the Lord (at least, we ought to do it) in presence of the evil, and in spite of its power; whereas, in the age to come, the Lord will have set aside the power of evil by the exercise of His own in judgment, and will govern creation in blessing according to the power of the Lord to do what is good. Only fallen man will be still in his weakness, and one will learn to distinguish better that which is of him and of the enemy; and man will be left without excuse when after all he falls, as soon as the enemy is let loose.

But this recalls to mind another part of the Epistle, that is to say, the intimate relationship between the church and Christ Himself, its internal relationships without regard to its relations with that which is apart from Christ; and this positive relationship is that which is most intimate of all and precious. This procures for us also His continual care that we may be a bride suited to Him, then that He may present it to Himself formed morally by the word, and then glorified by the powerful hand of Him who is its Head without spot and without wrinkle. We must not forget either the important accessory truth of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, not only as seal of the individual, but to form the body and animate its members. It is also remarkable that in the midst of all this, the Spirit of God makes the

exhortations the occasion of introducing our position of dear children before God, that we may imitate Him.

I do not quite know what you mean at the end of your letter, unless it is that priesthood is a way of expressing that we are perfect in Christ. But if that is the thought, I do not believe it is right, dear brother; because if it is important for us to consider ourselves perfect in Christ as the starting-point, whether of confidence or of nearness to God, so that all may be judged in us and around us according to that nearness, the discovery of that which we are in fact in view of that, the needs that flow from it for our souls, for our hearts, give place to the obtaining of necessary grace by the intervention of Jesus; and all that happens with regard to these needs brings into play, produces even, affections, interest, light and tenderness of conscience, spiritual discernment, growth of our moral being, which bring us constantly nearer in fact to the light, in which we are by right in virtue of the perfection of Him who, having borne our sins, is before God according to the absolute perfection in man of that which answers to all the exigencies and to all the affections of the moral being of God Himself. And it is not enough to be there of right on account of Christ, it is a question of being there in fact according to the love of Him who has introduced us there. Now the failures and weaknesses which would place us at a distance from it, become by the intercession of Jesus so many means of understanding, and links with the love of Him who answers to it, and channels of the intelligence of what He is, and of what He desires, so that we are formed intelligently after His image. Without the presence of Christ in heaven for us, this would not be so; it is He who puts us in relationship with God, and

maintains the communications of imperfect beings with the Being who is perfect; and He makes our imperfections the occasion of the communication of His grace, and that by working in our affections by His Spirit, thus placing us in known relationships, consciously enjoyed and righteous.

But explain to me more clearly, dear brother, your thought. I should much like to know it. Two reasons have hindered me from coming; I was taken ill at the mountain, after one of the happiest journeys in the Basses Pyrenees, where I felt the Spirit was working very sensibly. The attack was in my head. I could do nothing for three weeks: I am better… Then there is the printing of my "Etudes sur la Pentateuque." Salute the brethren warmly. I always hope to see them. Perhaps I must go to England.

Your very affectionate.

I have only spoken of the moral effect besides that of fact. The precious Saviour maintains our relations.

June 29th, 1849.

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My dear Brother,—I was purposing writing to you when your note arrived. I have heard that the flesh manifested itself in the circumstances attending the leaving Orchard Street; as also it was stirred up by the way they were dealt with. I write to you to say that if this has been so—into which I do not inquire—I justify it in no way; I leave it to the Lord's judgment. I go upon the broad ground that I get for myself—brethren avowedly clear of all upholding of Bethesda—without to me any other question. I stated in my circular I should not go

where persons were received from Bethesda. Bethesda received those who had been rejected as the avowed associates of Mr. Newton, thus forcing us too, if we owned Bethesda, to receive them back again. After what I stated yesterday, I have nothing to add. I can conceive no more miserable effort to serve the doctrine than the document still upheld by Bethesda. As to people's consciences, you must allow me to respect my own as well as others'; and, if others are determined to uphold what I believe to be wickedness, not to walk with them; if others judge so too, how can I condemn them? I have since I left Ebrington Street asked for the fellowship of none, except they felt disposed to receive me as having taken my position. I think Bethesda's position a very wicked one, and I think upholding it is wickedness, though ignorance about it may not be. The question of doctrine is not the question with Bethesda, but that of their trying to screen those who held it, and thus to force neutrality upon others. That they will not do with me. They have taken their position, and I have taken mine; and I shall act as to all so as to make it as clear as possible. But I am not now going to take any part in what is going on: I feel sure I have the Lord with me; time will shew. I think your position a false one. I do not pretend to judge how others may have wounded your sensibilities, for I really do not know. I pronounce no judgment whatever on the acts of persons in my absence. It is very probable I might not have agreed in them, as I felt the Lord was acting, and that the truest way was to leave Bethesda and its associates alone, and that they were in the Lord's hands. But I was not the judge of what others did. I desire earnestly that you may be brought in peace and brotherly unity out of a position I believe to be false. I have sorrows, but no difficulty. I

can wait upon others, and I do so, but I cannot willingly make my position equivocal. I go on very broad plain ground. I think Bethesda very bad. I cannot own it as if it was not. I believe it has been publicly and avowedly unfaithful to Christ; hence that its supporters are upon terrible ground: that suffices to guide my conduct. In dealing with others I shall endeavour to do so according to the grace and truth that is in the Lord Jesus. Such a position is very simple and makes the path very plain, if one only knows how to walk in it. There has been division where there have been supporters and justifiers of Bethesda, but where the guilt lies in that case the Lord will judge; I am not aware, unless a very few individuals, that there has been, where there has been faithful firmness.

Yours affectionately in the Lord.

Aug. 5,1849.

[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—You are entering I think upon that period of activity which makes a life of reflection a far more hidden life than before. This is a very real advance in christian life. I liked divine philosophy, it is still to my taste. As long as the external life is composed of this, we have the appearance of being far more spiritual and deep. Thus, the steam which escapes from the engine, appears to have much more force than that which draws the heavy train, which only appears to offer resistance to the movement that it is sought to give it; but it is when hidden for the most part, that the force really acts. In this way its reality also is put to the proof. And why do I say that it is real progress? It is because it makes less appearance before men, because it is more entirely

before God, with whose approval we must be satisfied. We must be content to possess the thing with Him, nay—to find it in Him; but that is to possess it in reality. It is the principle of moral perfection, to enjoy things instead of accrediting oneself with them in the eyes of others. Active christian life is a common life of service, in contact with human passions, faults, and weaknesses, in a word, in contact with the flesh. But to act in it, to introduce God in it, and this is what Christ was, there must be power, we must be really in communion with Him—participating thus in that nature that nothing encroaches on, and which shines in its own perfection in the midst of all—to be above all that we meet with.

Divine philosophy, supposing it to be real, and to meet with no opposition when displayed before others, is an easy enjoyment, and, as I have said, one clothes oneself with it, one displays it to admiring eyes. To walk in christian life, we must be what we admire: that is another thing. We must be divine, in the sense of the communion of His nature. And this is why Jesus was the most isolated of men, and, at the same time, the most accessible, the most affable: the most isolated, because He lived in absolute communion with His Father, and found no echo, no sympathy with the perfect love which was in Him; the most accessible, the most affable, because He was that love for others. Speaking of the ineffable work which opened a way for that love through all the sin, He says: “I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened until it is accomplished.” That baptism of bitterness and death, which made an end of sin, even in its last stronghold and its last title of destruction, through the righteousness of God against us, gave free course to that love in its infinite designs of

grace; for love is of infinite invention for the happiness pf that which is loved, and the love of God purposes that which is beyond all our thoughts. It is the spring of the thoughts of the infinite God. And again, when towards the end of His course the opportunity presents itself, at the moment when the unbelief of His own makes Him say, “How long shall I be with you? and suffer you?” (for —and this is what He expects from us in this poor world —there was not, even in His own, faith or capacity to make use of the resources of grace and power which were in Him) He adds, without even a moment’s interval, “Bring thy son hither.” (Luke 9:41.) The consciousness of being isolated in His love, so that others did not even understand how to profit by it, does not, for a moment, arrest His energy and activity. The same sentence which contains the “how long,” says also “bring thy son hither.”

What was then the life of this Jesus, the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief? A life of activity in obscurity, causing the love of God to penetrate the most hidden corners of society, wherever needs were greatest; among those whom human pride repelled, in order to maintain its own reputation, but whom the love of God sought, because He needed not to establish for Himself a reputation, or to keep one. He was always the same: and the more He apparently compromised Himself, the more He manifested Himself in a perfection which never belied itself. The love of God needed not, like human society, to protect itself from that which laid it too bare. It was always itself. The toilsome life of Jesus was passed in seeking souls in all circumstances. It went through everything that could put it to the proof, but we see in it a divine reality which never failed; then—in

presence of self-righteousness and pride, and the tyrannical boldness of the contradiction of sinners, or in favour of some poor crushed soul, or, lastly, to justify the ways of God in their favour—we discover in it from time to time a divine mine of touching, exquisite thoughts, a depth of truth which betrayed its perfection by its simplicity, shewing a soul always fed with the most intimate communion with infinite love and perfect holiness; the One who could say, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen;” who weighed evil by the perfection of good which was in Him, and found, in the fearful discoveries (if we speak of discoveries where all was open) which the holiness of His soul made, opportunities for the manifestation of infinite love —or rather, it was the love of a holy Being which made these discoveries, a love which clothed itself with a grace which, by its very humiliation, placed itself within the reach of all the needs of the heart, and which, at the same time, in presence of the pride of man, shewed itself at the height of the dignity and majesty of God.

How beautiful to see this Person (these divine qualities piercing through the humiliation) place Himself within the reach of those whom the world despised, and find—being wearied with His journey, indebted for a drink of water to a woman who scarcely dare shew herself with others—meat to eat which the world, and even His disciples, knew nothing of; and that, in the deliverance of a poor heart crushed by the weight of a bad conscience and the contempt of her fellow creatures, to whom He had given back (or rather, given) the spring of life and joy. What a prospect! how much of blessing to sinners this opened to His soul; for He did not disdain such consolation in the midst of a world which drove

Him from its bosom. Thus love consoles itself: the heart that loves the sinner needs it in such a world. But where is this to be found? In retirement, in the labours of a life which had to do with the common needs of souls, but as abiding in the truth; for this life did not shelter itself from the misery of the world, to walk in the midst of that which has an appearance only, but it brought into it—precious grace!—the love of God. He was that which others could write of.

How many needs, hidden even in the most degraded souls, would confess themselves, would come to light, if a love, a goodness which could give them confidence, were presented to them: but for this, one must be content, often to find oneself in the midst of such degradation, being preserved from it only by what is within; and this was the life of the Lord. How many souls are whirling in pleasure, in order to silence the moral griefs which torment them! Divine love not only answers needs; it makes them speak. It is delightful to see the opening out of a soul, and, at the same time, to see the entrance of spiritual intelligence. One may not exactly seek the degradation I speak of, but we find the world knowing that is the truth as to what is found there, and its external forms do not rebuff the soul. But it is a life of labour, of patience And of happiness, the like of which cannot be found. Christ could say through all, “That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” Without doubt there are diversities of gifts, but even when God opens this path before us in His grace, how slow we are to follow the track of the One who draws us there!

Courage, dear brother! grace is there in the path which He has opened to us; we find it every day as we go along; and what glory, when all the principles which

have been formed in the heart by faith, blossom in heaven, and are reproduced in the fulness of their results, according to the heart of God. We must wait while walking by faith. But I must stop.

I am at——, where I am pursuing a very humble work, a work of detail, but a work in which I am very happy, feeling I am at my post, and even with little desire to leave it. God in His great goodness refreshes me a little, when I see souls refreshed and happy in the thought of His precious and perfect grace. It is a little work, but I see in it the good hand of God, who in spite of our weakness makes us feel a little how good it is to be with Him…

October 1st, 1849.

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[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—You will be rather surprised at receiving an answer to your letter now, but not, I am sure, sorry. As to Ephesians 4, we must remember that it does not treat of ornaments before the world, but the tender and precious care of Christ for that which He loves as His own flesh. In result, man cannot frustrate this care; he may know very little how to profit by it; the intelligent result down here may be but small, but the thought of God in blessing will be always accomplished, because our folly, though culpable, gives room for His wisdom. If Israel had not courage to go up the mountain of the Amorites, and as to present circumstances lost, and lost what they did not find again, they learned—at least, Joshua and Caleb and others, and we ourselves likewise—much as to themselves, which set them in a relationship much more real, more true with God,

according to what Israel was, and what God was, and gave God an opportunity for the display of His grace and power, taking care of even the nap of their coats, and not allowing their feet to swell; for a manifestation much more remarkable of His power and of His ways in the crossing of Jordan dryshod, and in all the details of their entrance into Canaan, from the testimony of Balaam after the long passage of the desert—all these things being necessary to the full revelation of the ways and counsels of God. Was it then that the sin of Israel was the work of God? By no means. This unbelief was already in their heart; the arrival at the mountain was but the opportunity for its manifestation. God may permit and arrange events for the manifestation of sin—never in order to produce it—and the manifestation (being under grace) brings all into the light, and is a means of progress.

Then to say that because the church has failed it gets necessarily into a worse condition, is true and false at the same time. As a public vessel of testimony to the truth on the earth, to its shame, that is true; but it is impossible that God or Christ should be unfaithful, and the fact of the manifest and general failure, gives room for a concentration of energy and of light, so much the brighter, as the space it illumines is small. Israel, when the precious Saviour was there, was always going on worse, was tending to its ruin, but He shines with a light ever brighter, as it is concentrated in what He was Himself, instead of lending itself to His relations, true but temporary and obligatory with the Jews. This is the reason why, though all is so beautiful, the Lord appears in John with a light and perfection infinitely more touching and striking—why we see Him better than in

the other gospels. We are more entirely with Him, with Him alone, with what He was in Himself. There the Jews are set aside. Who in the history of Israel shines in the midst of darkness like Elijah? the only one in testimony, the only one—save the hidden remnant, whom the eye of God recognised and whom the faith of the prophet ought to have known, if he had been near enough to God to have His thoughts. I find in the Psalms, that faith is much more simple and calm when the remnant is driven away.

It is the same, I believe, with the church, at least, one may look for it; not that the vessel should be repaired, and set right, but that the true church, those at least who in heart are waiting for the Lord, will be always more true in their position, will understand the Lord's heart better, will be more united amongst themselves, a "little flock," but who will know much better the voice and the heart and the thoughts of the Good Shepherd. The ground which the enemy gains can only be over the flesh and over the general testimony: it is sad, but understood by the faithful one, and, after Sardis, the manifest general condition. If I find Laodicea to be spued out, I find Philadelphia, which has the ear and heart of the Saviour, having little strength, but which has kept His word, and not denied His name. We are working for the most part with those, the half of whom do not know the immense principles in question; But if there is faithfulness, a single eye, God keeps them. But to be always waiting for the Lord, that is our strength. "There are many called, but few chosen." Alas! decline is the continual tendency, but the Saviour never declines. Keeping close to Him, one will have, not perhaps a public testimony common to the masses—they

are always rather the fruit of a testimony—but still, the testimony on His part in the fulness of His power, according to the need of the church; for His power and His love never change. This is a subject that goes to the heart, and I know that I can trust Him, though I have been often cast down at the sight of the determination of the church to put aside grace and blessing, and the power which the enemy puts forth in deceiving her.

I have lost time at Montpellier, through failing to follow sufficiently closely the leadings of the Holy Ghost, and I am suffering for it now, having to do through greater difficulty that which, having been done much more easily before, would have left me free to do what I cannot now accomplish as I should desire, but now I put myself again in His loving hands; I must learn my lesson of the mountain and the Jordan. We are in sorrowful times; let us not be surprised at it, only let us be near Him, in order to make shine clearly, without obscuring it, what He gives.

As to the second question, it is certain that the day of atonement applied to the conscience in the sense of acceptance before God for all sins until the end. Man, such as he is altogether, is, so to speak, set aside, and Christ, in the efficacy of His work, put in his place before God, and the Christian ought always to have the consciousness of it, never to have the thought that God is against him. He is not so; Christ has borne all his sins; it is impossible that they should be imputed to him, impossible that he can be too clear about it. My sins are committed in an existing relationship, and one which they do not alter, but they are much more serious on that account. But my relations with God are realities, for which according to His glory I have been saved and

washed., and these relations are really interrupted by sin. The blood of the red heifer was not put upon the mercy-seat, but it was sprinkled seven times before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where God met with the people; this secured even at all times the basis of their intercourse. Restoration was on the side of him who had denied himself, and it was a real restoration. The nature of God is against sin, and darkness could not have communion with light, but our condition is darkness if we have touched death. There is a difference when the Holy Ghost reveals God in my heart, and I am in the atmosphere of His love, and when I search for and endeavour to find the sense of His presence; it is not a question of presenting the man, but of his condition if he were presented. Now the Spirit of God gives us the consciousness of this condition in grace; but in the conscience and in the heart. He renews in the heart the consciousness of the relationship; in the conscience, the feeling of having failed in it, and this in presence of the perfect love of Christ, for the ashes of the heifer are the proof of His love, and that sin is taken away—has been taken away, rather—that it is not a question of imputation, but of the work in itself. It is the word which is the instrument of it, the truth, and the word is this truth. As to imputation, it is then no longer a question; but defilement is not imputation. Now what Christ is doing for us in heaven is to reconcile practically our present position in fact here below with our position acquired in Him, and to make good to us, being in His presence as to our personal acceptance, all the grace of God to maintain us at the height of the enjoyment of this position, or to make us rise to it in the practical sense. Therefore it is said, “for such an high priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate

from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," because it is a question of this position for us, and He must be there. Now it is necessary to sympathise with our infirmities, but He "was tempted in all things like as we, without sin." Aaron was in infirmity when he was exercising the priesthood; not Christ, because we have a place with Him in heaven, but He knew what temptation was when He was here, and in virtue of His presence in heaven (in which we are accepted, nothing being imputed), He obtains all that is necessary to put us into real relations with our position above, or rather with God according to that position. So there is no inconsistency between the sense of having our position unimpaired, and the deepest feelings of horror of sin; on the contrary, it is by having this conviction that the feeling is produced.

In our ministry we must put these things in connection; this is what the ashes of the heifer did. In John 13, he who is washed needs only that his feet should be washed, but he is wholly clean. I do not put myself back into it when I have sinned; I do not lose it. It is because the house is clean, that I have a horror of the dirt that I have brought into it. If one has lost the sense of the purity of the house, one takes less account of the dirt, but the flesh can cast itself on that. When one has sinned, it is not that any longer; being there fully in the light, with full confidence, one's heart is cast on the judgment of what is inconsistent with such a position, and the love even unto death which has placed us there. The priesthood of Christ is exercised in order to produce right feelings, not when we have them. It is not our relief to think of it when we have failed, save as a general truth. "If any one sin" (not if any one repent),

“we have an advocate with the Father.” It is not (appropriately) said, Melchisedec, king of righteousness, save as to His person, except within the veil.

I have given you a few thoughts; I do not know if they answer to your request. I write a little in haste, even after such a long delay. There is some little good in the south, but weak in comparison with the organisation which is got up to hinder souls from finding their true position.

Peace be with you, dear brother. May the Lord find us watching to take us to Himself. Salute the brethren affectionately.

Your very affectionate.

Nismes, October 23rd, 1849.

* * * * *

Dearest ——,—Thank you much for your letter, which I need not say interested me much. Still, I feel, though my heart is often in England, my path is for the moment shut up here. When I say, shut up, it is not complaint, for I have everything to bless God for, and that my path for Him is to abide quietly for the moment. Switzerland will certainly require a visit before I return to England. But I have felt through much weakness, the Lord blessing my soul, fend I feel it is good to cultivate this; even in going to Montpellier, I feel that I rather dissipate myself, though there is some good there. The Lord has an intimate government of the soul which is infinite in love, but which one has to heed if one would have His face with one. At times one may have merely to go straightforward in the energy of His grace for others, and there is joy in service without much thought of self;

at other times He leads in the way of exercise for our own good. We are here in a very little humble scale, and plentifully despised and opposed and spoken against by all of influence, but there is some blessing. Yesterday week in the morning, I think four at least got a clear view of the gospel and work of Christ. Yesterday I felt much less power. But it is a place where without positive power, there is nothing to do at all. This is necessarily in consequence a real trial for the soul… But I have no uneasiness; I am satisfied God is in the storm (whatever instrumentality of Satan there may have been), and I have no doubt (whatever defects and want of faith there may have been), we, those who hold fast the beginning of our confidence, are in the same boat with Christ. Hence I can leave it all in peace till God clears me my way into the midst of the conflict, exercised, but at peace. But unless it is brought to me, I remain outside, because I am satisfied that is faith. I thank the brethren much for their prayers; I feel I am a poor workman, and my work is so negative just now, that there is little to say about it. But it holds the ground where reproach only was before, and carried the testimony of how good the gospel is, into souls, though they have not courage to walk with them with whom they have found it.

I find in scripture more depth, it is more real, true in Christ, and therefore has more infinitude in its character than ever. I was much struck lately with the way in which Christ was answered and overcame in Gethsemane and on the cross. I apprehend, while looking forward to the dreadful cup, the proper and immediate trial of Gethsemane was the power of Satan. “This is your hour and the power of darkness”—the great point was to get between His soul and the Father

(as before, by desirable things for life). But he could not; Christ hence pleading with His Father, receiving nothing from Satan or man in the cup, receives it from His Father in perfect blessed obedience—"Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Hence His soul is entirely out of the darkness in respect of His enemy, and He can say in perfect calm of others, "this is your hour and the power of darkness," and present Himself willingly that His disciples might go free. How blessed the perfectness, which at His own cost always kept them free; for in their position Satan would have caught them in his hour had not the Lord stood in the gap—and so ever—and when needed for Peter, can allow just so much as was good to sift, but stay the proud billows for him which were to go clean over His own soul. He was then, I judge, entirely out of the whole conflict with darkness, before it came in fact. He passed through it with God, His God.

At the cross, I apprehend it was another thing. He was forsaken of God, He had immediately to do with God and just wrath against sin, and He in that place, so that love could have no refuge for His soul; and here too He is perfect, and having accomplished this ineffable work, His soul having drunk the cup unmixed, atonement having been made, He comes forth from it as heard, and His act of death is merely His own giving up His spirit to His father: in the time of peace He had said so, but He was to pass through death in His soul, and did, as an offering for sin—but then, what was death? It was one who had overcome death, undergone it in its infinite atoning efficacy, and who gives up His soul, more than pure, which had put away sin, into the hands of God His Father. What is death here, if the overcoming of Satan

made it obedience? The bearing of wrath gave title to give up life into the merited reception of infinite favour. Death was His. It was not yet power in resurrection, but His soul given up to His Father. It was death, but death the closing of an accomplished life of obedience in woe, and the introduction into that infinite favour in life beyond all relationship of promise down here, which the work in which He had glorified the Father placed Him in; and so, through Him is death to us. It ceases to be a closing life; we have a title through Him to give up our souls in it into His hands as we see in Stephen; it is the closing of the conflict to be in the life in the power of which we live to Him—absent from the body and present with the Lord. He gave Himself up—it was power, though in reference to the Father, into whose hands He commends His spirit, that His resurrection might be by the glory of the Father. For in this even He did not take glory to Himself. Death, or what is called death, is thus a totally new thing; it is having done with all as a redeemed soul, to enter into another world. But I speak now of Christ. He had emerged from all this sorrow, far more dreadful hour, and could tell the thief he should come with Him into paradise, speak in peace to John of His mother—His hour was come for this—and knowing that all was accomplished, after saying, “I thirst,” give up His own soul into His Father’s hands. These two considerations have deeply affected me; save in some details, I never traced the general bearing and importance. I must close.

Though I sorrow over dear kind brethren like ——, I bless God with my whole heart that the brethren have been given to be faithful, and have proved themselves clear in this matter. Kind love to all.

Ever affectionately yours.

Nismes, November, 1849.

[From the French,

I have been thinking lately that the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane, while anticipating the cross, were much more sufferings from Satan, who, with the power of death in his hand, sought to overwhelm Him with its darkness, so that the fear might be such that He should not offer Himself up. As man, He had overcome the enemy before, so as to be able to introduce blessing here below; but man was not fit for it. He had to establish this blessing by death in another sphere. Satan throws himself in His way to obstruct His path, but he could not succeed in preventing Him from finding God; being in the agony of the conflict, He prayed more earnestly. For Him the cup came from the hand of His Father. Once entirely out of all that, He offers Himself up. When it actually comes, He can speak of it, being no longer in it: “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” Then He passes on to undergo another thing —the direct wrath of God. He drank this terrible cup for us, dear brother; but He also came out of it completely, and Himself committed His soul in peace to God His Father, in the consciousness that all was accomplished. Death now but sets us free to go to Him in that new sphere, where He has for ever left behind the power of the enemy, and where there is nothing but blessing, far from the power of him who used it against Christ.

November, 1849.

* * * * *

Dearest ——,— … As a general principle, I should have been glad that the whole matter had been more left to work in consciences… I encouraged in one letter ——, to individual courtesy as to those sincere at bottom, though going wrong… As to the main question, I have never doubted for a moment that it was a fundamental one, for the existence of the testimony of God, and a special work of the enemy on the other hand sifting this testimony, with God's permission, and hence too I was at peace. I am more and more convinced of it. It is no longer any question save of how to serve in it. Begin afresh if there was no other means, rather than yield an iota; and practically, and in the happiest sense it is that —a new state of faith from God. But no compliance, resistance with the face as a flint to the principles in which the others are acting, no matter who, as the worst possible work of the enemy.

I love —— dearly, but his idea of union, comeliness, worldly politeness, and so on, and I think an idea of a class of society, has dimmed his judgment; he is morally amphibious as to his springs of action; he loves the church, and knows there is one, and looks too for the Lord's coming as a present desire, but then he had muddled his judgment with journals, and Elliott, and such like, and he has set before himself an idea of something attainable here below for the church and for the individual, which must falsify the judgment. I always knew it acted on his imagination, but find it is a kind of settled principle or doctrine. But his idea of grace to individuals has made him inconsistent… It is time to go on without thinking of people, in setting up the importance of the Lord Himself. If any have been personally hurt, amends may be personally made for

that. What I felt unhappy about was that the matter had taken the character of a personal attack. Satan tried to give that character to my opposition in the affair of N.'s doctrine, but there was really no ground for it… I am so convinced that it is morally beginning afresh, that I am not anxious about such or such a person, save in affection for them, or such and such a detail—and further, that the sifting of God is a sifting of God for it.

The need of union is felt. Of this there are two kinds, respectable courteous union among men, and the unity of the church of God. That is the true question… There is the same question here, but it is everywhere tainted with the world. It is not of the Spirit of God, but a miserable effort of the enemy, to discredit the truth and faithfulness. While he could hold up the world in the shape of Nationalism, he did, and called us schism and separation. That no longer goes down with any; the truth has too much hold, and fears on the other side. Now then he sets up union as his cry—namely, sacrifice Christ and the church, all true principle, to worldly civility, to let us go on our way without following Christ. But then there are many dear children of God in, and attracted by, the fair appearance of the snare of the enemy, and the personal part of the question tends to throw them into it. There is the whole matter as I see it, save personal questions.

Here we, or at least I, am going through the fire of the strongest opposition; however, individual souls have received blessing, and I hold good for the present, though I am not sure how far it may issue in judgment for Nismes. In general there is some blessing on a small scale; the field of work vastly extended, but some little languor in working. The progress of the work however

everywhere, has raised up every effort possible to work against and to do something, or that all will be carried away—which is not. so, for many love the world too much, and faith is not of all men…

We ought to have more faith and prayer, believing the Lord to be nigh, that a people may be called out to meet Him. I feel sometimes that we allow ourselves to be too surcharged with details—that is, want of faith hinders rising above them to larger testimony.

Ever yours affectionately in the Lord.

Nismes, November 21st, 1849.

* * * * *

To the same.]

My dear ——,— … I send you my apprehension of Daniel 8, to see if it is admissible. “And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and trod them under foot; and he became great, even to the prince of the host, and the daily [sacrifice] was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down, and the daily [sacrifice] was given up to a period of distress, because of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised, and prospered. Then I heard a certain saint speaking, and a certain saint said to that one who was speaking, How long this vision of the daily [sacrifice] and the transgression [of the desolate] which desolates, to give the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said to me, Until evening and morning two thousand three hundred, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed [justified]… And in the end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have filled up

their measure, a king shall arise of bold countenance, and understanding riddles, and his force shall be strong, but not by his force; and he shall ruin [corrupt] wonderfully, and prosper, and act, and shall ruin the strong ones and the people of the saints, and because of his understanding he shall make deceit prosper in his hand, and shall wax great in his heart, and through neglect of God (careless ease) shall ruin (corrupt?) many, and shall stand (arise?) up against the prince of princes, and shall be broken without hand."

Is it not a power in Palestine, connected in his workings with the Jews, and ruining them religiously as much as by force? Then the question arises, Is he the full expression, historically, of the second beast; by whose force is he strong, west or north?

Here we are the object of the most elaborate opposition, but individually I come continually across fresh souls; my only doubt is usefulness elsewhere at Montpellier. I have much time; at present there is blessing there, and the meetings increase considerably… In general the saints that are out walk well and are happy, but the sleep in which other Christians are, has been broken by the little that has been done in the plain (for in the mountains the work goes on widely, and for some time back), and every art is used to turn away and excite, sufficiently to destroy any real need of better or true knowledge of Christ in the soul. But for the claims of other places, I am very happy and peaceful in it. The thought of them sometimes makes me hesitate as to my stay here. Kind love to all the brethren.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Nismes. December 4th, 1849.

To the same.]

My dear——,— … I am a little discontented at working by book instead of-personally, still I hope there may be blessing. If the beloved bride of Christ is blessed and He more honoured, I am content. Here we are in a very healthful position of conflict, spoken against on all sides, but I think still in salutary testimony, and by the Lord's great mercy recovering what had been much damaged by hasty movements and carelessness of walk. Our difficulty for some time now, besides the ordinary ones, and the excessive want of independence of conduct, is that the light and principles introduced have spread in a measure wide outside any gathering formed by them, and union without any real unity by the presence of the Holy Ghost in Christ is sought, cried up, and faithfulness sought to be presented as an obstacle, but I think the Lord is in a measure judging it. We must go through this for a time, its hollowness will be apparent, but want of power becomes very sensible when there is imitation.

One thing is evident, God is working in the last days. Dissolution is on all sides, not only going on, but felt to be going on. 'If the brethren are faithful, and there is sufficient power to be large hearted with faithfulness, they will be the first of blessings as to the state of things, otherwise—useless but for a certain individual blessing and faithfulness, which is always something. But we ought to love the church, and seek its good, surely more than a David or godly Israelite or Jew could Jerusalem, and seek its good for Christ's sake. The brethren ought not to be our occupation as they have been for some time, but the seat of the affections for the whole church, as the heart for the body through grace by unity of heart with Christ; this is what I look for: for

this there must be devotedness, practical devotedness as belonging entirely to Him. This is what I earnestly desire and pray for. We are bought with a price, and are not our own—happy and blessed to be so in a world stranger to life and God. To maintain such a position Christ must be everything. I long to see the beloved brethren in England, and to minister even a little among them, but I feel I should desert my post did I leave here at this moment, and I owe them a visit in Switzerland, and though I feel I lost time at Montpellier, the Lord's time is the best.

I shall be glad to know what came of ——, I love him dearly, and there is real love to Christ, which is the ground of confidence, though too much sentimentality. But I judge that at —— they have an immense sense of their own superiority. There has been much really delightful there, but I fear it has been a snare to them; and with all its kindness, his letter was a real defiance of corporate discipline on the ground of personal superiority of judgment. Such a case may arise in the present state of the church, but as I judge their position false at ——, and that on very distinct grounds on their own shewing, I cannot admit that it is such a case here. But we are not quite at the end of the matter, and with faithfulness and humility many may be recovered. Yet if the brethren get into such a position, that the blessing of God is there because He disposes of hearts, I have myself much confidence of blessing, but of such as is a company held in the hollow of His hand in the latter days. Be assured that we shall have to do with realities, and no evil, though kept from the hour of temptation, and the door open with a little strength. But being of Christ in the world will be a reality. How long God will

hold the rein on evil, I know not. He is wise, we know that His long-suffering is salvation, and our earnest desire that Jesus come.

I have had two or three days' unexpected rest from not finding some one expected at Montpellier—rest from the moral strain, though suffering from an excessively violent attack of rheumatism in the back, which is pretty much past. I have been able to write on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Bellett has some very nice thoughts on the latter, but as interpretation it will not do, being too much turned to the church. But practically it is not the less useful as teaching. I have found the study of the book always profitable lately, I believe my thoughts on it sober; and the exercise and forming of the affections toward Christ, and the study of His towards us, is of the deepest importance; but how narrow our hearts are to embrace all His thoughts towards us. What a thought that He should delight to tell out how perfect He thinks the church (I say church, not as interpretation, but application by analogy), and to press it on her that He may assure her heart and awake the affections, which in one so feeble, must have confidence to be able to be in exercise. This is very gracious, but to be expected from Him. What is there that cannot be? But I must close. Having arrived at the Prophets, I am come to a large and difficult field, but more cultivated already, and perhaps in some sense more open, that is, less dependent on our own moral seising of the force and bearing of the facts the Spirit recounts, as in the historical books.

The New [Testament] will be difficult, from the immense development it may receive, and who is sufficient for

these things? Peace be with you… The Lord Jesus, bless and keep His people.

Your affectionate brother.

Nismes, December 9th, 1849.

Section 6

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[From the French.

* * * It is clear that afflictions are trials of faith as well as chastening; so we ought not to suppose that what happens to us is always for the purpose of chastening, properly so-called. There is discipline as well as chastening; that is what purines, what helps to, mortify the flesh, what breaks the will, and helps by an inward work to shelter us from outward temptations, which would otherwise surprise us, because of the innate levity of the heart, which yields itself so easily, alas, without knowing it, to vanity, if there is nothing to counterbalance it. I do not speak of outward levity, but of this tendency to forget the presence of God, which is so natural to us. There are then chastening, discipline, and the trying of faith. Chastening ought to affect the conscience, awakening it as to any failure (at least, through the operation of the Holy Spirit which accompanies it); but at the same time the work is not done until the root of the failure is discovered to the conscience, and this applies to all sorts of discipline.

Want of dependence on God, pride, may cause us to fall into many failures; the soul is not restored before that which has given occasion to these failures is judged in the heart. Discipline applies rather to the’ condition of the soul. There are negligence, pride, inward forgetfulness of God, a thousand things which need the pruning-knife of the Husbandman, and it is even necessary that things which are in nowise laid bare to the conscience should be hindered from acting upon the

heart. The flesh needs to be thus kept in check beforehand. But there is a perfecting of the new' creature which leaves room for trials: Christ passed through them. Although the new man is in itself perfect, still there is progress. In us these various kinds are mingled; in Christ there was this last only. Not that He was not always perfect, but He "learned obedience by the things which he suffered;" His faith and His obedience were put to the test by circumstances ever becoming more difficult, and this even to death. His perfection was not to act, but to suffer; in suffering there was a more entire surrender of Himself. It was so likewise with the apostle Paul; we find this more particularly in the Epistle to the Philippians. God allows the enemy to put difficulties in the path of the new man. A trial comes; the energy of the new man is exercised by it; it is strengthened by it, and in the end it gains the victory. If one does not act according to faith one shrinks back, one loses joy, or at least the light of the Holy Spirit. The new man, while perfect in his nature, is a dependent being. This is the place which was taken by Christ. Sometimes external trials are necessary that we may distinguish between what is of the old man and of the new, which are often confounded in our deceitful hearts… When there remains in the heart any groan which is not uttered to God as to a God of grace, any distrust of Him, it is the flesh, and the work of the enemy. When we do not go forward when God has shewn the way, because of some difficulty, the flesh acts, and the Spirit is grieved. Have confidence in Him, and rejoice in His love. We may be cast down at times (although scarcely ever without some want of faith), and yet everything goes on well, if we bring it all to God. If it is trial only, we shall certainly be comforted; if there is

failure in us, it will be discovered there. However matters stand let us go to Him, His peace shall keep our hearts…

[185…]

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* * * Thank you for——'s letter. I like it much, but all this shews a sad state of feebleness and incapacity in brethren to act in the purification of the body. I have not doubted it, and this it is which makes me regret the offensive character of attack adopted, as I have already said. I have no doubt at all of the evil principles at Bethesda. I judge its position worse than when the letter of the ten was published; hesitation on the subject.'s only a proof to me of moral blindness, resulting from having some other object than Christ. But I do not see capacity of deliverance, nor do I see sufficiently the need that love has to deliver. I think you will find this feeling on the increase, though I have not meddled in what is passing, nor intend to do so…

Here, in general, the Lord has graciously shewed His mercy to us in one or two cases which gave uneasiness; one of division, which has yielded to love and grace, and one of exaltation shewing itself in condemning marriage, which has disappeared, at once I may say, before the light. We have great need of workmen in Switzerland, and I have been overcharged with work, going from place to place, but in general, reason to bless God for His goodness in encouraging; and in France, very sensible blessing continues… The doors are open wide, and in many places the press of summer work does not hinder the awakening and blessing.

Ever very affectionately yours.

Lausanne, July 26th, 1850.

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Beloved Brother,—I was on the move when I got your kind letter, so that I could not answer it at once, but I thank you much for it. It has not been my desire to interfere in matters in England, until I could do it seriously on the Lord's behalf, as called upon of Him to do it, and thus pursue it with the advised certainty of His calling as His service and obedience. It makes all the difference as to one's work, in certainty and effect too; indeed, nothing else is properly work. Save in two places (and in the second only with one person) where I was specially asked, I did not touch this question in England. I was in general very happy, always indeed, as to the course this matter is taking. Every prevision of God's working in it has taken place, and been surpassed considerably as to blessing. Individual souls have been exercised, and much more reality in Christ exists, without which all is nothing.

A mass of brethren had received blessed truths, superficially though really, and they were unconnected with an inward walk which associates the soul with Christ in them. The first wind blew much of this down; but where the inward state of the soul laid the ground for it, all this deepened exceedingly, and strengthened, and made to understand the relation between the soul and Christ in these things; and a large increase of real growth has been the consequence.

I blame myself, as unfaithful in passing over many truths for the sake of what is called peace. And God took the matter in hand, and now I doubt not the ground of the truth which God is using will be far more deeply felt and

understood, and a path according to it more intelligently pursued, by those who through grace have laid hold on it. This I thankfully believe God is doing. A humbling sifting was needed for it, but in gracious love and faithfulness, that He has sent us. It will put to the test whether Christ is preferred to brethren (even though loved), to ease, to everything; but this is blessed in fruit, because He will be everything, and thus links our souls to the time when He will be. I regret what was attempted at——; I regret what was done at——… But what was done at——and—— does not affect me, because it was but a needed expression of what was to bring about the sifting. Hence I remained, and remain quiet. Where God is acting, it is useless for man to put in his hand.

I do not speak of fidelity when in the circumstances. My path is to consider it a settled question, and to go on in faithfulness in the truth, delivering according to what is given to me, when the case is presented to charity, as from any other evil, but to seek positive good. What is of the world will sink in, somewhere or other. What is not attached to Christ by the Holy Ghost, according to the needed truth by which He is now acting in and on His church, will fail in the conflict somewhere; but I act on the quiet conviction of entrusted truth, and the assurance that what does not receive it, cannot bear its. fruits without agitation. Those who do not see what the church is, will not stand. But that is not the wickedness itself, but they will not be capable of holding good against it; and I act accordingly, or rather walk, acting only where called on. One may rest sometimes with God, as well as act with Him; for one cannot act without Him, save to trouble, even though meaning to do good. Along

with stedfastness in testimony, the saints in general want building up in Christ, and also personal leaning on the grace of God towards them.

In general, abroad we have to be thankful. In France there is very much to be thankful for, and here in Switzerland they have been revived since winter. In Neuchatel there is positive blessing. I was in a part of France lately where I had not been before, in the Doubs (Montbeliard), where the blessing is greater and more extensive than I at all even knew, though I knew there was such. They are walking in a good deal of simplicity and love (though Satan tried hard to make mischief in one place), with little public preaching help, and a good deal of dependence on the Lord. The world in general has the conviction, that if a man is converted he ought to be there. Save a very few, if any, Christians are there, and the world, as men say, “go to church,” but unless one they are all poor. Query— If the rich came, would they remain as simple? The gracious Lord that loves them, keeps them! What a mercy to be kept in the secret of His grace!

My feeling, and indeed conviction, is that there is decided progress, and that of God; His Spirit is working, though with needed (needed through the state of souls) slowness, in the godly discernment in conscience of what is right and wrong— a coming to themselves in the saints. This is the only work of any account: this we must have or nothing; I decline all else as useless. Deputations, and going up to Bethesda, and all such like, are useless and worse, save as God uses everything (and in this I have full confidence), without denying that individuals may do it conscientiously according to the light they have. But it must come to a conscientious

judgment in one's own conscience of evil by the Spirit of Christ, or nothing. And this will always be a humble, not a haughty thing. The rest we must leave behind or cast away.

My purpose is to come to England as soon as ever I can. I am bringing out the second volume of "Etudes sur la Parole" —the only definite thing which keeps me—but paying any needed visit on the way. I purpose (D.V.) to come to England as soon as that is done. I ran over for a few weeks, finding I could not get to stay, and was very glad I did.

One great thing we have to seek is, that communion with Christ Himself be as strong as all the doctrines we hold or teach. Without that the doctrine itself will have no force: besides, we ourselves shall not be with God in it, and, after all, that is all. Peace be with you, dear brother, and much of this communion. It is easy for the life within to decline before the outward exercise of gift or activity does. I am sure the brethren want to be more exercised with Christ themselves. When the full truth God is using is not held and walked in, there cannot be community of service—that is, where it is denied; for there may be ignorance of it. And further, what would be called the highest truth is the only safeguard against the principles of the worst error. If I am not one with Christ —that is, if I depart from tins—I am ready to Judaize and worship angels. It is the easiest lost, because it requires the flesh to be mortified, and that living faith should be in exercise spiritually; and if lost, admits the worst errors. Farewell. Peace be with all the brethren.

Ever your affectionate brother in Christ.

Lausanne [Received], November 30th, 1850.

* * * * *

To the same.]

I have a profound conviction that the question with God, and that in grace on His part, goes much deeper than the particular evil which gave occasion to the break up of Plymouth. I agree with all you say, but if it was the mere negation of evil, the case would be sad; because I have never found, though this be a bounden duty, that it sufficed to gather. I believe at my deliverance from bondage in 1827-8, God opened up certain truths needed for the church. I believe that, though holding and seeking to help souls by them, for what was called peace and union I swamped them, had not faith to make them good in service. I do not enter into all the questions how far it was permitted, or how far grace entered, or natural dislike of conflict, but so it was. God would not allow this; and what was founded on this unfaithfulness, associated with what was opposed, was broken up. I have no regret at this now, though the passage was painful. It is the grand reason why I have left the exercise to go on without interfering. It is no use attempting to daub with untempered mortar.

I have, as you know, long said that for my part I begin again, that my proper work now begins. In saying this, I only confess my' unfaithfulness, but on the other hand it is an encouragement, for to begin with God is always an encouragement. He has never lost time—alas, we often. But I have faith in what I believe, only I feel it humbling even that God should be obliged (so to speak) to do so much outside what I am confident is His truth. It does not enough absorb the work. This, however, is true, that the truth now given by grace is not merely foundation or

elementary, as at the Reformation, but while setting that again on its true basis, builds up and brings out that needed for the latter days—that which was earliest, and always, is soonest lost—"holding the Head from which all the body," &c. Hence people can content themselves with a certain Christianity which saves, which gives elementary truth, which has delivered from popish corruption and the like, without that which puts faith to the test.

But the question will go, I do not doubt, on large grounds in England. It is the question which is now exercising it as to prophecy. This will require patience, for the great body have not the ground on which to judge these questions: they have not faith in the doctrine of the church. Now Ebrington Street brought down to its worst form, not ignorance, but opposition to this truth which is what God would have brought out, and—as the corruption of what was best is the worse corruption—was gone as far as possible. I doubt altogether that Raleigh Street has as its foundation anything solid which would hold it together as a whole. It is possible spiritual power might with patience have formed it into something consistent, but as a fact there was little common foundation truth on which it stood. Negations are nothing to. build on, though conscience be a ground of conduct. This many have not understood; and because separation from evil may have been a duty, have supposed it to be a ground of union and gathering. It is not… I should have been much disposed to begin afresh at——, not as rejecting many dear brethren, far from it, but that they and I may enjoy together the refreshings of God's love in joy and peace: and this is a general principle with me. Perhaps continuance at ——

might have got it on this ground, but across many wearisome difficulties.

As to the judgment they form of my separation and all the rest, even supposing there might be mistakes, I am more indifferent than as to the form of the paper I am writing on: because they have no perception at all, I am satisfied, either of the principles on which I acted, or on which God has dealt, or on which He would have us to act. The only point on which I have ever questioned whether I might have acted better or more wisely, they know nothing about, nor any one else. I bless God for it now, though that does not justify me, for I do not think I knew, or in a certain sense ought to have known, the evil of Ebrington Street the least as I know it now. I leave all that, their judgment and their course, entirely out of question.

I should in England, as indeed I have done, go on my own ground, the Lord's, I believe, and if they liked to come on that, well—if not, well. I shall go on no other; alone or with beloved brethren, I shall go on what I believe the Lord wills I should go on. … I am quite decided to walk in what I am satisfied is the Lord's. If they do not like it, I have no desire nor thought of quarrelling: we shall not walk together. The Lord will judge who is right. That judgment I accept beforehand, and bow to it with my whole heart. Hence it is I am in no hurry, and, I may add, full of confidence. I see abundant failure in myself, but it is not where others see it—just the contrary; but I believe in the Lord's grace.

I believe He has confided a testimony to me, however feeble I may be and unworthy. I do not say that to the exclusion of others of His servants, but as that for which

I am responsible. I believe I failed in it, and I trust now in my little measure I may not. Until I am myself in England, I refrain from all interference in what passes there, because I wait upon God, not being yet called upon to act. The cloud seems rising to lead me back… In general there is considerable blessing in the work, with the usual opposition.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

[Received] February 25th, 1851.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—I received the two notes, but long after you wrote them, and when on my journey I have just received your last. This difficulty at once presented itself in answering your notes, that to answer them requires a discussion of the whole scope and bearing of the prophetic word; and not only that, but of other subjects, without which that bearing can never be understood. Two means present themselves: the reply to the errors or abuse of prophetic statements, or the substantive development of the truth. Now to this latter there is the difficulty, that the reader is not in possession of the principles which enable him to seize the force of such development, and it is difficult to answer a false system without the elements existing in the mind to be disabused, which render it capable of judging the falseness of it, and seizing the truth. The false system is adapted to the state of soul of the mass of Christians even, but God is faithful. To do this at all properly would require a long work, which would set all on its right base, and thus develop the truth and refute error. But there is always this difficulty, and the truth must ever make its way against it, and so it does at length. Positive

evil remains till judged of God. The false systems which abuse the minds of saints perish and disappear before the truth. Besides, many, as Mart-land, Burgh and Co., have used certain truth in Satan's behalf to undermine important present moral bearings of truth; hence God would permit minds to be rescued from their influence by what restored these moral bearings, though imperfect in interpretation unless both were given; for He will keep His saints as a present thing above all. This does not render the truth less important, but makes one feel the need of God's help to make it good. I see no means to work effectually but this: to answer the works which mislead, so as to overthrow them, while disclaiming the evil principles of Maitland, &c.; but this, as means of stopping and getting rid of evil, so as to be able to nurture the positive development of the elements of [Christianity].

The great point I judge needed, is a clear apprehension of the difference of the church called for heavenly places, and the government of the world in respect of which the Jews form the centre of the ways of God… I hope the "Etudes sur la Parole" will aid as generally consolidating the statements of the truth. I feel that to do anything in English it would require me to set about and grapple definitely with the books you mention, reading them for myself. I could not master the question otherwise. I always need to make a thing my own in my own mind to be able to deal with it. When I get hold of the bearing of the principle of the thing in connection with scripture, I can deal more easily.

I only await the closing of my immediate work here in the south to turn towards England; when I am not actually at the strain of work, my thoughts all turn

thither. In general there is blessing. Some valuable labourers have been raised up, and on all sides the Spirit of God works more or less, and that now even among Roman Catholics.

The Lord be with you, dear brother, and keep us at the post in humbleness till the Lord come. It is a time to be entirely heavenly, for the earth is far from God, and daily its darkness closes in, but we belong to the light, and await another day.

Yours affectionately in Christ.

Montpellier, February, 1851.

* * * * *

Dearest——,—I have been studying the infidel objections; I find them excessively miserable, most of them as old as Celsus, in general without the least foundation, unless the privilege of doubting, and proof of a desire to find difficulties. The question takes two aspects, historical authority; and as to this, the character of the enmity is proof of it, but of more, namely, of inspiration, and the divine character of Christianity; for there is no such enmity against the history of Mahomet, no such anxiety to disprove it—the why is evident. But what would not invalidate history, may (seemingly) literal inspiration, for all men may mistake, and do—the best informed—the Lord cannot. But I see nothing to enfeeble the fullest inspiration really understood as of God. The great mistake is supposing that it is made to satisfy man according to his thoughts, and not to communicate God’s with perfect certainty. This last is needed, and, I am more than satisfied, exists; but were it in a way to satisfy the

exigencies of men's minds, it would lose for me its divine proofs…

It is astonishing what labour men take to exclude God. Happy those to whom in grace He has made Himself known, so that the proofs He gives of Himself are intelligible and conclusive. But man, away from Him, is not only evil, but contemptible.

Yours affectionately in Christ.

My books are quite alarming, as if I was regularly settled in the world; however, my life would hardly bear out the charge. But I use them diligently now. But I am astonished at all the ignorance there is in learning. Tholuck is sometimes a little flippant, but able in use of details, of which his learning gives him a vast quantity. There are two things: learning as acquirement, and capacity to use it—having it or not having it, save in general, so as to use it.

London, July 11th, 1851.

It is a great mistake to think that nothing can give testimony to itself. Supposing a man, noble, generous, forbearing in his ways, do I want a testimony to him? He is his own testimony. The character of the Lord's miracles there is nothing like, not merely in false or devilish miracles, but not even in the Old Testament. God's character as love, power and light is in them. They are not mere wonders. Who ever took a candle to see if he could see the sun? And if a man cannot see it, what do I conclude of him?

As to the fact, there are testimonies not only in the famous passage in Josephus, but Celsus does not attempt to deny them, but attributes them to magic

learned in Egypt, and the Jews said He got into the temple and stole the Shem hammaphoresh, the ineffable name, hiding it in his thigh, and wrought them by it. But all this is nothing compared to God's revelation of Himself.

The responsibility is connected with full adequate evidence, suited to man, being given. (John 5:33-40.) But man's will and lusts are such that he loves darkness rather than light. And thus God's power quickens sovereignly. (John 5:21. See chap. 3:11, 32; 8:45.) Conscience as to the faculty is the inlet to light, and none else, save that love draws; for God is love as well as light, and reveals Himself in Christ. If we see Him we see what we are, but we see goodness before us— where but in Him save dimly in those whose life He is? (See John 3:19.)

[Date unknown.]

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Beloved Brother,—I should except more against the general bearing of your argument than against particular passages in it.9 Indeed I know of one whom it sent back into the Establishment, and justly if received; for you quote me as saying it is no church, and hence that they do not apply to it; in your argument upon them you leave room for no such distinction, nor do you even suppose that What has been a church can cease to be so by some principle it adopts. Your general reasoning is this: you are to judge the evil individuals, but in no case the body. Suppose, as in Sardis, very few to be such as will walk with Christ in white, and the mass to be unconverted—never mind, you are not to separate, however degenerate they are become. Now how is an

ordinary mind to distinguish this from the Establishment? And you carry this so far, that you go through the churches, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and press that the Lord even never acts against the body, but only against those that have sinned—an argument without any force, because it omits Ephesus, whose candlestick is to be removed for the smallest departure, and Laodicea, which is wholly vomited out of His mouth. Now whatever use you make of this, it makes your deduction of no value; because according to your way of putting it, Ephesus would be wholly rejected for "a fall which no eye marked but His own;" and Pergamos and Thyatira would not, for the grossest allowed evil. The conclusion I draw is, that your manner of reasoning about it is unsound. I think the contrast I alleged as to the Establishment best; but it does not reach this case, though it was a just answer to Mr, J. Kelly;10 and I still hold the principles I there stated: only they do not reach the case either, which was not properly then before me.

I do not think you can justly reason from Christ's dealing with a church to my dealing with it—a principle I did not enter on, nor perhaps think of, in writing to Mr. K. First, because God can bear with evil with which I ought not: witness His bearing with the world, Babylon, from out of which I am called to come. Secondly, because in many cases He can judge the wicked only by a discriminating judgment in power, as in the cases you refer to in Revelation 2, 3, and as He will do at the end of the age, which I cannot. Hence a conclusion from His judgment to ours is unsound. We do not remove candlesticks either; though the Lord may validate our acts as to it, binding what we bind, or loosing what we loose if it be according to His mind. But we ought, namely, a body of

saints assembled in Christ's name ought, to answer the appeal of the Spirit to these churches, and repent if there be evil, and not continue in the evil—thus, if it had Nicolaitanes or Jezebel, not leave them if it could put them out—unless recovered by and to the truth.

But the case you speak of is not reached yet, or rather which you do not speak of, save by an allusion in a note. Supposing a body refuses to act in discipline, supposing after service as to its degeneracy, or in spite of remonstrance, or in any way which shews deliberate principle, it will accept of false doctrine, or false practice, specially as to what concerns Christ's glory (though all really does), what am I then to do? Walk with it —namely, accept myself also in my own acts the sin of which the Holy Ghost calls me to repent? I admit such a case ought never to be. My reasoning with Mr. K.. was on the ground, that the principle and system were God's own. Is that the case when doctrinal dishonour to Christ, heresy, or immorality is accepted as admissible in the church of God, namely, compatible with Christ's house and with Himself? Is that God's principle and system? I know well you will say not, in an instant. Whether there has been sufficient patience is another question, and a very serious one; because God will be just and patient, if we are not: whether the right steps have, or have not, been taken, is so too: I think wrong ones were in some cases as to Bethesda. But that cannot now affect my relationship with such or such a body, though it may render my path more difficult. I can only say God will suffice for all, and turn all to good; and we must wait on Him, and on His leadings. We deal thus with hundreds of professing bodies, on one ground or another. If the principle of union in Christ were to be explained as

meaning necessary continuance in, or admission of, evil, the brethren would be the wickedest sect or body in existence. Yet if evil is accepted, or refused to be put away, after all due measures are employed; if jealousy for Christ's honour be not the principle of union, that is, of the action of those united, this horrible principle is admitted. This being so, the question is one of fact. Of that I am satisfied. I suppose you also are now. And the mistakes in the manner of dealing with the evil of which others are guilty can never change the principles on which I am to act for myself, though it may render its application more difficult; which I do not doubt is the case, though I believe God, our faithful God, has overruled it for good, as He does in His wondrous grace everything for those that love Him.

I said you alluded to the principle, in which you evidently contradict your whole tract, and prove (forgive my saying so) that you reason from feeling, not from principle. "Our course here is… thirdly, to reject any coming from a place, or teacher avowedly [you mean, 'known to be,' for no one avows it] heretical, however professedly sound themselves, unless they would cease from all fellowship with such place or teacher." Be it so: but now (supposing it had been once a sound gathering, or treated as such) if degeneracy claimed service, not departure, you compel the sound man to depart from his gathering, though possibly the majority might be sound, and only the teachers perverting them (or indeed, vice Versa); that is, you insist on his doing what you condemn. You are right in insisting on it (unless it be real ignorance of the case or facts); but then, how does, as an absolute principle, evil and corruption or false

doctrine not claim departure? Your conscience is right; your tract leads people all wrong.

I have been asked how much, corruption would make me leave a gathering (supposing it once formed on true principle); I answered, no degree of corruption as a fact. But a refusal on principle, or deliberately by the body, to remove the least, or at any rate to seek to remove it, would make me leave it; and for the reason in my answer to Mr. K.: it would be not God's own system, but the opposite to it in the most possible way. I would make a remark here. You will find when a man walks with God, whatever his progress in the depths of the divine counsels or prophetic apprehension of His ways, and of what is passing around him, certain elementary parts of God's character and truth retain their full importance, and render him clear in judgment and sound in mind. Evil cannot have to say to or go on with God, nor God with it. Surely nothing simpler. Seducing power will always sin against some such truth as this; hence* the godly man, however simple, is not deceived by brilliant or fascinating power or appearances. See Romans ii., how the plainest elements are laid at the bar of all the amazing scheme of doctrine which judged the wily effects of Judaizing teachers. See the message which Christ brought as the eternal life which was with the Father, in 1 John 1:You will tell me love, and love to the brethren, is one of these elements. I accept it; but I add, love to the brethren is distinguished from the faint human resemblance to it, by its consistency with the principle I have referred to, "By this we know that we love the brethren, when we love God and keep his commandments." Thus it is distinguished from a coterie, or human kindness of nature. It is clear if I go with two

of your children, and lead them away from your will, it is not as your children I love them. There is no doubt that love, love of all the brethren is a distinctive mark of divine life.

Another principle I add in connection with this, dear brother. If we are walking with God, and looking to the church as Christ's, and that the house should be His, and so holy, and thus His honour sought to be maintained in it in grace, we shall trust Him for it. He is as Son over His own house, and most faithful in it; He will govern and rebuke according to the light we have, but never forsake. If I have failed in a simple ready seizing of the light, I may wait a moment, or go softly till I see my way, but I never shall distrust Him as to it. He it is that works for it, and alone can communicate blessing. For my own part, though I have felt all this very humbling, I have never doubted this a moment. I think it behoves us to go softly, but the more decidedly in the path of our feet, the more we feel that we have been straying. I am afraid afterwards to get at all away from Him. And that is true decision in the conscience; decision in fenergy is another thing, though it has always this for its basis. The camp was at Gilgal, wherever the victories were: if not, it was soon at Bochim.

As to the attacks, notice that the spirit of the world is working in those who condemn the principles I press. Hence I agree entirely that we (when needed) deal with individuals; but then I should see whether they had the principle of inter-communion with evil. If so, they are in heart of the principle of the gathering which you avowedly reject. This is a part of their state before the Lord. And if knowing that the gathering they come from

hold this principle, and I could not lead them to renounce it, and necessarily (consequently, if honest) the gathering, I could not receive them. Indifferentism under the name of charity is the great snare now, not avowed error, and it is wickedness of heart, and that is the fruit. If I found them bonâ fide ignorant, and in heart opposed to this horrible principle, for my part I could receive them; only I should plainly warn them of their error and inconsistency in going back where the principle they condemned was acted on; I assume them to be ignorant themselves of the fact. It is only your own principle, of page 11 of the tract, applied to indifferentism. For a poor ignorant saint might never have perceived a heresy in the teacher, and yet gradually have his mind infected; and so of indifferentism; and I have seen sad cases. Let us only remember that both are the influence of Satan over the mind, and we shall seek the deliverance of souls, and charity will not be content without it; though in present circumstances (nay, in such cases generally) we have to avoid the appearance of sectarianism, proselytising, or attacks on others, the appearance of which only turns the ignorant, the very persons I speak of, away. I do seek bonâ fide faithfulness to get such delivered, not the seeking of quiet at the expense of Christ. Getting as you are out of sir mistaken path or judgment, I feel quietness is even suitable, but the more we have felt we have erred, the more will conscience be decided if it is at work. The standing alone is a temptation, [a] mere escaping the burden of the church's sorrow. Had I sought this, I might have stayed comfortably where hundreds and thousands even [would] walk in peace with me, but I do not believe the Lord would have left me comfortable. He is too faithful. He would have

proved me there. Indeed, in these cases it is either seeking to be roused by other and greater trouble, or, worse still, left where we have sought our own ease. No; our path is humbleness and even humiliation and lowliness, but full and entire confidence in Christ. We feel our sins and faults right when we can bring them to Him, and there we find His strength for the sorrow they have occasioned. Up to that, we seek our ease in the flesh, or have preferred some of them, to all the sorrow of heart they have occasioned. I hope that is all done with. You see I go a good deal further than you, but I shall be glad to hear what you say, as regards receiving: the intercommunion principle we have in common. Then further, I desire and seek unfeignedly restoration, but real, to God and before God, not playing at it to ease our own minds, but godly humble true return to and walking with Him according to His will, jealousy for Christ, and deliverance from the deceiving or blinding power of the enemy in habits of thinking; for this is the way He is working; of which we have the plainest proofs to my mind.

I hope I may see you soon, without knowing precisely the moment.

Ever affectionately yours

In the blessed Lord.

What I look for is real jealousy for the Lord. Then I could bear many mistakes.

[Received] August 29th, 1851.

* * * * *

[From the French.

* * * The affections and duty towards parents are precious and lovely in their place; but the redemption of Jesus has placed us in a new creation, and if He calls us, according to His sovereign rights as Redeemer, to work for Him, we must be wholly given up to it. No man can serve two masters. This is not despising the parental claims; on the contrary, it is recognising them. If I place myself in this relationship, I ought to recognise it as from God Himself; but then I cannot be entirely at the service of Jesus. Called by Him, I am in another sphere, where family relationship does not enter. If it exists, it is obligatory. This is what was manifested in Jesus. He was subject until He commenced His ministry. From that time He did not know His mother. When His work was ended He recognised her indeed, and with the most exquisite tenderness, even while suffering on the cross. It is not the destruction of the affections, but the power of the Spirit, that carries us into a world the interests of which absorb us. “Salute no man,” said the Lord. “I know no man after the flesh,” said the apostle, For my own part, even while desiring to use all courtesy (for charity demands it); I am unhappy whenever I find myself on the ground of human relationships, however lovely they may be; it is not my Master. We have learned that honey does not go with sacrifice. Later we shall have fully developed, and in a better manner, all the sweetest affections; and we have them already in the church. This is the meaning of Mark 10:30. Yet a little while, and the pure affections of the heart will have all their scope, without any movement of selfishness.

1851.

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To the same.]

[From the French.

* * * The word of God teaches very clearly that the woman ought to keep silence in the assemblies. If it is only a question of conversation, a gathering of friends, of an evening spent together, the woman, with due regard to the modesty of her sex, is as free as another. She may exercise her gifts (for there were prophetesses) freely, according to the word of God; but in all that-really takes the character of the assembly, that is to say, of souls gathered corporately in the name of Jesus, the woman is to be silent: whether we are taking the Lord's supper, or not, she is to be silent in the assembly.

Our dear sister … has knowledge, and a facility for communicating it, and she may, without doubt, make use of these gifts in private; for in the epistles we see many women who laboured in the work, and who helped the apostle Paul himself, so that he makes mention of them in his letters, or rather the Spirit of God has honoured them in this manner. May God preserve us from not taking account of it in the present day. But the order of the house of God is always the path of blessing, and no expedient for filling up the gaps which in fact there are can be blessed in the long run, though it may at the moment seem to be useful.

The directions given by the apostle as to the deportment of a woman who prays, or prophesies, in nowise alter the instruction, "Let your women keep silence in the assemblies." In 1 Corinthians 11, it is only with verse 17 that the directions for the assembly begin.

The case of the daughters of Philip shews that these gifts were exercised elsewhere than in the assembly.

1851.

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To the same.]

[From the French.

* * * Let us work well, dear brother, while it is day; it is our only affair in this world, and, at the same time, let us be very watchful that the inner life, communion with our precious Saviour, be the true source of our activities. May we be faithful to the will of God in our walk, and large-hearted towards all His children. I earnestly desire to preserve the true character of the work of brethren, poor as they may be—and we are poor, and whenever we have lost the sense of it, God has chastened us. I believe that God has committed a testimony to us, even the testimony necessary at this time for His church. What a responsibility! and in us what incapacity for keeping this precious deposit, if we are not kept of Him, and near Him! Away from Him, from His presence realised in a sensible way, it would be, alas! but one more good thing spoiled, while the one to whom it had been committed would be puffed up, as to the very thing in which he bad been unfaithful. May God keep us near Himself, and in humility. Oh, may we be true and faithful witnesses of His grace, and labourers from Him; and who is sufficient for these things?

September, 1851.

[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—We are here at a conference in which, thank God, we have been much blessed; we have read in order the Gospel of John, but it leaves me little time for writing to you. I was delighted to receive your account

of Lyons. You know that I spent some days in that town coming from the south, and many things had already taken place, and I saw many people also. The meeting and the work have been much on my heart since then, so that your letter has been a great refreshment to me. In the condition in which brethren are there, in which we are all as a whole, it is not an evil that souls should come one by one. I do not believe either that those who have been brought up in system are in such a condition that they could walk without causing uneasiness and falsifying the path of brethren. There ought to be enough power amongst them to be able to receive every converted soul in L., whatever his condition might be; also in fact they would have no right to refuse any; but I rather doubt their being at present in the state to do so, and if God is doing that which tends to render to Him and to maintain for Him a true testimony, I can bless Him for it, although it is certainly humbling for brethren. They ought to answer to all the necessities of the church, but it is useless to pretend to what they are not; besides, we must leave God to act according to His perfect wisdom, and He is acting in grace, blessed be His name for it. We ought to remember also that we come on the scene when everything is already spoiled; however, Christ is sufficient for everything. We must seek to separate the precious from the vile, and we can count upon His grace. As to my letter, I hold fast to not giving to our position, that is at L., an anti-baptist character. While deeply convinced of it, and believing that I have the light of God thereupon, I would as much avoid being an anti-baptist as a baptist. I really desire the union of all Christians in the unity of the body of Christ. If any one has the conviction that he has not been baptised, I think he does very well in getting

himself baptised. My desire is that we should be one, as we are one in Christ. Now I should be much grieved if the meeting in 50:was founded on opposition to baptists. We have need to be founded on grace, on that which also edifies; and that the reality of the power of the Holy Ghost should unite us in the practical grace of Jesus Himself; that our life should be of Him, and for Him; that He should live in us and that thus we should be one. If the publication of my letter gave a sectarian colour to our meeting by pre-occupying minds with a subject below Christ Himself, I should much regret it, and this, dear brother, is what I dread. If you can offer them to persons who wish for them as a means of appreciating truth, and in order to prevent souls from falling into a sectarian spirit, I desire no better. With these remarks, dear brother, I leave the matter in your hands; you can dispose of the letter as you think well. You will examine before God if you can use it with this object: perhaps if you think well to have it printed you can do so without publishing it, and you can add by way of counsel what I have just said; I mean the substance of the thought.

I bless God with all my heart for His goodness towards our feeble testimony, for I have good news from Nimes also. I feel this the more because I felt that I ought to come here, and the work in the south was much on my heart. God is blessing us here; the spirit of the brethren is simple, humble, and grace rules in their relations. We are having a conference here for the study of the word in which we have been certainly blessed, and I hope that it has even done much good. I must conclude my letter; I have much to do. Grace and peace be with you, dear brother. Greet the brethren affectionately. I must leave you in order to revise the translation of the Synopsis on

Kings for a few moments before our meeting. May God be with you.

Yours very affectionately.

Bristol, September 12th, 1851.

* * * * *

To the same.]

[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—Your letter reached me here on my way. I answer without delay. Anxiety which anticipates evil is not the faith which faces the difficulties through which God sees it well to make us pass, and in which the conscience is consequently engaged. Mr. W. had engaged me to write to Switzerland on the subject of this business. I am waiting, while leaning on the goodness of the Lord, who loves His church, who knows if it ought to trouble them. I am waiting on God that He may grant them to be faithful, and give them all the necessary instruction if the difficulty arises. He has done so already in a wonderful way in the case of Mr. N.'s agents who went there: why should I not trust Him for every other case? … I do not wish to raise questions where the brethren are in peace, hoping that God will give the needful wisdom when the question is raised: why occupy them with it beforehand, when the conscience is not yet involved?

With regard to Mr. ——, I have not seen him since the Bethesda question arose, so it is possible that by presenting the matter clearly to him and to his conscience he would be brought back, even if he has at present gone astray. I suppose that he is more or less connected with Bethesda; now if it is so, and if he

rejected warnings, and persisted in keeping up connection with B., I could not walk with him; I am going to tell you why, leaving him aside, not knowing what would be the effect of a conversation with him. First I must tell you that I believe that if one meeting receives the members of another, and the members of the former go there in their turn, there is a bond between the two, although I own that in the present case other motives have power over me. This is how it is then as to B. Doctrine is not in question, but faithfulness to Christ with respect to doctrine or holiness. I would not receive a person who knowingly formed part of a meeting which admits heretics, or persons whose conduct is bad, because the principle of indifference to good and evil, to error and truth, is as bad as the wrong action, and even worse. Let me be clearly understood. I believe that the church is bound to be jealous with respect to the glory of the Person of Christ. If Christ is despised, I have no principle of union. I believe that B. has acted with profound contempt for the Lord, to say nothing of brethren. Here there is nothing equivocal. Mr. N. was maintaining a doctrine of which Mr. Müller himself said that if it were true, Christ would have needed to be saved as much as we did. This doctrine placed Christ under the effect of Adam’s sin by His birth, in saying that He had to gain life by keeping the law. We had driven away this doctrine and those who upheld it, and the struggle was ended. The persons who had supported Mr. N. had published confessions with respect to the doctrine, and had made confessions before the brethren publicly of the falsehoods and wickedness by which they had tried to make good their views and to justify themselves; it was a truly extraordinary work of Satan.

Well, a lady wished to introduce Mr. N. to teach in a meeting near Bethesda; this meeting refused; she left the meeting accordingly. She was introduced at B., Mr. M. knowing that she was maintaining and propagating this doctrine, Mr. Craik the other pastor having had to do with her. She went there because they admitted such persons into that meeting. At the same time, two gentlemen, who made part of the meeting which Mr. N. had formed when he was obliged to leave on account of his doctrine (those who had supported him having left him and made confession), these two communicants of Mr. N.'s, I say, were also admitted to B. It is proved true that these three disseminated Mr. N.'s tracts in the B. assembly. The lady induced a young lady to go who was the most active and intelligent agent that Mr. N. had, in order to spread his doctrines. In consequence of these circumstances, several godly brothers of B. asked that all this should be examined; they said that they did not ask even that the judgment of the brethren should be taken thereupon, but that they should examine the matter and the doctrine themselves. This was decidedly refused. I received a letter from Mr. C, blaming me as sectarian for making these difficulties, even when he was not prepared to receive everything that Mr. N. was teaching. They had many meetings of the flock and the ten labouring brothers (of whom two were really disciples of Mr. N.), Messrs. M. and C. at their head, presented a written paper to the assembly at B., declaring that this was a new test of communion, which they would not admit; that many excellent brethren did not give so decided an opinion upon Mr. N.'s doctrine; that they were not bound to read fifty pages to know what Mr. N. taught, the members of his flock being—mark this!—already admitted at B. A brother asked

permission to communicate some information about Mr. N.'s doctrine, in order that the assembly might understand why they held to it that the doctrine should be judged; and this was peremptorily refused, and the paper which said that many had not a bad opinion of the doctrine, rejecting as a new condition of fellowship the examination into the doctrine, was laid down as the absolute condition of the pastorate of Messrs. M. and C, without which they would withdraw from their ministry in the midst of the assembly. Those who justified them on the ground of this paper were to rise, which was done by the assembly, thirty or forty forthwith leaving B. So that, with knowledge of the matter, they laid down as the basis of the B. assembly, indifference to the truth as to the Person of Christ; and they preferred to see about forty godly brethren leave, rather than to examine into the question, having in fact in their midst the members of the N. meeting. This was so much the more important in my eyes, because Satan was seeking at that moment, and still seeks, to forbid the assembly of the children of God to examine into and to judge any heresy whatsoever; that once a person has been acknowledged as being a Christian, one has no right to know what he holds. This has been plainly laid down as a principle by many persons who blame us, and they desired to take advantage of it to force us to receive a young man who distinctly denied that there was such a Person as the Holy Ghost. I do not say that all lay down this principle, but the enemy has sought to bring it in, and amongst the brethren who opposed me on this question, some of the most violent maintain it.

Now the principle of indifference as to the Person of Christ being laid down at Bethesda, and the assembly

having publicly accepted it, I refuse to admit this principle. They have admitted persons put outside amongst us on account of blasphemy, Messrs. M. and C. are the pastors of the assembly in virtue of this principle. This letter has never been withdrawn: they claim to have done right. Many things will doubtless be told you in excuse, and to make it appear that they have done things which nullify this: I know how it is with them. For me their condition before God has become much, much worse. I should be ready to say why. I believe that they are themselves more or less infected with false doctrine, but I cannot enter into the story in detail. Mr. M. said to me (after having acknowledged that Christ would have needed to be saved as much as we, if this doctrine was admitted) that they maintained the letter of the ten to the full, and that they had done well in all that they had done. Well, indifference to Christ is a grave sin: an assembly which bases itself publicly on this principle I cannot accept as a christian assembly. Assemblies which are connected with B., which go there and receive from thence, are one with B. —save the case of persons who are ignorant of the matter, an exceptional case of which it is not necessary to speak. Fox my part this is what I do; having distinctly taken my position I judge each case individually according to its merits, but I will not receive a person who keeps up his connection with B. with knowledge of the matter, Faithfulness to Christ before everything; I know not why I labour and suffer if this is not the principle of my conduct.

The fact is that brethren had fallen into a state of spiritual demoralisation which required this sifting, and as they get out of it individually they reject B., which is

taking place, thank God, every day. Persons who have written tracts against me write their own condemnation, while declaring that they were deceived at Bristol. As to that, my resolution is taken: I am deeply convinced that the basis of the B. meeting is contempt of Christ, and I do not walk with those who accept it, and I will not mix with it; it would be indifference to my own conduct. If consequently I walk alone it is well; I am content as to myself; I deplore the condition of souls. I do not say that all that has been done to oppose it has been wise. I do not think so, but my judgment of the matter in the main is definitively taken. I believe B. in a much worse condition than at the beginning of the question.

I do not desire to introduce such a question into the midst of brethren who are not in fact engaged in the evil. I fear Mr. W. is inclined to do so. He has done so to some degree here in my opinion.

Your very affectionate.

Hereford, October 6th, 1851.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—I doubt not that money will be found, not so that there should be no more needs, but in order to prove the faithfulness of God, who thinks of those whom He sends forth. It is not His will to take us out of a lowly position, nor to destroy the occasion, the necessity (and may it be a necessity for the heart) for dependence on Him. I would not wish it to be otherwise; but He will answer faith without taking us out of the position that requires this faith.

I think it is goodness on God's part to have taken away our dear sister G. I always trembled for her, and, with Jesus, she will be very safe, and happy too. If we bear many souls upon our hearts, He knows how to bear them not only on His heart but also in His arms. How happy one is to be the object of His care! How tender and faithful it is, and what wisdom! He keeps us here for our happiness and joy; He takes us to Himself for still greater joy, when this world is not suitable for us. May we but know how to live for Him, entirely for Him; and by Him, in order that we may know how to live for Him. It is just when we desire to live for Him, that we feel that we have not the power to do so without Him. But then, how He sustains the life! in what a precious way we learn His faithfulness! and how far even a little food will carry us, because Christ is presented to us in it in so large and full a way.

Yes, our business is to be with Him, that our life should be Himself. The springs of life in the soul are then deep —deep as God Himself; it is fed by what is pure, by what binds it so directly to Himself that everything acquires a strength which it is impossible to have otherwise. A well-nourished life then becomes a well-filled one.

April 5th, 1852.

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Beloved Brother,—Few, I should trust, have a larger spirit than myself, or are more disposed to leave the fullest liberty of conscience. I fear being too large sometimes, but I do not quite understand individual liberty in public common discipline… The difficulty of present circumstances in exercising that discipline I understand most fully; but supposing discipline to have

been justly, and consequently divinely exercised, surely saints elsewhere are to act upon it; or confusion and disorder, and slighting the saints and Christ Himself in antinomian liberty, is the result. I freely admit that, as things are, it is difficult in many cases, not of common evil, but of ecclesiastical judgment, to deal otherwise than the best we can; but it is always well to respect brethren unless one has a clear case of conscience. Of course ——is free, not to be bound by the judgment of brethren, but if people put things on this ground, why, we might say as much. But woe be to him who, if brethren have walked humbly and patiently with God, holds himself free from their judgment. Such may despise them, and for a time they may for their good have the lowest place, but I do not believe such a course will prosper, for God is with them that fear Him, however He may humble them.

Certainly no one has less sought to make a party than I have: I trust my heart is too much in heaven to find such a thing supportable. I am sure I am too morally lazy. But I shall pursue the course I believe to be of God, and He who judges the secrets of men's hearts will judge all things and all men. The cry of party does not move me. It is evidently the enemy's cry: the only danger is others shaking one by it, by giving decided persons the reputation of being a party. But I am not afraid of the enemy, though I would be on my guard against him…

I see looseness is an easy road, but I prefer following Christ. And I see very clearly here that gentlefolks who want an easy berth would prefer Bethesda for unholy reasons. Perhaps God in the present state of the church would give them an easy path, half-way with the world. They have their own cross there for their class, and they

are not capable of more. Christ preferred the poor; ever since I have been converted so have I. Let those who like society better have it. If I ever get into it, and it has crossed my path in London, I return sick at heart. I go to the poor; I find the same evil nature as in the rich, but I find this difference: the rich, and those who keep their comforts and their society, judge and measure how much of Christ they can take and keep without committing themselves; the poor, how much of Christ they can have to comfort them in their sorrows. That, unworthy as I am, is where I am at home and happy. I think I am intellectual enough, and my mind—though my education was in my judgment not well directed, save by God—cultivated enough to enjoy cultivated society. I have none of it, but I prefer the cross.

London has given me the opportunity latterly of comparing, through all this break-up, the effect of what I embraced joyfully on principle, and as a principle, twenty-seven years ago. I thought then it was the cross, but took it up in the energy of first and inexperienced zeal. I have had the opportunity of weighing it by experience. And when, perhaps in the most trying way, I have found it to be the cross, and with the additional difficulties arising from my own failure, and poor, feeble, and with little wisdom to know how to walk in it, I accept it still. I am sure more faith might walk more powerfully in this path, but the path is the right one. There I walk with God’s help. I have seen many swerve and seek ease, I have seen my own failure and feebleness in it, but the path is Christ’s, and I desire to walk there still. I did not enter into this path for its success, but for its truth, because I believed it Christ’s. I walk in it still for the same reason. I did hot enter into it

for brethren, or brethrenism: there were none to join. I did so because the Spirit and the word shewed me it, and that it was following Christ. It has not ceased to be so; and now that many have left for a broader, and I think more worldly one, I still prefer the narrow one. I did not choose it for them; I do not leave it because they have left it. Faith may be more exercised, the faults of others and my own may have made it more difficult to walk in it, and it is so, but have not altered it. When I left Ebrington Street, I thought myself alone. 1 think the brethren behaved very badly, but I recognise my own failing enough to leave all that, and walk straight now through grace; if others will not, I mourn, but do not change my path, for the world more or less always, when they do not. I endeavour, and earnestly desire, to shew grace and largeness of heart to those I think even wrong. I do not deny that in the conduct of the affair, the failure of judgment as I think of others, has made my own path much more difficult, but I cast all this on God, and go on looking to Him. The result is in His hands. If alone, alone; if He grant union, it will be my heart's joy, but at any rate faithfulness, and His favour and approbation. This is my answer to these things.

Ever affectionately yours.

London [received], May 15th, 1852.

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* * * I have often, of late, insisted upon the fact, that all sorts of things are related in the scriptures: the malice of Satan, the mistakes and evil thoughts of men, their sins, unmixed evil, a mixture of good and evil, things and words where the influence of the Holy Spirit in the heart finds its way athwart the prejudices and the thoughts of

men. But all these things are given us in the word by inspiration, in order that we may know man and the ways of God. At the same time, God's own thoughts are also communicated to us, in order to enable us to judge all this according to His judgment. Thus we comprehend, in a far truer way, the state of man and all that is connected with his relations with God.

What I seek in an inspired book, is the perfect communication of the thoughts of God, such as He deigns to communicate them to me, and a perfect history of man, a history such that possessing the thoughts of God, I may perfectly judge of what man is, as God, the God of truth, would shew him to me. Now, for this, I must know his faults, his thoughts, what he is without law, under law, under the influence of affections which the Holy Spirit produces, whether the flesh is entirely mortified or, in what proceeds from the heart, it colours the affections produced, giving them the form of the individual's condition of mind.

In this latter case, when it is a question of this mixture, I do not take the result as the proper expression of the thoughts of God, nor as affections absolutely approved of Him, such at least as they are expressed. But I accept what is told, as a revelation from God, which makes man known to me in that phase. For the effect of the work of God in man will only be perfect, when, in the glory, we reflect what He is according to the pattern of Jesus, to whose image we shall be conformed. The moment we have to do with the thoughts of God revealed directly, it is another thing; but man depicted by God, the work of Satan, the effect of the work of God in man, are never that. There is difficulty only in this latter case, on account of the mixture. For my own part, I do not doubt

that a powerful effect of the Spirit of God is often produced, where the moral form with which that which produces it is clothed participates, to a very great degree, in all the thoughts of the class of persons who are the vessels and channels of it. The Holy Spirit produces zeal and affections; their form is often that of the religious education of the individual, or even of the nation.

June 16th, 1852.

[From the French.

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Beloved Brother,—The re-sifting to separation from the world must begin through this, naturally more painful in Plymouth than elsewhere. Nor will growth upwards as to work begin till this be gone through. As with Christ Himself —many of His disciples went away at that saying, and walked no more with Him, and yet it was the most blessed of all that He said then; but it did not suit their state. Pruning having, I suppose, been neglected, brethren must pass through this winter, to sprout in spring; and it will be a fresh work, not associated properly with old joys, but in the truths, and yet much more in the Christ that produced them.

It is a mercy all did not slip back into the loose worldly religion which generally characterises the decay of revivals. I look on it as a very great mercy from the Lord.

There is an enduring to the end, and patience having its perfect work. It is trying when people are not decided, and have not definitely taken their place as on a finished question. Then we can deal with restoration, but I doubt

you are fully there at——yet… It is absolutely necessary to be settled in order to restore, and this must be by being really fixed in the true Christ, or being all wrong; but eternal questions cannot restore. That which gathers is Christ, and grace and real work in bringing Him down to souls: that is what we want. It is that which must always do God's work, can and ought alone to do it. Now, with looseness as to Christ, this is done in a measure (because the error may not appear—only when this is hollow there will not be power, and God will not bless it), even to conversion, if there be a true witness.

But there may be a mass of souls who are loose, and do not like the trouble of being faithful, or in such a time, the question connected with it. But alas! they are then gathered to acquiescence in unfaithfulness, and the world is more or less there— religious world perhaps, but not the cross properly. If the cross be not taken up, this ensnares; that is, if Christ be not everything and the world therefore not wanted, and its neglect therefore easy to bear. Some few simple souls may be ensnared, but they will get out when exercised in God's time. But then, on the other hand, this settling of questions even rightly will not gather souls. We must be right as to what they are gathered to: but it must be a Christ in power and grace, without any questions, that gathers them. God alone can give this, and He will not, till there be sufficient exercise to make the Christ gathered to, the same Christ as that which gathers. But it is free out-going grace alone that gathers.

I do not know if at——you are quite at this point; but I count it a great grace the Lord has so dealt with the brethren. The good effect on souls has been astonishingly evident also; they are worth morally

incomparably more than they were. If it be not arrived there, it will suffer yet awhile, but the apparent advantage of.the unfaithful will be hollow and worldly, a mere re-descent into the mixed religious system of the day. When it is not, it will be a restless angry feeling, as I see in some gatherings elsewhere, especially when the Lord allows blessing to flow a little elsewhere; and they do not escape worldliness after all. Then they will have more rich and respectable people who like looseness and liberty in religious things, but it is not a real testimony to Christ. But, I repeat, living grace bringing in grace, Christ by the Holy Ghost from heaven, to souls, can alone really gather and recruit souls.

There is, through great mercy, a little blessing here…. Several souls who had wandered from God have been restored to peace and joy, and there is an ingathering recommenced quite as fast as, I feel at any rate, we have power to watch over or help them… The work is very constant, but I am happy in it, and through great mercy —how undeserved I well know, and would say how unworthy, but that it is not a question of worthiness—I feel the Lord with me in it. I have plenty of work besides London and plenty in it; indeed as to care, I feel it is not done, and only find a resource in Him who perfectly cares for His sheep. Kindest love to the brethren. The Lord sustain and bless them. It is a winter time for them: but heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning, and to the upright there ariseth up light in the darkness. There is no doubt the Lord must carry on the sifting work He is doing to the end, with those who need it. I desire earnestly a restoring spirit, grace dealing and seeking souls in grace; but it must be to a

known Christ we are faithful, and in our little measure, that the gathering and restoration can be…

Ever your affectionate brother in Christ.

London [received], July 13th, 1852.

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[From the French.

Dear Sister,—I will remind you of one thing: it is that the sisters of——have long been in the habit of judging the preachers; I do not mean only since the beginning of the meeting, but when they were still going to church they did it much. It is a thing against which our sisters will have to be on their guard….It may be indeed that there is not all that answers to the needs of all the souls that attend the meetings; but if there is true piety, and I believe there is with a good number, if Christ is presented, even if there is not anything very new, a spiritual soul will find, not perhaps all that it desires in the communication, but that which puts it in connection with the source of all that it desires, and feeding itself there—in such a case—it is not much occupied with the state of the meeting, except to pray much for it; and in so doing, it will find the joys and sweetness of love by the work of the Spirit of God in itself. I do not at all say that this is all that is to be desired in a meeting; far from it; but one walks there with God, and the consequence of this is that the. soul is happy in itself and contented. There are souls who make more progress thus, than where there is much outward spiritual help. I can understand that where the word is less completely developed than the habits of the mind demand, the want will be felt; whilst many souls who have not these habits get on well there. But after all, if we are near God, we

can bear it, and rejoice even in the freshness of the grace. To mention only the name of Jesus is a sweet smelling savour shed forth for one who rejoices deeply in Him in his soul. There is the secret of happiness; and then to carry the burdens of the church as one's own. I stop. Perhaps I shall soon go to ——. In any case, if God permits me, I shall not delay very long. I charge you to walk quietly for the moment, and not to take such a serious step as that of separating yourself from the assembly. In doing so, it is difficult to retrace one's steps.

Your affectionate brother in Jesus.

London, July, 1852.

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My dear Brother,—After a meeting for humiliation11 of some brethren habitually walking in fellowship together, some who were separated from them seemed to have had the desire to have taken part in it, and to have been prepared to do so.

A desire being formed in my own mind for a meeting for humiliation, and having spoken to others of it, I have found it, thank God, to be the common desire of many—universal, I think I may say, with those who have felt bound, as it is well known, to be decided as to what they judged to be evil, and participated in—I am led to believe, by many from whom they have been unhappily separated; for unhappy it surely will be felt to be, even if the judgment may have been convinced that it was inevitable. I feel assured that God has wrought this desire for humiliation, and disposed the hearts of one and another to it.

The point on which I should propose to meet with brethren is, that we feel that we have failed in maintaining the glory of God in that which was committed to our trust, though He may not in grace have taken it from us—a serious and solemn thought.

Each one would in his own conscience take to himself the share in this, for which he would feel himself responsible before God. The subject of our common humiliation would be the result we are all conscious of. I am ready for my own part to take the first and largest share in this. It is not a confession of others' faults I look for, hut a common one of us all before God, each taking his part as the Holy Ghost may in sovereign grace shew it to him.

No one who comes is supposed thereby to relinquish any judgment he has formed as to evil, or any course he has pursued as to it. On the other hand, those who have blamed many of the acts of the brethren here alluded to are not supposed to be committed to any approval (or disapproval) of them. For my own part, I am ignorant of most, and myself dissent from some I do know of. Any change in this respect must be left to the Holy Ghost, if such there is to be.

I say this, not to raise any question as to what is not the object of the meeting, but to meet one which would naturally arise, and might be a hindrance to one otherwise disposed to join in it, and thus remove the difficulty.

The object of the meeting is one only—humiliation, because we have failed to glorify God. It is to join in this that any one should come, if he comes at all, with the desire that God may grant blessing to us by it. Such is

my trust as to the meeting. I trust God's blessing may attend it. I feel that it is the place that becomes us. Through His grace it may be the means of blessing, nor would I limit the extent of that which God might grant by it. His grace is beyond our measure of it, or our thoughts. Though, of course, it more immediately concerns those who have been placed in the unhappy circumstances known to us all, if any Christian who has never been mixed up with the questions which have given occasion to it, nor belonged to an assembly of those amongst whom the circumstances have arisen, felt really desirous, as a member of Christ's body, and convinced that the testimony of God was concerned in it, he would have gladly a place amongst those who have given occasion to the humiliation called for. If any in Bethesda desire really to join in humiliation, it is not desired to exclude them, and means would be taken to afford them the opportunity in such a way as would not involve any one in any sanction or acceptance of what they judge to be evil.

July, 1852.

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Dearest Brother,—I must, of course, expect every one to take his own view of the meeting, and rely only on my hope that God will take His; but there seems to me to be some haste in your correspondent, as there has been, I think, in much that has been done. Where did he find "any allusion to the sin and separation existing to be excluded?" It is as new to me as to you. How could I pretend to dictate the prayers and confessions each should make? It was a point on which I had pre-eminently to trust God. I desire none to be there but

those thoroughly humbled. If they are, God will surely guide in the confessions they are to make. I am sure if any one in his prayer—which.1 have no right or reason to suppose—prayed against me as a maker of schism and the like, it would be to have himself judged as to the doing it on such an occasion. It would work together for good. I have stated as distinctly as possible in every invitation, that those who have been, as I think, justly decided, are to be understood as implying no change whatever by coming. —— wanted to have a vague invitation, leaving this out, but I did not comply. I did not bind the others who came to any approval of the acts of the former by coming, leaving all changes in this to God's working in individuals. If there are among them any disposed to join us in humiliation and nothing else, without our giving up our judgment, I would not refuse them; what I sought was this one point, because I saw some did desire it. I think if any one went there to accuse B. (and my own judgment is more than confirmed as to its evil) instead of confessing his own part in the evil, and humbling himself because of the dishonour done to the Lord, as a great public fact among us, he had much better stay away; for the object of the meeting is to humble ourselves because we have failed, not to accuse any, however evil they may have been. This is my whole object in the meeting, to take for myself the place of humiliation, and I am content to see those who take this ground with me, that is, that the Lord has been dishonoured, though they condemn me in some of my acts. I have not for that given up my judgment as to the given case of evil at B. or elsewhere. The truth is, I think I see it more clearly, feel it more strongly, and have increased vantage ground against it of a holy kind by this humiliation. A rigid pride of righteousness as to it I

believe does not become us; if any feel it their place to take this ground I am sure I do not take it with them, yet I think I am as decided, and I hope I shall be as firm in the long run as they. I think I have sometimes seen something of this spirit; I do not sympathise with it.

Now my desire (led, I believe, of God) in the meeting was to separate this humiliation from everything else. I know of no social meeting together. This introduces the meals. I felt many might be disposed to fast: such was the case at Kingston. I further felt that in a meeting, professedly and solely for humiliation, dining socially together was much less in place than just taking what was needed in the way of food. Every family mourning apart [Zech. 12:12] shews not the letter but the spirit in which such an act may be looked at; and I decided to have no regular common meals, but let every one eat as his nature needed it before God; of course, several could together, if they were led to do it. The effect of this met at the same time a scruple which might be in many minds, and to avoid— what might trouble them—any recognition in worship, for so thanksgiving might be termed, of those who were walking, as they judged, disorderly. It would leave every one free to join where his own conscience was at ease; in a word, while I felt it in itself suitable, this arrangement left every conscience perfectly before God to do what it thought right. The eating makes no part of the meeting whatever; I have for the convenience of all provided for every one something to eat, that they may not have to go away to inns, or be hindered coming. I judge it will make the humiliation more solemn, and that I am very glad of. The humiliation is the sole object of the meeting. Of course, one who could not let into the humiliation he was

engaged in, as regards the dishonour done to the Lord, another who desired it who was not decided as ourselves on what has occurred, could not join with comfort in the meeting. This leads me to the invitations. Unless in the case of known false doctrine or such conduct morally as stopped my hand, I did not positively exclude individuals, or by any negative course which amounted to leaving them out. Their writing the bitterest things possible against myself would never have been a reason with me for excluding them, rather the contrary, that they might know personal injury did not weaken my charity…

In fine, the meeting is neither social nor ecclesiastical, but of individuals who desire to humble themselves because we have not maintained the Lord's glory in what was committed to us, and nothing else. It is not about B., nor. about those who have separated themselves from it. I judge that great dishonour has been done to Christ, and a stumbling-block put in the way of souls finding their way out of surrounding evil. I put myself in the first place of guilt as to this. I meet those who desire to own we have not maintained God's glory in the exceedingly precious things committed to us. I have found some who have not been as decided about a certain evil as they ought to be, desirous of humbling themselves for what we are all concerned in. I take care they shall understand that there is no kind of compromise as to our decision as to this evil, and I am then willing they should humble themselves with us also. I have sought, not exactly to choose the individuals myself, but to take the best moral care I could that those should come who really joined in spirit in the humiliation.

B. is not the subject of the meeting, but our having dishonoured God: such is the meeting. I understand that with some this sense of humiliation has not the place it has in my mind. Of course, they would not see the character of the meeting as I do; they may be more occupied merely with their own righteous ground as to B.: I do not sympathise with them. I think even great mistakes were committed by those who were right in the main, and that humiliation is the principal thing that becomes us; yet I think I see the evil of B. more clearly and more decidedly than ever: I am not going to make acting against it the spring of my action, but Christ. I think, as I have said, I get moral vantage ground as to it by the humiliation. I trust I have made clear to you the ground I have gone on as to the meeting. Of course, I may have made mistakes in the execution, but I feel assured God approves the object of it, and that He will guard it from any hindrance in the main to its object, which I believe to be dear to Him. It has this character of light at any rate, that it has brought out in a wonderful way the thoughts and state of everybody's heart. I shall lose the post if I add any more.

Ever affectionately yours.

July 16th, 1852.

* * * * *

Dearest Brother,—I am very thankful indeed you have been satisfied. I have no doubt the meeting will be a true basis of blessing, for example, the grace of God which gave it, and is connected with it, Many, at any rate, felt the Lord very decidedly giving His hand to help us out of a trying position, a fresh start in grace; I have no doubt of it. The Lord only keep us in the place in which

humiliation brings us. Effects shewed themselves evidently in the hearts of several…

The meeting referred, as I said, to our own failing, not to other people's; I am sure it did with me altogether. I feel on clearer ground as to it than ever I did, and relieved from the difficulty of dealing with evil in the condition of failure. We had a meeting afterwards at Bristol (not to mix it up with the Taunton one) where we were free to speak of matters. Then I took a step forward, delivering to myself, and removing a difficulty in others' way who complain of me. I declared I had entirely withdrawn my original letter as to B.; not that I saw anything wrong in it, only one passage had been complained of, that in which I said I could not break bread, &c. This I had put in as due to brethren, to tell them openly what I felt about it, instead of leaving them in the dark; it was openness and confidence towards them. But, while it took away what was a barrier to several, a grievance to all who object to me, so that they had spoken about it, I felt that it freed me from a perpetual formal question why I did this, and why I had not done that, and threw it over on the abiding merits of the case, and I drop out of the question, if there be any desire of approaching; if not, it is no matter. On the merits of the case I cannot have a doubt, and there the matter now stands, as far as I am concerned. There exists nothing between me and B. but its own state, and the pains I took to bring it before M. and C. in grace; nor, as regards others, have they this topic to dwell upon.

I do not think they were aware of what they wished; for the act, as far as my position is concerned, has the most complete arid important bearing, but I had weighed it before the Lord, and declared definitively it was done. I

was cross questioned and examined to know what I would do, but I refused peremptorily to commit myself to any course for the future. I was Christ's servant, and what was His will I should do, as far as grace enabled me, and I knew how. I felt that it broke the link with the old organisation of the brethren, if such I may call it. I had left that individually in leaving Ebrington Street, but the error having been generally rejected, that link was, in a certain sense, renewed by a circular to them all, and involved me in their position. Its withdrawal put me again completely free and isolated. I told the brethren that I had not a thought but through grace of having closer ties with those who walked in His fear, but the original link of association, the only ostensible one, was gone. I felt it delivered me from all link or discussion with gatherings, put B. out of court, and set me free in communion with brethren going right on the sole and simple ground of the unity of the church of God.

With them it will consequently bind the bonds tighter and on true and healthier grounds; while however free to act in grace towards any if occasion arise, as I heartily desire, I am free from all link with anything else; I am not involved in their responsibilities, as that letter implied, and what was urged as a stumbling-block to others is gone. I am Christ's servant, untrammelled by aught save His will, which is true liberty. It astonished some of the brethren, but it was a settled thing in my own mind.

I am prepared to suppose, unless God, who certainly is at work, prevent, and rise above it all in grace—however clearly I explained it—that many will take advantage of it to say I am changed, that I confess I was wrong, and see I was unjustifiable in my judgment as to B.; I am

prepared for all this. I have to do with B. as a Christian now, and not to defend what I did then. I feel it a happier ground, though my object was to take what was alleged as a difficulty out of the way. They cannot complain now; the sole question is what are the real merits of the case. It has set my own mind abundantly free; I do not trouble myself the least with consequences drawn from it. It gives a new start, and gets rid of festering questions and details. Others, I suppose, will tell you of the meeting, so I add no details. I felt at the end of the second day it was really closed, as did many others—that its proper character of humiliation had; and though the evening of that day there was much spiritual energy, I believe it was beginning to merge, though there was confession, into rather more intercession for the future—all most enjoyable, in its place, but not our meeting. I believe the Lord ordered the whole.

Affectionately yours,

Beloved Brother, in Him.

W. writes me word he has withdrawn his printed papers from circulation and thinks of something else.

London, July 26th, 1852.

* * * * *

* * * I am not anxious to explain my conduct—I quite expected the use likely to be made of it by many… I told them I saw no harm in the circular, and had pressed its withdrawal, and as it stood as “a stumbling-block” to many, I took it out of the way. L did not see much meaning in withdrawing a warning, never on sale, and three years old, but as it was a matter of feeling, and they felt it a hindrance, I was willing to remove

everything in the way. The merits and demerits of B. remaining I supposed unchanged, I go on with those with whom I am in communion on the broad and plain ground of my duty to Christ. If others are faithful to Him, we shall go together; if they are not, by His grace we shall not. The fact is I never was on any other, only I supposed myself with all the brethren on it, and the Ebrington Street iniquity broke that. I never—not even when in the Establishment—thought that Christ and iniquity, and Christ and fundamental false doctrine as to Him, were to go together. If others think they can and ought (and it is the whole question)… of course this will lead us in different paths. I have withdrawn the circular in grace because it was a hindrance and a stumbling-block to minds of brethren, from before whom I would take every such thing. Any conclusion drawn from it I entirely repudiate. I shall act as faithfully as I am able in every case which shall arise as a servant of Christ. I dare take no other ground: I never did. I know of no "ecclesiastical position" but this: I took it publicly in London. On arriving I told brethren I could not be for ever on questions. I have done with B. entirely, and every case that I meet with I will try and act godlily in. The question for every one is, "What is faithfulness to Christ?" It remains, and must remain, just where it was.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—I know nothing of communion entered into with those from whom I was separated. Would to God this were restored, but it must be on true and solid ground. I could humble myself that it was lost, and not exclude those who could really enter on this ground, but I do not think that humbling ourselves that a thing is lost, is saying that it is there. The moment the meeting

seemed to lose the character of humiliation, though keeping its form, but that it was practically spent, and began in spirit to turn into intercession, it was closed. The whole thing I believe was blessed, though doubtless imperfect, and was and will be the channel of blessing. Instead of thinking it puts me or any one who really entered it on false ground as to evil I am not personally mixed up with, I think and feel distinctly it puts me and them on much truer.

There is a ground taken by some, that is simply—Bethesda is wrong and we are righteous. This ground, though not doubting the least as to the evil at B. as to which I feel clearer than ever, I reject altogether. I can quite understand difficulties as to the meeting, and in the fullest way respect conscience as to them. One beloved brother who felt them, came and took part; another who much desired it and came, did not attend, because he could not explain himself as to it. All this conscience, instead of blaming, I am thoroughly glad of, and can understand—having had in it to seek to meet conscience—the difficulties felt, for I found them, though I think through grace we found our way through them. It certainly met the common need; there were twice the number of brethren I looked for. I fully trust there will be blessing. I believe grace was in action towards others, but I have no consciousness of having given up a single principle I have. The ground taken by a very few I do not take. At any rate, it has been so far light as to bring out the thoughts of all hearts.

Ever affectionately yours.

I feel that humiliation of self was a primary need of the soul and primary claim of God. To do it on the bare

ground of righteousness, whatever particular evil I might judge, seems to me to deny it.

July 27th, 1852.

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9 [“Is there such a thing as corporate rejection! Do we find in the word of God, cases that warrant our separation from whole bodies and assemblies of Christians, because of evil among them? “Letter on ‘Receiving and rejecting brethren from the Table of the Lord,’ 1851.]

10 [See Letter to Rev. James Kelly, February 26th, 1839. Collected Writings, vol. xiv. 285]

11 [The invitation to the Taunton meeting for humiliation of 1852.]

Section 7

To the same.]

Dearest Brother,—I think you misapprehend the disturbance of mind occasioned by the Taunton meeting; one or two have felt, and sought to produce it in others, but it has produced a great deal more peace than disturbance in the most, and I think only where people were absorbed by Bethesda, and as to that (without judging, I would trust) the Lord a little displaced by it. When I came over to England I assembled the brethren at Rawstorne Street, and told them I had done with it, and could not be for ever on questions, and desired to get on fresh with Christ, making a fresh start; that I did not make myself responsible for what had been done in my absence: it might have been much wiser than what I should have done, but being away I could not answer for it. And we have never been occupied with B. since, only taking up every individual on christian principles. Not that my or their principles were changed as to it in the least. It was a clear ground of judgment when any case arose involving it.

And now as to the meeting. The real difference is that your mind, as was ——'s, is much more absorbed with B. than mine. You speak of parties, and so on; my mind is quite off this ground. I believe that a testimony of God was confided to brethren in these latter days which they had to maintain in the unity of the church. God, I believe, has in no way given up this testimony, but I believe, brethren (we all) have grievously failed in maintaining it, and God's glory in it. This was a ground for humiliation, let B., or Rome, or any other thing be

what it may. As to confession, it was left to every one to acknowledge in his heart—aloud, of course, if he thought right—his own part in the bringing in the evil. The meeting was for humiliation, only so, that we might be in our right place before God. As to the causes, I, of course, did not prescribe the confession of any. But they date long before the B. affair. This was but a consequence, and it is just in owning ourselves the guilty party from previous failure, and thus getting right in our own place of humbleness before God, that He could help us as to any circumstances arisen since. To raise the question as to B. as some, as taking the clean place against the unclean, would have been to get out of our own proper place before God to take, in that by which God had chastened us, the place of righteousness.

Is it that my judgment is altered as to the cause of B.? Not at all. But I am outside and beyond that question. I am upon my own evil before God—humbled because we have not maintained His glory. Each could in such case, if led to it, confess his own fault. It was an effect. The meeting was for humiliation. There were prayers that we might be led deeper into it, brought to know more fully our real place before God. Humiliation was the one object of the meeting. It was left to God to direct any particular confession. The ground of the meeting you state might be blessed is exactly what was taken, and I undoubtedly believe has been very greatly blessed. I look to its working effects individually, as God may own it. I think too this character was preserved, and God’s power distinctly shewn in that.

I have no old position whatever. When I left Ebrington Street I stood alone. I walk with God’s saints where I believe they are walking on His principles; and so far

from the meeting putting me in the old position (save so far as it was abstractedly of God), that in its effect, though in itself it had nothing to do with it, the only link, which unawares to me connected me with the old position—namely, my circular—I haw withdrawn. I have no more to say to B. than I have to Rome, and I feel that ground the happiest and the truest—no more, save as positive acts may give occasion to judgment.

As to the evil, I am on no different ground than I ever was. If a thing is wrong and contrary to Christ it remains so, and I am under the same obligation to abstain from it and keep myself clear from it, and others, if I can, as ever. These things do not.change. I may add, that evil doctrine was not the ground at any time of my dealing with B.: and I should not, on the other hand, have invited any in evil doctrine. But I deny most strenuously that division because of It has been the cause of the evil results. It is here that we are upon totally different ground, and that the real question as to the meeting is. I consider the B. matter, however sad their course, which I quite think, the cause of the sad results, and hence not that our faithfulness is the cause of what has arrived. Now I am not denying in a certain measure the faithfulness. But I look upon B. as a mere occasion in God’s hands, for chastening us for our own previous unfaithfulness. Why did we fail rightly to judge and put away the evil? I admit brethren did. But how came this? Why did God permit them to be thus sifted by an evil they did not know how, had not the wisdom and courage, to deal with? Does God lightly and for no cause send such affliction and humiliation?

The incapacity of brethren was to me frightful and inconceivable as regards B. I think, seeing their state,

they went wrong not because B. was right, but because they meddled with it out of their place. I begged them not, but they would not hear me. I could as to this take clear ground from all; but I go much farther back, and bow myself first of all for letting the evil come in—failing myself—of which I consider all this but the chastisement. When you speak of parties, and mutual humiliation, you are on a ground I know nothing about, and recognise nothing of whatever; because, as I said, you are occupied with B. as the one question. I have nothing to say to it, nor the meeting, save so far as historically it had become the occasion of sorrow. Individuals were invited; there was nothing mutual in this question that I know of. The only thing was to hinder consciences being so embarrassed as to prevent their coming. Individuals really concerned in the testimony brethren ought to have borne were welcome there, provided they came to humble themselves, and did nothing to shock the conscience of brethren, when judgment as to B. was distinctly resumed.

As to the conference: in the first place, the Taunton meeting is over. I should entirely decline mixing it up with any conference, whatever effect it may produce. I declined having the conference which was at Bristol at Taunton, that the Taunton meeting might fully preserve its own character. I should decline any ecclesiastical conference. If individual brethren wish either to open their hearts, or inquire even of. the Lord what they ought to do, I have no objection. I shall take my part in it, if I can go on my own individual responsibility. I do not at present feel led to promoting such. I prefer letting the humiliation produce its natural fruits; and it has in those who took part in it produced such already largely,

and certainly manifested the state of hearts in a wonderful way. Humiliation was our right place before God, and whenever we get into our right place before God He can bless, and delights to bless. It is possible a conference may have its place. It has seemed to me more the desire of anxious minds at present than of those quietly led by fie Spirit of God. Does He lead us to it, I have no kind of opposition, and can conceive a state of soul in which it might have a very useful place. Souls are on the move, but under God's hand their competency to settle things I doubt.

Forgive me, dear brother, if I think that at —— you have not adequately reached the just measure of want of confidence in your position.

Do I want you to doubt as to B. or any evil? God forbid. Quiet godly certainty as to it, I believe to be of the last importance, and especially in these loose and uncertain days. Or do I wish you to doubt the competency of God to help and direct His church were there but three met on earth? They might be a brighter testimony than three thousand. But I cannot help thinking that there was a confidence in your own position which does not reach the due extent of humiliation. Perhaps that arises partly from not having been mixed up with evil, which we who are older in this work have to mourn over. But so it is, there is an idea of competency to act with authority (not to be separate from evil—all evil—which is quite right), which I doubt that you can make penally good before God. Used for His glory He will bear with and bless you and purge out what there is of pretension in it, but He cannot approve and sanction the thing itself.

I repeat, as to our present question this may arise from your being never much in the position you have taken: a happy reason. Still it does not alter the great ground of the position brethren have to take before God. Brethren in general are quite outside these questions. I doubt that a conference got up as you wish would allay; I apprehend it would rather excite at this moment people's spirits, and much is passing at this moment that might impede its really occupying people's minds. They are occupied with other things. W. is withdrawing his papers, and has written to some as to the spirit in which he took things up. T. and W. are meditating withdrawing their circular, and stating on what grounds, though I have no particulars nor know whether they are decided. So that I should feel at this moment it would be the, moment to wait awhile.

Further, I have made and know nothing of any compromise on anything, nor would not on principle on any moral subject whatever. Compromises are in my judgment always wrong. As I said, the mind of G. and yourself, and perhaps one or two others (for there are only one or two, and some of those that assisted), have not seized the positive subject of the meeting from being occupied with your own point of view. No one there thought or dreamed of a compromise; such a thought never crossed anybody's mind. But I do think the fault is in your position, not in that of the brethren who humbled themselves. I think there has. been a tendency to an assumption of capacity of judgment, which God may own in its desire, but not in the wisdom of the position taken.

I thank you sincerely, beloved brother, for your letter, and, as you see, have answered openly and fully in all

confidence. I quite believe the brethren who stayed away did it from a motive of conscience and a dread of compromising with evil, which I entirely respect and rejoice it was in exercise. I do not think that humiliation and a sense of failure had an adequate place in their mind; but some brethren I particularly value had scruples; some got over them, others did not. I do not blame one, quite the contrary.

Ever affectionately yours, beloved brother.

July 30th, 1852.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Dearest Brother,—Your letter gives little difficulty in answering, because as to its great principles it is quite what I feel myself. And I will add, as regards the Taunton meeting, the difficulty of acting in the Lord's mind as to humiliation, and yet keeping clear of evil ourselves there—for that was the point—was so delicate a one as to succeeding in practice, that had I not felt guided of God I should have felt it hopeless. And while I believe He graciously did help us, yet feeling it a very nice point to attain, not in principle but in practice (with one hundred and fifty people one could only, as to particular right estimate of the position and individual acts, in the main trust God that we should be kept), and earnestly desiring there should be no practical loosening of any separation from evil, I could in no way be surprised if persons felt scruples or difficulties as to the point reached; and their jealousy as to committing themselves to any compromise with evil I heartily sympathised with. Our affair was not to arrange communion, but to avoid any communion with what

could affect the conscience as denied, and yet have the humiliation on the ground you state.

I now turn to the difficulty you mention, as to Bethesda being on the ground of the Dissenters or the Establishment. This has been pressed much by persons who sought, while owning there was evil, to involve us again in looseness of fellowship with the principles of B. This is not your object at all, but your difficulty turns on the same point. But to me far graver considerations make a total and complete difference. There had been fellowship rightly or wrongly with B., and the first question was, was it to be continued. That is, people had been received if they came thence, and brethren went there received in like manner. Subsequently to this, persons holding the most horrible doctrine as to Christ were received, inquiry refused, and the doctrine laid down and accepted by the body that no such inquiry should be. That is, they took as a body this position of unfaithfulness on foundation matters to Christ. The Establishment has not done this; indifference to persons holding a false Christ has never been proclaimed as its principle. Nor has any dissenting body that I know ever done so. This is the difference then to me, a grave positive sin against Christ, the body having accepted this as a principle. Where a dissenting body has done this, I would not receive its members, unless the individual were cleared of the sin. Nor can I consent to set ecclesiastical faults of judgment (however grave as regulating my conduct in connection with the unity of the body) on the same ground as positive indifference to what concerns the personal glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. An Independent goes ecclesiastically wrong; when he comes to me, though inconsistent perhaps

through want of conviction, he goes ecclesiastically right; but as to Christ's personal glory, and the foundation of union, he is perhaps as jealous as I am, and, it may be, more faithful.

Supposing now B. unfaithful, for I am only shewing the difference of principle—supposing they are as regards the Person of the Lord Jesus, I am, in receiving one who forms part of it, acquiescing in this sin, which is in no sort cleared by his coming amongst us, but rather acquiesced in by us. Fidelity to the truth as to Christ's Person is in question in one case, and not in the other. Now, this is a difference all-important, which is before all unity, and at the foundation of all unity too. To hold unity independently of it is to put the church—that is, unity of men—in place of Christ, not to build it on Him. To me this is as clear as the sun at noonday, and I believe it to be a question of the value we have for Christ. If persons say we are now separated for good, and have nothing whatever to say to B. as being outside the pale of Christian unity, I should have no objection to examine each case, provided the sin in which they have been implicated be inquired into and pressed, and continuance in it taken account of—in a word, that indifference to Christ be in no way accepted or acquiesced in. That is the whole matter with me; though I think there are other grave points in the B. case, all fade to my mind before this.

I would not on any account have invited one whom I knew to be in false doctrine to Taunton; one case when I feared it might be, I took particular pains to guard against any mixture with it. I do distinguish between persons actually deliberately guilty of the sin, and persons, through not knowing what to do, or prejudice,

or ecclesiastical difficulties, not cleared from ecclesiastical connection with it, though they would abhor it in itself. I certainly would not have invited a person I supposed to be deliberately and unrepentingly guilty of it. It was proposed to me to have it open to them, and I declined. Two courses were open—excluding B. as a body by name, or inviting individually on some well-known principle (not of course on private choice). I first thought of the former, and finally acted on. the latter, but in a way I believed to be effectual, and which was carried into effect on the same principle which would not let in those who held to the sin. Without, of course, pretending that all was perfect on these points, still careful godly pains were taken to maintain the fear of God, and certainly our gracious God watched over the matter for us.

Some I might not shake hands with, others I should; I cannot lump all together in the same moral judgment. I see scripture teaches me in certain cases when I condemn, not to treat as an enemy, but admonish as a brother. This is the ground I publicly took on returning to England. I believe I am on right ground, and I must deal with each case individually.

I have been interrupted and distracted in every possible way while writing this letter, but I trust I may have conveyed the point of my thought. If you have any difficulty, I am sure you will kindly write again. The whole question with me is, the real faithful maintaining as far as in us lies, the glory of the Lord Jesus, for its own sake, and as the basis of union.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

London, August 6th, 1852.

[From the French

* * * Where His will is, there is happiness, and I am quite happy here. Christ is my happiness, beloved brother, but it is in the path of His will that we find the enjoyment of His love. Thus, feeble as I am, I find in Him a source of profound and ineffable joy. This joy has a character of peace which is connected with the revelation of Christ Himself to the soul, and when He is in question, it leaves no room for the idea of something that changes; not that we reason about it, but we know whom we have believed, and He will keep that which we have committed to Him until that day. Besides, our treasure is Himself. Peace be to you, beloved brother. May God keep us near Himself. It is scarcely a conviction of faith which assures me that happiness, the only happiness, is there. When, in spite of so many shortcomings, we have found His love always faithful for long years, and are in the present enjoyment of His love, no doubt it is faith in one sense, but it is more than that: we dwell in Him, whatever may be our weakness, and He dwells in us, and we find our rest in Himself. Everything else is only folly which passes with the breath of the life which is occupied with it (and often long before), and is but vanity while we possess it. God will have us walk by faith, but this turns to knowledge by daily communion.

London, October, 1852.

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[From the French,

* * * May God keep you, beloved brother, in the patience of His work, mortifying the flesh, and filled with Himself, really fighting the good fight. The only thing which can be truly blessing to our brethren, so precious because

they belong to Him, is that which we reproduce of Him. May He vouchsafe to bless His church. That is the only thing upon earth, the gathering of those who are to form it included. And that it should manifest Christ in all its ways. May He fill it with His grace!…

1852.

* * * * *

To the same.]

[From the French.

* * * The more I look into infidelity, the more, by grace, I am attached and cleave to the simple truth; the more I love it in its simplicity. The more I value revelation, as revelation, and the goodness of God which has given it to us—but I value yet more than any means of receiving the truth the precious Saviour who is the subject of it—and that in all its simplicity, receiving it as a little child—the more I desire to be a little child; and I am ever seeing more that one must be such if God speaks. It is my joy to be a little child, and to hear Him speak. I may add, that the perfection of the word, its divinity, ever develops more to my heart and understanding.

1852.

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Dearest ——,—You have no reason to regret dear ——'s note. It is the most gracious and moderate I have seen. It would seem as if the decay of his bodily health, of which he is sensible, is letting down the pride and excitement of his nature, and the gracious work and nature of God getting through to shew itself.

Our gracious Head is faithful, and can bring the spark of life through what we in a church way, from love to souls and to His glory, ought not to bear. Besides, excitable and overexcited temperaments judge justly sometimes that there is evil, and not being able to lean soberly on the grace that meets it, set up for special righteousness and superiority of grace in judging it. There is their own fault which they are not aware of, but when it has real zeal for the Lord for the root of it, I can sympathise a good deal with it—as regards myself, bear it all; only one must watch it does not produce confusion in the church, and seek patiently, and sometimes firmly, to check the amazing self-confidence which sometimes accompanies this.

I have got on latterly slowly with my answer to F. Newman. Besides my daily work, which, of course, in London, as every one used to it knows, is very great—being alone for it besides —I have had to answer a violent public outburst of heresy at——, which has drawn public attention much. I have sent down one tract, and I have prepared another, which I fear is more desultory and less pointed. But as one said (though we ought to have perfect guidance as we have full help in everything), I have not time to write briefly.

Peace be with you, dear brother. I rejoice in your blessing as in my own. The Lord keep us humble, and in unfeigned and constant dependence upon Him, a dependence which goes to Him about everything.

He is certainly working graciously here. Souls are bringing back—and some even bringing in—I mean back from personal wandering; but how little compared with what the grace in Him could do, were we able rightly to

avail ourselves of it in personal faithfulness. Still, He will surely do His work infallibly—praised be His name.

My head has once or twice begun to give way a little from overworking, I mean in pains and sense of pressure on the brain, but I am very well and, thank God, very happily sustained by mercy and faithfulness.

Affectionately yours.

London.

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Dearest ——,—As to ——'s paper, his statements as to the double object of the epistle are good and useful, but on chapters 8, 9, 10 he is, I think, without bottom in his argument. He does not descend in the class nor character of priesthood; he sometimes urges Hebraizing Christians not to go back, and sometimes to advance. The importance of the remark is this—that he supposes a different kind of Melchisedec priesthood coming out for future time (applicable- to such a state or class) distinct from His going in as Melchisedec; the Son now, Christ may have a priestly character as Melchisedec in the world to come, of a modified character in its exercise, and this may serve as a link in the apprehension of it. But He is never seen as coming out in the Hebrews. In chapter 9:which he refers to, in verse 24, He is gone in. He does apply it to the passing away (chap. 8:13), but the priestly place is the same as in chapter xiii., only there he applies it to the further point of their leaving Judaism entirely, which was passing away. So that we have the contrast of earthly and heavenly, the passing away of the old, the advancing into the new, eternal and heavenly, and the actual leaving the old before it passed away, or was publicly judged here

below. But whatever suggestive links we may gain, the coming out Melchisedec which he supposes is not in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but solely the going in Melchisedec in every part of it.

There is another mistake, I think: “Compassed with infirmities” is not, as he supposes, applied to Christ, but to the Jewish priest who is such while he is. Christ was not a priest at any rate till He had left His humiliation. He is quite right as to his contrast of “taken from among men,” only he has not carried it far enough. “Maintain failure” is incorrect, though I understand it—maintain failing saints he means. His point is not stated with sufficient clearness for many to get into any difficulty by. And I do not deny that as Melchisedec, He is the surety of a better covenant, and still is so on high, and thus a link of truth is gained; but He is that as going in, not as coming out, in which character He is never seen in Hebrews. The Epistle is not putting any on millennial ground, but taking them off old covenant and putting them into the heavenlies, and nowhere else.

Affectionately yours.

Hereford, December, 1852.

[From the French.

* * * I have been struck lately, in reading the Acts, with the way in which, when the power of God is there, all the evils surging around do but cause that power to be displayed, turning them into good, into positive gain of testimony and development. It was thus with the opposition of the priests, with the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, and with the murmurs of the Hellenists; all this made way for a development of spiritual power outside the apostles, and opened a way for carrying the

testimony, according to the mighty liberty of the Spirit, outside Jews. But, for that, power is needed; brethren have failed in that, I doubt not. But our God does not grow weary.

March 29th, 1853.

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Beloved Brother,—I write just a word, as it is possible I may not see you; as it may be, if my foot which I have sprained allows me, I shall have left England even before you, the Lord ordering so, and I would not let you go without a word. I do not think so much of partings as I did here below if in the Lord's will; I should have desired much to have kept you in England, if the Lord had so pleased. But if it be His will a little further or a little nearer, all is far, far off heaven, and all on the way thither; and heaven is near enough everywhere to make earthly distance nothing. I am, as few think, a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth. I see all kinds of evil in me, great laziness and sloth among the number. I have no home—though countless mercies; on earth my home, for the home belongs to the heart, is the place of His will; for the rest, it will really be in heaven; and Montpellier, Düsseldorf, or New Zealand—what is the difference? For rest of body and mind, New Zealand would be more of it than France, but none unless it was His will.

O Thou by long experience tried,

Near whom no grief can long abide;

Where'er I roam my home I see,

Secure of finding all in Thee.

I wait for heaven and for Jesus, trusting He will give me to finish my course with His help through grace.

Hitherto my sadly feeble failing steps have been led along. It is this gives me joy when a saint falls asleep according to God's will; I do not feel separated, I feel less so; what separated is gone on one side, and nothing is lost.

I should have been glad—longed to have been still able—to see you in the face, but if it be God's will, had rather you were where He would have you. If you are to go, I hardly sorrow not to see you; to me, humanly speaking, partings go dreadfully deep. In spirit all is well. We are only going along the road where Christ has left His blessed footsteps, and the cross characterised it. We have to suffer with Him, but it is but the road, and all right; one thing only is needful—that to live be Christ. The rest all perishes, and in simply doing His will, He is always with us, and all is peace. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. We know when we have walked a little way with Him in whom we have believed. One has committed one's happiness to Him in the proper sense till another day. Then He will gird Himself, and make us sit down to meat, and come forth and serve us. Glorious place! What a sense of His love, and what joy and glory to Him thus to serve even then, and see the fruits of all His work and toil of grace. Till then it is ours to serve, and be girded, with our lamps burning, waiting constantly for Him. Simple-hearted faith will doubtless have conflict, but will be always happy in Him.

The Lord bless you, dear brother, and prosper your way by His will, and all yours. May He keep your heart in New Zealand; a new place brings new temptations. Here we are in an old world, sick with sin (how gladly we look out for Jesus), there it is a new one, rife with material hopes and its future. We must value Jesus for His own

sake to wait for Him. But it is no other really, but the same, alas, alas, alienated world which turns away our hearts from Him. The Lord keep you, not slothful, God forbid, but from the snare of material cares in the shape of the duties of a new settlement. But if temptations are new, grace is as new, as various, as infinite to meet them, when we are where He would have us. One of our mercies is, that He keeps us from all evil by filling us with His own good. Filled with that, all is well everywhere. I should like a settlement away out of this dreadful world, and I am here by God's will as much a stranger, and alone, as if (I) was there, with more to do according to my calling for Him.

I trust and take for granted we shall hear from and of you. The Lord keep those around you. They will have their snares, but home will be even more a home, for them. May it be a mount from which they look higher, taking them away from the worldly world, and not sinking them into materialism. For a family home is God's home down here, but how many things have come into the world to break it—yea, now in one sense, even grace itself. This, if kept by grace, you may have more for them out there. This so far consoles me, but here or there Jesus is the bond which no distance breaks, and no nearness can give without Him, and which will, blessed be His name, last for ever. He has thus united us: I thank Him with more thanks than I should know how to give till I get to see Him in heaven. The rest is all just His will by the way. Peace be with you, beloved brother, and every mercy by the way individually. Kindest love to your whole circle, the Lord keep them and bless them there. I trust they may learn to be useful in keeping close to

Christ and His word. The Lord keep you all. The Lord be with you.

Ever affectionately yours.

Montpellier, early in 1853.

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Dearest ——,—It is a serious though a most happy thing to undertake direct service—that is, a service which takes up all our time. I would there were many more really gifted by love to souls, and zeal for the Lord's glory, to lay themselves out in and for it. The mere fact of an inclination does not shew that we are called to it. I believe the surest sign is earnest love to souls, and intercourse through the need of the heart with Christ about it. I doubt not there is a pressure often of the Spirit of God which forces you out into it. Many may be most useful, giving up a portion of their time to it, who would not be giving up all, because they cannot fill up the measure of allotted service with Christ. On the other hand, men of much energy and zeal can serve and support themselves (witness Paul, and in his case even others) when one of less could not who might be very useful if given up to it. It is not the desire to speak, but for souls and the building up of saints which is the real moving spring of service. I know not how far this presses on you.

I should be most glad to help you in scripture as far as I am able. Constant application to it would suppose the Lord leading into it, and in your case a wife and a child have to be thought of. I have now coming to me for an hour, twice a week, three or four, and probably shall soon have the whole of an evening generally free for this. I leave, of course, entirely to themselves the Lord's

call to them. Those who come are more or less at the work but, save one and an ex-clergyman who is with me for the moment, labour for their livelihood. I leave to and cast entirely on the Lord any further carrying out of it. I shall, if you feel called to the work, be most glad to help you in reading. As to the reading on the Psalms, it would depend on many others besides me.

Local ministrations well supplied from Christ and the word are greatly wanting, but that love and care for souls which cements and makes happy is an essential element in such service. Devotedness is the first grand question of all; would there were a thousand-fold more of it! I should not be afraid of the Lord's taking care of people. I trust you will weigh over before the Lord how far He calls you to this.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

[Date uncertain.]

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To the same.]

Dear Brother,—I feel your course and steps to be of great importance in this matter at this moment, because it may give an impulse to a most useful means of helping in spiritual truth and development those who labour; and hence every step should be taken, looking earnestly to God that He may guide it. As to time, I will accommodate myself to brethren or the times of their leisure. I am in Ireland, and hope somewhat to go to Clonmel, Kilkenny, Athlone, and the north.

I should think you had better, while earnestly begging God to order this, invite speedily as many from perhaps a smaller circle than sixty miles, at once those entering

on the work or entered—if some cannot come, fill up by enlarging the circle still with workmen, asking some older students to help in the study. I should suppose inviting the active workmen around, and older workmen whence you felt disposed. There is no idea of exclusion, but of nearer neighbourhood, and some more distant to help in the study. It ought to be bonâ fide study, or not so private.

Of course, you would be free to ask any particular person at a distance whom you wished to see there—any labourer—or if any labourer wished particularly to be there from a distance, accede to his wish if you were not too full. May the gracious Lord direct it all.

Here I have found a number of young men in a very lively interesting state, recently converted, ever ready to feed on the word. Some have doubtless been a little hurried into peace, but it seems to me deeper and more solid than in England. The blessing has been unequivocal of those in communion as others; several are engaged in the work in rooms about the city, where there are conversions, and as it would seem not a few. Indeed, the Spirit of God is at work around the country.

Peace be with you, dearest brother, and the Lord guide you in this effort for the study of the word, and bring those He would bring.

I am in a different position here, as to which I have to be on my guard. I meet many I have known of old, some relatives, more of the upper classes of society interested in divine things. The revival brings people of all sorts, gentlefolks of the Establishment (besides, everybody knows everybody in Ireland) —persons really interesting, and I have to watch as to being as

absolutely and solely a Christian as I am wont in England and abroad; I do not mean in purpose, but not to slip into the stream of society—it is no use. There is most interesting work on all sides, and God leading souls on; but I desire to be a Christian and nothing else, passing on, knowing no man after the flesh. Yet I need not say how thankful I am to find doors open on all sides. But what good for others—what loss for oneself—if one does not bring in a perfect and unmodified Christ, in where they are open. But the good and gracious Lord is ever faithful, and enough for all. Oh, what a difficulty a place is in the world for those who are in it! The Lord has-indeed said so, yet there are some most graciously seeking only Christ. Kind love to the brethren and all around you.

Ever affectionately yours, dear brother.

Dublin, May 16th, 1854.

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Beloved Brother,—I rejoice with my whole heart that you and J. have been so happy together, for I know that both seek unfeignedly to glorify the Lord and hold the truth in its purity. It will be a joy to me to visit——, and see you, when the Lord shall allow me. I know not when exactly by the Lord's will h[dh poteV eujodwqhvsomai ["now at length I may be prospered"], but gladly as soon as I can.

Four weeks were cut out of my stay here by an unexpected call to France. Besides some seven or eight hundred last year, of which a great portion were new conversions, I hear ninety or a hundred have been converted since October last in Rhenish Prussia. This occupies me a little, as I have a smattering of German,

and my tracts and writings have almost all been translated, and helped on the work. They have been sent to the King, by some circumstances connected with the refusal of military service, by a brother—less powerful there I suppose than with the poor of this world, chosen of God, but it may be used for shewing there is no Schwärmerei [fanaticism], and we should pray for all men. Also God orders all these things; He has ordered it with the Emperor Napoleon and his home minister. In France there is blessing, but some persecution, but where there is, conversions many. In Switzerland there have been many conversions lately, and in one district violent popular persecutions; but it is an out-of-the-way place, and it happened there once before.

I have got Tischendorf. I have been struck with the great uniformity of result on questions of text in all the editors, unless perhaps Matthiæ, who you know follows the Russian MSS., namely, Textus Receptus as a system. In translating the Greek Testament, which I have done now a second time from Komans to Colossians, I had Griesbach, Scholz and Lachmann open before me, and Matthiæ and others at my side, that when all agreed I might, if no particular reason, translate from the common text of best editions. There is scarcely ever any difference between them; and however Scholz may talk of the Constantinopolitan family, after all, at any rate in the epistles, wherever he has the chief Uncial MSS. one way, he follows them, just as the others do. This is not so with Matthiæ, who indeed does not consult them. I have held the check of Bloom-field over them. He is useful for the Greek idioms, and usus loquendi, and a diligent conscientious study of the text. You know Augustine

attributed the omission of John 8:1-11 to the false difficulty about morality of some persons.

As to Bosh (Ezek. 38:2), I do not see the force of the argument. If Ezekiel prophesies that the prince of Kosh, Meshech and Tubal shall come up to Palestine in the latter day, I do not see what the origin of the name of Rosh has to do with it. If Cush or Phut is to suffer in Egypt, or in the lower Euphrates, what matters it where the point of their first migration was from? The prince of Rosh may have sprung from the Northmen, and acquired power over Meshech and Tubal, and Persia be at his steps. How do the Russi, coming from Scandinavia or the Cimbrian Chersonese, hinder that?

I rejoice in the blessing you enjoy. There is blessing here, but it goes on enough without me to make me feel disposed to migrate to more unworked lands. Two years and a half ago I came here: they were at the lowest—four at a prayer meeting, including me, and no one even to preach, and disheartened. God has, in mercy, putting down, humbled, raised them up and added very many, and one of such energy in working; and I, though still glad to labour as opportunity offers, may be off.

Kind love to all. I shall gladly come when God shall permit, but I have journeyed constantly for a long while.

Ever affectionately yours.

Dublin, May, 1854.

[From the French.

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* * * The principle of Hebrews 13:17, to which I would add 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, and 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16, is more important in our day than ever, because

regular authority, established by the apostle and armed with his sanction, no longer exists. There is only one thing which modifies the application of it, that is that the care contemplated in these verses is so extended generally in practice, that it has not the same hold upon the conscience. Then, on the other hand, God permits the jealousy of the clergy, that plague par excellence of the church, the great barrier to the progress of souls. It opposes itself to the progress which is necessary for their deliverance from the influences of this present age, and from the principles which are carrying on the external church in the way of destruction which will be accomplished in the last days. However this may be, if you examine the effect of a clerical position, you will find souls stunted, scarcely any spiritual development or intelligence in the ways of God.

As regards the moral condition of individuals, I believe that it consists, in many cases, in despising the influence that,. God grants to services rendered to His church by the power of the Spirit. But, as soon as this influence is placed between the action of the conscience and God, the clerical principle is established, and moral declension begins.

The relation of individual conscience with God is the great and true principle of Protestantism, no doubt greatly lost now, in that which has come in. It is not the right to judge for oneself, as is said, but the direct connection of the conscience with God. “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Man has not the right to judge, but neither has he the right to interpose himself between God and man, so as to intercept the direct action of God on the conscience. The ordinary interpretation of this principle of Protestantism is the

root of Rationalism; the denial of this same principle, taken in its true sense, is Popery. Real intercourse between God and the soul preserves the Christian from each of these errors. As long as there is only man, there is but place for one or the other of these two things, because it is only man that is in question. If God enters upon the scene, there can be neither one nor the other, because God is there. But, in order that it may be so practically, we must be»kept in His presence.

When the conscience is before God, we are individually humble, and, for this very reason, recognise God in others: when will acts, we reject God in His own Person as well as in others, and that is what is evil; it is also what the apostle had in view in the above exhortations. When the influence of true ministry is in exercise (and it is of great price), it is gentle as the relations of a nurse with her child, as Paul said; the more so that spiritual power, acting in personal devotedness, is but little manifested now as in the cases indicated by the apostle. It also supposes a workman made “manifest to God,” and consequently to the consciences of those in the midst of whom he acts. I have never seen, when such a person acts, and his action flows from much communion with God, that this influence, this moral authority, has not been recognised. Moreover, such a workman is not, in this case, carried beyond what he has received from God, so that his ministry finds its sanction in hearts without any pressure. There are, however, cases where things go on badly, and the workman is put to the test. In such a case he must keep before God, and act solely for Him; he must be at the service of Christ, and commit the result to Him alone. The Lord will always keep the upper hand; and in the end, if patience has her perfect

work, the wisdom and justness of the judgment of the person who has acted will be made plain. Without having sought it, his authority will even be much increased by it, though perhaps he may, in appearance, have entirely lost it. But for this, one must know how to act with God. I speak of what happens, and of the principles which are connected with this question.

I find that in these times the principle of these passages render them of great price, because it is a question of a kind of authority that no condition of the church can weaken. All other authority might be lost, this will but shine the more. It is exercised by the direct action of the Spirit of God in service. Besides, he who seeks this authority will not have it, while he who, in heart and by the love of Christ acting in him, makes himself servant of all, as Christ has done, will obtain it. To be servant of all is what Christ is essentially in grace—it is what love is at all times.

There is another kind of authority. Christ exalted on high may institute apostles to represent Him officially; these may institute other servants to exercise a delegated and subordinate authority, each in his sphere. That has taken place. In the passages with which we are occupied, the apostle speaks of another kind of authority. He does not speak of that which represents Christ seated on the throne, regulating the official order of His house, but of that which represents Christ, a servant in love. May this be my portion!

Now, in the present state of ruin and scattering of the church, this latter authority, which is acquired by service in love, is of great price; but it is evident that it is exercised in conditions of devoted service, of humility

and of a nearness to Christ, such as excludes all other influences, and makes us act solely from Him. As to the measure of the confidence granted, it is a question, as in every other case, of spirituality. Through indolence, the flesh places confidence in the flesh. The soul is not then before God. Walking after the Spirit, I am before God, and I have the consciousness that there is more spirituality, more that is of God in another, and I recognise these things. This never stifles spirituality in me, and cannot stifle it, for it is the same Spirit who produces spirituality in the labourer and in me; only it enlarges my spiritual capacity, as to the fact which is realised, and raises it to the height of him who has more of it. A lower degree of spiritual intelligence and affection in one Christian can discern that which is more excellent in another, and accept it, when will does not work; although he would not have been able himself to make the discovery of such or such a course of action, proposed by greater spirituality and greater love than his. As I said at the time at Geneva: the waggoners know if a road is good and well laid down, and they know how to use it; but only the engineers knew how to plan it and lay it down. Now the presence of God in the church comes to our aid, and regulates everything, when the difficulty appears otherwise insurmountable. God is there for this, and He suffices for it. If the assembly has too little spirituality, if will acts with such force that one cannot follow out what one knows by divine intelligence to be the will of God, one has only to commit the thing to God, and wait for Him to manifest His will, or to manifest Himself, to put others in the right way.

I do not speak of that which demands absolute separation. When an assembly positively accepts an evil

which the Spirit of God could not suffer, God will make good His rights in favour of what He has given. We must commit ourselves to Him for this. I believe that the confidence of a simple soul, and its submission for conscience, not to man as man, but to the manifestation of God in man, is one of the sweetest and most profitable things possible.

The difference between the influence of true ministry, and that of the clergy, who have borrowed the name, is as clear and simple as possible. Ministry presents God to the soul, and places it in His presence. It desires to do this, seeks to do it, hiding itself in order to succeed. The clergy places itself between God and the soul, and seeks to keep its position before souls. Every spiritual soul will clearly discern its place. It finds God in the one case; in the other, it sees Him despised and set at a distance, in order that the usurped influence of man may be exercised.

London, May 27th, 1854.

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[From the French.

Dearest Brother,—I was delighted to receive your letter, and to read what you say in it. I rejoice, dear brother, at the blessing that God is granting you as if it was through my own means, and I think more so; for naturally I am passing out of it little by little, and nothing rejoices me so much as to see that God is raising up labourers, and putting on them the seal of His blessing. Then I am unworthy of it, and I am quite happy that He is granting it to others more fitted to serve Him; as to that, we both know well that it is to His glory, and that it is He Himself who accomplishes it, and neither you nor I. Still we shall

enjoy it together with Him; what deep and sweet happiness! His love is so precious, and alas! so above our poor stupid hearts. However, I rejoice with all my heart for those precious souls brought to Jesus. What a thing the possession of eternal life is! At times it amazes me; we do not think enough about it…

People do not feel, or I do not feel, sufficiently what the possession of eternal life is for a soul. May God bless you abundantly, dear brother, and may He lead and keep you very near Himself: we always need it, and it is our happiness. I know what it is by rare instances—hardly ever—to enjoy a few days of rest with God. God, for want of sufficient habitual communion, grants it to me at times through illness, but in London, sufficient for daily bread is indeed much. Besides, I have not yet strength for rising early or sitting up late, but I feel well. I think of setting off first to Germany, then going to Switzerland to see them perhaps for a little. I may pay some visits in France before returning, but I am bound not altogether to neglect England. You know our brethren H. and D. are in prison: God will be glorified thereby. D. is very well, I hope H. also, but all I know of him is that he was taken at St. Jean de Gard, and that they are about to try him.

Farewell, beloved brother, may the peace of God be with you in its fulness. Let us watch and labour for souls until the end, till the Lord comes to take us to Himself; this is all that will remain, except His grace towards us.

Your very affectionate brother.

They are making great efforts to have a work on the Continent, and to monopolise souls here, but they are thrown much on the side of worldly ways of Christians of whatever connection.

London, August 10th, 1854.

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Dearest——,—My eye has been again bad, though not very bad, the effect, I suppose, of work and change of living; the weather has been severe—all was ice where I slept. It is not so cold now. I rested my eye, and only listened as we were reading over our work for correction. We are getting it a little faster now, and more than half is finished. I feel somewhat a prisoner here with it, but I trust it may be blessed. It was dreadfully needed; one cannot often quote Luther, and never trust him to prove any truth…

As regards Bethesda, I am on quiet but unmoved ground. I have judged, and the conviction is only strengthened by the consideration, that they have deliberately tampered with dishonour—open, known dishonour done to Christ. Hence, if all were to go back there, I should not. I say nothing of motives, though many present themselves, but the fact is so. I fear love being asleep towards them, but my sober judgment, formed I believe according to God, remains unchanged. God has allowed that they should put their hands to it in the Letter of the Ten, for every upright soul that will not tamper with evil, and so blind himself. Men have been angry that I have spoken of a fresh start, but such is equally unmovedly my position. It is a humbling one, and it is great grace that we are permitted to make such. It is the confession of failure on the first, so that there is no indifference or pride. The principle and object is the same, I hope, the attempt with more intelligence of what we are about, and more resolute purpose of heart through grace. I have not a new truth to maintain, but I

hope not to yield what I had for men's sake, as much as I did before. I did not understand its value before as I do now, nor its importance. I mourn over many simple souls involved in the departure I cannot join with, but the Lord does all things well, and knows why He has permitted it; they will need, I suppose, the process of delivery… I think you would find no wavering as to the position in which I believe mercy has set me. I would do anything to testify to souls, led away in it, my anxiety and love to them. But I decline going through the evil and proving it, and occupying myself positively with it. I told them so in Rawstorne Street, on my return from abroad, a couple of years ago. My position is a quiet but ascertained one. I desire to be acting with Christ, without closing my heart against any movement of God's working in those who are astray.

I have good news in general from France. Where I was stopped and my passport taken from me, and the meetings broken up, the commissary of police and the sub-prefect have been removed; and——, who was subsequently awhile in prison, was there the other day, and they met in peace and, instead of some sixty, are now a "hundred breaking bread in increased firmness and experience: such are the gracious and sovereign ways of God…

In general, my own soul has, I think, gained and profited by its restraint here. I could not work, read, or study as wont, and I must needs be more with the Lord, or it was more subjective, as men say now. I have gone on, however, at intervals with the Etudes, and have gone through part of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians—of the last learned much more the character than heretofore. I have also translated in English from

Hebrews 7 nearly to the end, and practised a little German reading to consolidate the heard and spoken, but I shall be glad to be free. The under police were a little disposed to make a difficulty as to my stay, but the upper removed it at once when they were in the office.... Peace be unto you. Thank you much for your news of London. Kindest love to the brethren. I shall be rejoiced to see all the brethren again.

Affectionately yours.

My eye is to-day sensibly better, but I cannot use it so as to work freely or apply myself.

Elberfeld, [about] Jan. 25th, 1855.

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[From the French.

* * * The time to come is the time of the glory and perfection of the church; the present time, that of faithfulness and of faith, but of a faith which counts upon God, that the church by His power may manifest His glory, even in this world, by its general superiority to all that governs it, and to all that exerts an influence over it. The church is the seat of the power of God in the world. What have we made of it? (See Eph. 3:20, 21.) The Epistle to the Ephesians presents the perfection of the church's position before God; that to the Thessalonians gives us, in the most interesting manner, which has greatly edified me, the perfection of the christian position individually.

Elberfeld, February 10th, 1855.

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My dear——,—I am at length free, and the Lord willing, start on Monday for Frankfort and Switzerland. I thought to have gone through Siegerland, and seen the brethren there, but my time would have been so short that I should have had no satisfactory visit, and I had not even time to warn those some way off that they might come. I had an opportunity of preaching to a large assembly of strict Baptists, who are dreadfully under the law—the first time I spoke in a large company of strangers. They were assembled from all sides on Easter Monday, and the Lord was gracious, and I was able to set a full gospel before them, forgetting the assembly, and only thinking of the Lord's love in His work. The attention of a vast number was something remarkable; one saw they had never heard a simple gospel —it is law and experience. Some older hands were equally visibly uneasy. And German came, thank God, in full flow. I hope the truth may have remained in many; through grace, at any rate, the testimony was important, and went to a large number, so that they knew what it was. I have been happy in the work in neighbouring places lately, and I hope there has been blessing. One very interesting man out here has found peace a few Sundays ago, and having an active mind searches all out—already has found the cross through it. His testimony has been nice and faithful. He has taken no decided outward step, but sees the Establishment impossible to remain in, In these [parts] the persecution is still pretty sharp, but the blessing going on rejoicingly. In other districts there is continued encouragement in the work—conversions; but though this is ever eternal grace and wonderful, nothing particular recently. My stay here has been a peculiar discipline to me, but I hope profitable. With the brethren I have found all love and kindness. Though the

translation was a great exercise to me, undertaken as a needed service for them, I can commend it to God and trust it to Him. I am not content with it as a work done carefully enough, but I believe we have in it the best and truest translation to be had, and the poor brethren find it very plain and easy to understand—far more so than anything they had.

Affectionately yours.

Elberfeld, April 20th, 1855.

[From the French.

* * * The brethren recognise no other body than that of Christ, that is to say, the whole church of the first-born; thus they receive every Christian (since he is a member of it) who walks in truth and holiness. Their hope of salvation is founded upon the atoning work of the Saviour; they await His return, according to His word. They believe in the union of the saints with Him, as the body of which He is the Head. They look for the accomplishment of His promise, that He will come and receive them to Himself in the Father's house, that where He is, there they may be also. Meanwhile they have to bear His cross, and to suffer with Him, separated from a world that has rejected Him. His Person is the object of their faith; His life, the example which they have to follow in their conduct; His word, namely, the scriptures inspired by God, the Bible, is the authority which forms their faith, and is its foundation, and that which they recognise as ordering their conduct. The Holy Spirit alone can render it efficacious for life and practice…

July, 1855.

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[From the French.

* * * Without having anything very new, I have much enjoyed and, I hope, profited by the Word. The Psalms have formed the subject of our intercourse, and a number of passages, here and there, have assumed more force and clearness in my mind.

I have been a good deal struck with the effect of the judgment-seat of Christ on Paul. He sees all its terror, but the only effect is to induce him to persuade others. The Christ before whom he would appear was his righteousness, and judged according to that righteousness; thus there was no possible question. That which judged and that which was before the judgment-seat were identified: this was one side of the truth of the nature of God; the other side is love. Now it is this latter alone which, in consequence, is set in activity: he persuades others on account of this terror. I know few passages which more forcibly set forth the power of the gospel and the perfection of justification. But there is a precious operation of this judgment-seat: the apostle realised his appearing before Him; he did not fear to be manifested in the future, he was, in fact, manifested to God; conscience, perfectly purified relatively to God, assumed all its sway, and being kept in the presence. of God, all that was not according to that presence was, in fact, manifested in the light. This was necessary, and, through grace, he had the light of God to shew, to give the consciousness, that there was nothing. It is very important to be there; many things are judged there which often are not judged in a tolerably well-regulated christian life; and when conscience is before God, and

clear, love is free. In this way we know also what it is to be always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies; or rather walking thus, one is capable of being, one is fully in His presence.

Among other things, I have also been struck with chapters 15 and 17 of Genesis. It seems to me that the disinterestedness of Abraham, at the end of chapter 14, was the reason of God's saying to him in grace, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." At first sight one might have thought that Abraham would have nothing to do but to rejoice with ineffable joy at the thought that God Himself was his reward; but he says, "What wilt thou give me?" God condescends in grace, when it is a question of a real need founded on promise. But there is an element which stamps its character upon that grace: "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;" the blessing does not go beyond the personal needs or privileges of Abraham. Quite naturally his heart enters into this, and it is the development of the need of his heart according to its own state; It is immense grace, but grace which, in a certain sense, is measured by the needs of the creature. In chapter 17:God says, "I am the Almighty God." He does not say, "I am thy…" It is what He is in Himself: "walk before me, and be thou perfect" (upright). Abraham falls on his face, and God talks with Abraham. He promises him the son, and afterwards reveals to him, as to a friend, what He is about to do. Then Abraham, instead of making requests for himself, intercedes for others. It may also be remarked that chapter 15:does not go beyond Jewish promises; in chapter 17 he is the father of many nations. It is the difference between the goodness of God, which

is connected in grace with us and our needs, and communion with Him.

November, 1855.

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[From the French.

Dear ——,—As for me, I have been detained by a happy motive; it is, that for two months, there has hardly been a preaching without a soul being blessed—led to the Lord, brought back from a state of carelessness or from a fall, or who has found peace. I had no thought of remaining so long in this town, but you will understand that one does not like to leave it under such circumstances. Moreover, in general the brethren are doing well. They are leaning peacefully and with joy on the Lord, and they are blessed. This is the case almost everywhere. I think of going, if God will, to the south before reaching Switzerland.

Do you know I am not so young as I was twenty years ago; and though I work almost as in the past, the spring of life does not play so well, it has lost ever so little of its elasticity. It is no sorrow to me to think that I am nearing the end: very far from it. The long journeys are not so pleasant to me. Besides, England depends a little more of my time, for doors are open in many part. However, I hope to see you once more, if God will: if He takes us to Himself, that will be indeed much better.

I have much enjoyed the Word all this time, while meditating on it in public and in my closet. What riches it contains! All the fulness of the grace of God is unfolded there, so that we may know Him in the whole extent of his being, and all the better that, at the same

time, it is in such a way as to adapt Him to us. The mutual connection of all these minute parts shews that it depends on a living God, who reveals to us these things; like a tree in which the branches are not seen growing detached in the ground, but an assemblage of branches, so that we cannot see the smallest twig that is not connected with the trunk, and united to all the others as parts of a whole.

I have been much struck by the reciprocity of interest about us between the Father and the Son in John 17. They are not separated from each other in their love for us: we are the common object of it. The Father has given us to the Son; the Son has saved us in order to present us to the Father. He prays for us because we belong to the Father, but the Father will keep us because the Son is glorified in us; and so on. This is very precious, and it gives us a profound idea of this love. The Father and the Son are occupied in common about us. The Son taking care that we should know the Father as He Himself knew Him, and He desires to present us to the Father according to His own heart, so that the Father may find His delight in us. But I end my letter, the little room remaining also giving me warning.

In haste,

Yours affectionately in Christ.

Bath, November, 1855.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—Thank you for your letters, which always interest me. God is so faithful towards His own, that if there is any disposition to be lifted up, God

humbles them: witness the assembly of——. It is not His will that we should be out of the place of safety and blessing. Discipline is more difficult than we think, because we are not sufficiently humbled at the thought of sin in a brother. What we are ourselves is not enough felt, nor, consequently, love for others.

I have been deeply interested and touched by the reciprocity of interest between the Father and the Son in their love for us. (John 17.) Their communications are between themselves, or at least by the mouth of the Son, who addresses the Father, and I learn the manner in which they share this love. The Father has given us to the Son; the Son has manifested to us the name of the Father. He has kept the disciples in the name of the Father; now the Father is to keep them. The Father is to bless them because they are His, but also because the Son is glorified in them. The Son has also given us all the words which the Father has given Him for His own joy. What a thought, that the Father and the Son think thus about us!

In general, in John, it is the love of the Father and of the Son that characterises grace. God is light, but the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not; but if no one hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has revealed Him. Thus, in chapter 8 it is His word; it is, “I am.” In chapters 9, 10 it is grace, and, “I and the Father are one.” They will think that they do God service; it is “because they have not known the Father, nor me.”

December 13th, 1855.

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[From the French.

* * * I find everywhere that a full, clear, positive gospel, the proclamation of a real salvation, attracts souls; they need it. Insist on holiness as much as you please in nourishing the soul with Christ; but let the grace that saves be grace, let it be God; an entirely new life, and a divine righteousness accorded to man already entirely lost, and being flesh, without resource, even in God—man led to own this condition in the presence of God, but there clothed by God with the best robe, a robe that he had not even in his innocence: a sovereign act of grace, of God, which having absolutely put away our sins, introduces us into an entirely new position, and that by the communication of the life of Christ risen, in which as He is so are we. For ourselves, dear brother, let us seek ardently, constantly, and with confidence, communion with God; so that self set aside, and our thoughts and intentions judged, we may have entire confidence in Him. He is faithful, and there is nothing sweeter than to have the conscience at home with this faithfulness, with this love that finds its joy in blessing us. Let us watch against the enemy in the path of God's will…

[1856.]

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,— … As you say, communion (and nothing else) is the regulator which maintains the equilibrium between dependence and the activity of love. But this is, I think, what explains it as to the principle. The new man, so far as it is a participation in the divine nature, is in its activity, charity, love. Then the

love of God, being shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit that He has given us, becomes a powerful impelling force in this same way. The Spirit directs us, whether it be towards the saints individually, or in the exercise of gift, or whether it be towards poor sinners. One is father, pastor, evangelist, perhaps all three. But at the same time, the essential quality of the new man, as it is seen in Christ, is dependence on God and obedience. It lives with God, and in the consciousness of its real relations with Him. Now this relation is to wish nothing, to do nothing without Him. The new man cannot. Then he is led by the Spirit. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Thus the Lord Jesus, love itself, did nothing where He had not the will of His Father for the motive. Not that the will of the Father would stop Him in the activity of His own proper will, but that the will of the Father alone was the motive of His. Love was always active, but its exercise subject to the will of the Father; it was directed and set in motion externally by the will of the Father. This is why it was obedience. So far as the new man acts in us, it is the same with us. But alas! the I, self-will, self-love, tend to enfeeble love and to turn us from obedience, from entire dependence on God in our activity— as a consequence, more or less of uncertainty, or activity of our own. Now the intercession of Christ, and communion with God, then the action of the word in our hearts, the restoration of the single eye, are alone able to re-establish the balance.

As to 1 John 1:1, for a time, but long ago, I thought as you do, and it is impossible to separate the pre-existence of the divine nature in a person. However, I think that in saying, “That which is from the beginning,” the Spirit

speaks of what Jesus was on earth, of what John had seen and handled. In the Gospel, “in the beginning,” relates to the whole previous existence of God, that is to say, the phrase states the eternal existence of Christ as the Word. John’s great subject is the manifestation of God, and of divine life on earth. To this end, he speaks of the eternal Word, and of His incarnation; but in the Epistle he goes on to the reproduction of this life in us, and with this object he traces up this life in us to its origin and to its perfect manifestation—what Christ was on earth. Chapter 2:7 seems to prove that this is the force of the passage. In these days, when people will have something more perfect than Christ, it is not unimportant to insist on that which was from the beginning.

It is of the utmost usefulness to cultivate a healthy spirit, which does not search after questions, but piety. It is of this that Paul speaks to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:4. Thorns never nourish us. This sort of thing is a proof of a bad state of soul.

I have been struck latterly with the three characters of experience, or of the action of the Spirit of God, in Philippians, 2 Corinthians and 1 Corinthians. In the first, the soul raised above everything, can do all things, always rejoices, is troubled about nothing, does but one thing, knows not whether it is better to live or to die. In the second, he despaired of his life; when he arrived in Macedonia, he had no rest; without were conflicts, within were fears. But in the first case he rested on Him who raiseth the dead; in the second, God comforts those who are cast down; thirdly, he glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him. In a word, it is power and divine consolation when one is pressed

down by difficulties. In 1 Corinthians the Christians were in a very bad state: he reproves them sternly, but begins by saying, “God is faithful, who will confirm you to the end, that ye may be irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What grace in all this! And this has done me good, and I have found it instructive.

Dear brother—— gave me good news of the work in your quarters. God be praised for it. The labour of His own will not be in vain, if we do not relax. May God sustain you, dear brother, and bless you yourself in your soul. One must drink for oneself in order to have the rivers. Salute very affectionately all the brethren, although I do not know them by sight. May the Lord, theirs and mine, bless them.

[Date unknown.]

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Dear ——,—I do not think coming forth from the bosom of the Father scriptural. The reason seems to me evident, because the expression is used to express a present apprehension of His love and favour which depends on His being in that place. To come forth from it would be at best the thought of memory, and this is evidently much stronger; it is the present being in, and in the enjoyment of, what tie phrase expresses. He came forth from the Father and into the world, and left the world and went to the Father, but never, I think, is it said from His bosom. But it is evidently to express an idea like Abraham’s bosom in another order of ideas, not a physical fact; and man, in expressing the love and joy He left for us, may have used it in a certain sense harmlessly, namely, with right affections, though not quite accurately seizing the force of the expression in

John 1:18. I may have done so myself, for aught I know. Coming forth from the Father is the point de depart, not the intimacy of affection and position. Hence we have the only-begotten Son, He who concentrates in His own Person all the affection of Him in whose bosom He is.

As regards oJ w[n (“who is”), it is, I doubt not, somewhat emphatic, but too much must not be ruled on it. The participle is used with article, or it is left out, in many cases without much difference of sense; toi'" aJgivoi" ejn *Efevsw/ or toi'" aJgivoi" toi'" ou\sin ejn *Efevsw/ is pretty much the same: oJ w[n by itself is the name, I am; still I think as w[n is not necessary, the subsistence and existence of Christ in this position, its being a part of that existence and subsistence, is intimated, as it might be supposed He had left it; for oJ eij" toVn kovlpon could be very well said, and I do not believe the Holy Ghost has put the wjn there for nothing. But it is more its being constant and essential than its being divine that is intimated, though to be essential and constant it must be divine. I do not think it is a question of doctrine, but the force of the expression is lost if we speak of coming forth from—namely, leaving it in a certain sense. Christ’s being in the bosom of the Father is of so much the more importance, that He declares the Father’s character as He thus knows Him. The importance of this is increased by 1 John 4:12…

Seraphim12 are never used that I know of but in Isaiah 6, unless the serpents in the desert, or perhaps the general use of saraph. I do not exactly know the moral import of the expression. I suppose they are symbolical beings, expressive of the consuming power of God’s holiness as the cherubim of judicial power, at least in their relation to others. I could not say that there were

specific beings called seraphim anywhere. There may be those who are near to God specially in this character.

As regards death in creation before man's fall, I must remark that probably the question only refers to death in this earth's state as it is since Adam's creation. Since man's creation, I am quite satisfied that death never took place till his fall. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Now here the apostle is occupied with sin's effect upon man; still he states that death entered by sin. Hence I conclude that death was not in the creation of which man was the head until his fall. But of what may have happened between the creation of the heavens and the earth (bara) and the forming the present world out of chaos, scripture says nothing, but leaves us to gather rather that the state of the world, the tohu bohu ["without form and void"], was the ruin of some previous state; for I hardly think that the state in which God would create it, and make all the sons of God shout for joy. Hence if geologists find Megalotheria, and Plesiosauri as many as they please, they do not touch the statements of scripture one way or another, for scripture makes none as to it: only into the creation connected with man, death entered by man's sin. That scripture states, though it does not touch on its consequences for beasts; but Genesis 1:30 confirms, for it gives the green grass to the beasts of the earth. I know not whether——is aware of the discoveries of geologists and the use made by infidels of it on the point in question. Scripture decides as to the present state of the world in which man is found, and says nothing as to what preceded it.

I am at Nismes, after going round many places in the mountains; the blessing has been real and the work extended; we had a useful conference of three weeks, with more detailed study of the scripture. More than one new labourer has been raised up, still the field has been so extended that still they are few… There is need of feeding and building up, but in general encouragement.

At——they have been harassed by the ardent Baptist party… But if I had needed anything to convince me that it is all wrong, this would have sufficed. Such a display I have rarely witnessed, or evidence of a fleshly work. It was deplorable. I have, however, declined controversy, and sought only to calm and claim liberty of conscience. But while desiring and wishing before God and men this liberty for Baptists, and feeling that God can allow in the midst of abuses that this point should be brought on the conscience and before the church, as a means of proving its state, the examination of the point this has occasioned has more than ever convinced me that the whole Baptist principle is a mistake from beginning to end, and nothing more than conscientious want of light … I trust now, save with a very few, all are disposed to leave people free in conscience…. And all having been in the main left to God, He has, and I am fully assured will, set His good hand to the work. So little were those who baptised infants disposed to contest or enter on the subject, that some who were carried away in the torrent, complain of them for not speaking to them and teaching them on it. I am very glad they did not, and occupied them rather with Christ, for half the evil (though not all) is being occupied with ordinances, whatever side may be taken. It was a sore trial to——and those who cared for the work, but a useful exercise. It partially hindered

the world from listening to the gospel naturally enough, but one must expect the enemy to use all such means, and the Lord will accomplish His work and gather His own. Peace be with the brethren and yourself also.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Nismes, June 2nd, 1856.

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[From the French.

* * * I have lately much enjoyed the beginning of Genesis. Nothing is more beautiful than the communications of God with Abraham: he knew the Lord when He visited him at Mamre; but in the presence of others, while shewing Him special respect, he leaves Him in His incognito. When once the two angels have departed, and Abraham is alone with the Lord, he opens but his heart to Him, with perfect intimacy and entire confidence. This whole chapter is perfectly beautiful. The spiritual man ought to maintain propriety. He lets himself out in blessed confidence when he is alone with God.

I have occupied myself, during some spare moments I have had, with the order in which the events are related in the first three gospels, and the reason why they are transposed. I have made a table of the three, and am occupied with what is special in the order of Matthew. This throws light also on the purpose of the evangelist, and on the manner in which he pursues that purpose.

February 12th, 1857.

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Dear ——,—I looked over the [Addresses on the] seven churches which, as notes, barely corrected for what was wrongly taken, were imperfect enough; and I apprehend they are tolerably intelligible, but I did it at request. I know not how far it is to be desired as useful truth, or more available in a spoken lecture. I will do anything about it that is wished, if it be thought useful. I have not a very clear idea of my own as to its practical utility, and therefore thus speak… At Rotterdam I have found access to a good many, and had one very interesting evening besides visits. I think there is opening for truth, and our position is clear, as we broke bread—four persons, three who were blessed at Pau. I cannot doubt there will be opposition gradually, but I hope some souls will get into a new consciousness of connection with the Lord, before the enemy can close the doors on a good many… I speak generally in French, with some in German, and if on religious subjects, understand nearly all that is said in Dutch.

As to christian individuality and fellowship in the work, I can only write on what comes to me, nor indeed speak, but I have often spoken on it with my mind clear on it. The examples in scripture are clear enough, as Paul and Silas, Barnabas, Timotheus, Apollos, and others.

Rotterdam, September 2nd, 1857.

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[From the French.

* * * The important thing, and one that is often wanting, is, that Christ should be all; it is to know that we are of the new creation which is in Him, and even that we are the first-fruits of His creatures; that we have to live as being of the new, in this world which is not the new, but

the old creation, long ago put to the proof and judged. And what blessedness to be of the new, where all is of God, where all is perfect, and in the unchangeable freshness of the purity of its source! It is infinite blessedness, and ours according to our very nature, only we must have objects. The more I go on, the more the deliverance of souls from this old creation, from this world which passeth away, is the desire of my heart, and that the devotedness of the love of Christ should govern the hearts of brethren…

Some have not feared to say, “We are the church;” and really they give themselves such airs, and facts answer so pitifully to it, that there is nothing more hurtful. They assume to recommence the church ab ovo; they do not do so. One comes out of an immense system of ruin and corruption to recover what one can; and when we pretend to have all, it is that conscience disregards our true state. From that moment there cannot be solid and lasting blessing. False pretensions are not the way to blessing.

Rotterdam, September 7th, 1857.

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To the same.]

[From the French.

* * * It is good, dear brother, that we should be brought to think of death. The coming of the Lord is our hope, we desire, that that which is mortal should be swallowed up by life; but it is good for us to feel that death has entered this scene, that all is passing, that with our last breath all is gone, except the responsibility which has accompanied us all the way through. Thanks be to God,

as to the imputation of sin: the cross is the perfect answer to that responsibility; but, with regard to this latter, it is good that the heart should be exercised, to have everything settled in the presence of God. It is thus that the apostle used even the judgment, not to cause fear in thinking of responsibility—he was pressed to persuade others—but for his walk. I am, he said, manifested to God. By faith he applied to himself what will take place when the day shall have come.

Elberfeld, October, 1857.

12 Queries, “Are there seraphim in heaven, so far as you see?” Also, “Would you maintain as against an infidel, that there was no death in creation before man’s fall, or only none among men?”

Section 8

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,— … The work of God amongst the brethren is one which has occupied me much lately, not merely as a general testimony of God which He raised up, and which I am persuaded He loves, but His ways with it. He has in every way since 1845 sifted it, in appearance diminished its body and position before men. It has been tried in every way, apparent success given to those who slighted and opposed it, and apparently weakened by many causes within as far as it depended on men. But it has subsisted. It has gone through the fire—we may be sure from the goodness of God—a needed fire. I have no doubt principles contradictory to the purpose of God in it had come in through our weakness from the first: I was indeed soon assured of it. And, on the other hand, I am sure we failed in walking up to the advanced position in testimony in which God had placed us. Our gracious God took us in hand, dealt with us, and made us little.

There were two immense principles in question in this testimony. The church, its own proper standing; and the manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost, in an actual unity in the present state of things. To this, great fundamental truth was needed as a basis. This was touched, and weakness was shewn, but it was reserved for Bethesda to be the deliberate supporter of this evil. Here, through the weak state of brethren for the time, the outward witness to unity was lost, God intending to sift, and division characterised what had willed and set out to be a witness for unity—at least, felt its need. But

Christ's truth was held as foundation, and the standing of the church had its weight. Thus the Lord has set about sifting the instruments according to the position they are in. How right and just this: all is—nothing could be brought down more, as to all that could be counted on in man. It is this that gives me confidence. All that is purifying is of God. Man attempts it; God deals with those who do so. I cannot but see God at work, and in the measure in which living power has been or is at work, it prevails and is blessed, and God is working; but He will keep us humble.

The question or exercise has been raised in a corner of Switzerland. Hitherto God has helped us. Now He is actively at work in Canada for good, where the evil was, and men slept in it. This is a step yet forward in His ways. I have entire confidence in His goodness in this respect, and for myself only feel more established than ever in the truth of what He has given us. But if blessing in —— took us out of humbleness and dependence, it would bring us conflict (needed conflict) elsewhere. It is a remarkable feature how all that held fast the truth have been humbled, the others, not that I know of—I mean in respect of this. Dear R. E. is a new feature in the case. The Lord give him wisdom and humbleness of heart, and simplicity of faith in God—this is all-important —and hence to be humble and dependent. That it is a question of faith is to me evident, and a putting the heart to the test what place Christ has in it. Where He is not sufficient for the heart there will not be endurance in the conflict, and where He has not His importance. That is the whole question. The church's place links on to it, and has its free place where Christ has His right one.

The Lord, I have no doubt, is working, but as I have said, He will keep us humble. As to ——, I enter into your sorrow. Have you a prayer-meeting? The great remedy for such a state of things is spiritual life, not complaints: one great means is common prayer, and the individual prayer of faith.

Here I have felt the Lord graciously with me, and some new doors have been opened to me; also in Holland the Lord has been very gracious to me. But here I have been very much occupied translating the Psalms into German. The brethren much needed it. They needed something of deepening and exercise of heart; but I have been happy, both in prayer and in other meetings.

Salute the brethren affectionately for me. Love to all, and peace from God be with you.

Elberfeld, October, 1857.

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To the same.]

Beloved Brother,—Thank you much for your kind sympathy. My eye, is I may say, well, only I have to be a little on my guard against what might affect it. I am at present at a conference where we have near a foot of snow and a hard frost.

We have found thus far very much blessing, and I see I think sensible progress and considerable increase of depth in the brethren at work in Switzerland. In Switzerland there are about ten, and twenty-six in France. But in Switzerland they are more absorbed by gatherings than at the first, when all was evangelisation, or nearly so. As regards England, many felt in London anxiety and difficulty at the urgency and excitement as

to conversion, while others saw the life of the brethren in it. I apprehend if there had been more spiritual power within, there would have been more enlargement as to a work of conversion, and a remedy for the evils which attended it through the flesh. I saw two dangers; conversions often real without sufficient conviction of sin, and an urgency for reception in order to shelter them to which the want of depth gave rise, and (as) to which a just dread of superficial work, but some mixture of routine and ancient habits as to the reception of persons to the Table. Evil has resulted from the excitement which was mixed with the work. Perhaps more positive energy of action in those who were not excited might have guarded against this; still there was evil to be guarded against. The only part I took was to seek to deepen the work by the word when occasion offered. There is another point which has a more serious character, without casting a shade on the interest which the labours of the evangelising brethren inspire, and which rejoice my heart and spirit, or, I trust at least, undervaluing the blessing, greater in that respect than my own at present. There is this difference between their labours and the early ones of brethren where large success accompanied evangelisation; at that time, those who laboured with energy watched over the fruit of their work gathered by them. There was, too, I think, more of Christ, and of the value of the church to Christ in their work, as distinguished from the love of souls. It is now consequently more easily associated with mere evangelicism, which, pretending to convert the world, mixes with the world it pretends to convert. Besides bodies of saints being already formed, the judgment about souls, and the work that brings them, are in distinct hands. I do not doubt there are healthful

counteracting principles in many. But I have thought I have seen this, besides excitement.

The supposition you speak of, that an awakening revived for the time, shews the soul to be in a young state, and to have judged itself but little; because nothing but the daily exercise of faith in Christ, a constant sense of dependence and active seeking from and intercourse with Christ, can keep the soul in a good state—humble, dependent, in the sense of God's presence, and the joy of His love, and in an atmosphere into which sin does not come. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him," and "He that eateth me even he shall live by me." With, I should trust, as deep an interest in the work as any, I cannot say I felt any excitement. But I apprehend our work through grace is not to blame or hinder, but to seek to help in prayer, and, according to the gift given to us, to care for these souls, to deepen and complete the work, to work for Christ in it—to look for deeper conviction, but specially to connect Christ with the state of their souls. But here exactly is the difficulty of the case; because the fact that the conscience has not been deeply affected, leaves the heart more to its own feelings and occupied with them, and makes Christ less precious and important to it when the feelings wane. The soul has a sickly life thus. But then we depend on grace, on grace in Christ, and in ministering patiently Christ, the soul perhaps passing through a crisis of doubt or a fall, finds His value, and is settled in Him.

Though I have had no details, nor desire to have them, I am aware of the efforts and attacks directed against me. There is a kind of instinct which shews you them. I have no wish to be insensible to them, but I am through grace

in blessed peace about them and everything. One can by faith carry everything to God, and all is peace. First, as to outward things, I have never had such good meetings, both in France and Switzerland, and the Lord so sensibly with His poor servant in speaking. And if it were God's will that men should cover me with infamy—if it be His will, I should be unspeakably happy in it, because it was His will. Perhaps many would not understand me, but when one is more with God, joy becomes boundless. It is not, of course, that I should seek it, I need not say, nor that the thing is not disagreeable; but, in the measure in which it is, one's joy is more entirely with God; and His will is always right, so that one has not to reason about it, but to leave it to Him. As to those who act in it, I have only as to myself to wait and seek to act rightly if they cross my path. Thus I leave it, in all peace.

Our place is to meet everything in service, in the patience and power of Christ. I speak of you and——. Many brethren feel the danger of the influx of persons to, the Table, and I trust that with all largeness of heart they may carry all this to Christ. In London it occupies the thoughts of some. The Lord raise up true carers for souls.

Our week's conference has been very happy, and a true and cordial spirit among the brethren—confidence—and I have renewed acquaintance with many beloved brethren.

Peace be with you, dear brother. My letter has been written by morsels during the conference.

Your affectionate brother.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Beloved Brother,—I received your letter on my arrival here, and thank you much for it. The Lord's gracious hand is most evident with our beloved brother. He has been most gracious also in Switzerland. He alone knows whether all effort is closed on the part of the enemy, but He has wrought so graciously hitherto, that one ought not to doubt a moment His goodness.

As regards your own path, beloved brother, I think I can enter into it, but there is a God above all adverse circumstances and undesirable influences. And our path for power is in letting patience have its perfect work. Our casting things on God has a wonderful retroactive power on our own souls, in breaking. down will and what in us cannot link itself with the divine nature. The signs of an apostle were wrought in all patience. We are subjects in many and even in all cases, where we think ourselves agents; and where hindered evidently so. Besides that, there is a positive bearing on God's part wonderful in comparison with what (alas!) is often the measure of our faith. Trust Him. He has power to work where we least expect it. In those Swiss affairs I was only ashamed for not having asked more, so wonderfully did He grant all I asked Him for. But it is according to His will. Our will must not be at work. Hence let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and complete in all the will of God. It is important that we should feel, that faith may be in exercise—or rather that is faith— that not only God is great and glorious, and able to help and love, but that He has linked His glory in love with His saints. This is a most precious truth; when I can say, He (Christ) is glorified in them, I can ask confidently. See Moses, "Thou hast brought

them out of Egypt." This makes, no doubt, evil intolerable in the saints for the same reason; brother, friend, neighbour, become intolerable in the degree of their nearness when God is dishonoured in them, viewed as wilful in the evil. But the bright side is, that with God we can use all that they ought to be in Him and that His love can make them, as pleas with Him; but then we must be separated from self in it—and when not, and for that, patience comes in as between ourselves and God in self-judgment. Besides, the saints, however foolish, are very dear to God. But I must close. Peace be with you, dear brother.

Ever affectionately yours.

London, January 21st, 1858.

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[Beloved Brother,— … It is so true that we have all grace in our living Head, and I do pray that we may be enabled in holding fast the Head, to draw continually thence, and to be preserved from what would hinder the life of that blessed One in our mortal bodies. When we think what it is to have such a life and such a fulness to draw from, and that really we are to enjoy all that that supplies in God's own presence, in the light in heaven, it gives a thanksgiving and a steadiness of joy, that the Holy Ghost alone can give or make us understand. But we have to seek that there be an exercised spirit, that our living and habitual state may be according to this. Christ was not always in the glory of the transfiguration. He met and felt an unbelieving world; but He was always consistent with the glory which that revealed, and indeed with what was only dimly shadowed there, and that in every spring of action and manifestation in life; and in us this

must be sought to be realised in them. It is not an effort to copy (though we do copy) but to be, or rather so to draw from the Head, that what we are in Him be not hindered in its manifestation by evil. To overcome, we need power as well as the desires of a new nature; hence constant dependence, not uncertainty as to the nature and life which desires, but dependence for force or power on Another for the accomplishment (I mean here below) of those desires. It is the difference of Romans 7 and 8.

There is another point I will mention, as I have been led to this, that all proper and happy affections suppose the relationship to which they belong, not merely the nature capable of them. An orphan has the capacity of loving a father and mother, and it makes it unhappy. A child who has its parents has the affections which belong to this relationship. So the existence of the divine nature involves the desires natural to it; spiritual affections have their place in known relationship with the Father and with Christ; and this is founded on redemption and grace, which must be known as an assured thing, accomplished, and indeed the relationships into which we have been brought by it, in order that these blessed affections which flow from a known God exist in our souls. But then what a sure and immutable source of happiness we have—divine and immediate nearness to God! He has adopted us to Himself as children (see Eph. 1.), and given a nature capable of enjoying it, and the Holy Ghost as power (unlimited in itself), and that based on a redemption which places us fully in unclouded favour and fully known love, exercised and accomplished towards us in it, in a position as assured as the value of the redemption itself—eternal redemption. The Lord

keep us in His peace, and walking before Him in all holy conversation and godliness, that we may meet in unfeigned joy. Adieu, dear brother. The Lord our gracious Master be with you and near you, and all His beloved people, and deign to keep me also. I have been these latter times in general very happy with Him, but it has been with a look into the blessedness before me in His presence, which has made me feel how little one sees into it as one ought, though at the same time how great it is; but it is a wonderful light into which one is permitted to look; I speak of the happiness of His presence in light.

Lausanne, November 23rd, 1850.13]

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[From the French.

* * * Personally, I am glad to hear that our dear friend D. has found, I trust, a refuge. I hope that our gracious God and Father will grant him quietness of spirit. He has some very fine qualities, if he knew how to use them in that spirit. But how much, with us all, the “myself” at the bottom, finds its way through certain points of our character. If it is of a disagreeable or tiresome stamp, we are such to others; if it is of an amiable stamp, we are amiable to others; but there is no difference really; and we find difficulty in judging this “I,” when it presents itself with certain characteristics, under certain features. By looking at Christ all is right, because the bottom is reached.

How beautiful is Christianity—beautiful in itself, beautiful in its perfect adaptation to all that we are, and in a Christ who has participated in all, except the sin which would have spoiled all. What a sight for angels, to

behold God, an infant in a manger, and no room for Him in the inn! I admire that inextricable confusion, those exercises of man's heart in the midst of good and evil, knowing not what is good and what is bad; the good corrupted, or corrupting; evil, the means of good; the world in the heart, to know what there is of good under the sun, what is the truth, the end of these researches; an ardour which would fathom everything, let loose in infinitude without ability to comprehend it; a being, the more miserable from knowing more of good; his best affections the source of his griefs; his heart swelling against God and against man, selfish, condemning himself, and, however hating himself, no possibility of getting out of it nor of continuing in it; a will which would mount up even to God, and which is a slave of the devil and sin.

Perfect good appears; it appears on the scene, in the circumstances, in the nature (but without sin), where this struggle takes place—where all the moral elements of a creature who knows good and evil, without being God, and far from God, are engaged in battle, without head or centre. Immediately all is light. Evil is manifested as evil, because good is there. The will? It is discovered, laid bare, it is wilful evil. Is it a question of misery, of conflict? Perfect answer to all: good in this misery, and all the more good that it is there; good in itself, but the perfect answer to every need, to every misery, that which takes us out of it by giving us perfect good, and by binding our hearts to God.

Yes; the more absolute and infinite the confusion, the more Christ is Christ. What infinite power is that which, in a moment, sets everything in its place, because it is good in itself, and perfect. He is the truth: He declares

all about everything. Everything is known, and finds its place according to the truth of what He is. God be praised! it is grace: without that, even though God be love, there could not be truth. But I allow myself to run on.

Poor ——; there are times when everything must find its level. They are times, in my judgment painful and necessary, but not seasons of power. The power and energy of the Spirit raise us to a point where we are not found really in personal faith. A moment comes when each walks in his own faith, when the Lots (I do not mean that this dear brother is such) will go away to the well-watered plain, to those scenes where the outward appearance of blessing, as far as flesh can judge of it, hides the elements which are preparing for judgment. The power of grace had brought out Lot with Abraham. The plain of Jordan receives him who had not, for himself, laid hold of the call of Abraham. He.was a righteous soul. I doubt that our dear brother——can now be happy where he is gone. He will vex his soul. God grant that he may return by his own faith.

Look at the leading seceders around you: where is there a single one remaining? But it is not a proof of power, of power that gathers, and which in the abundance of water hides the shallows where the current of the river of God has not its proper course. But God is full of grace. Is it fresh light which has detached them from brethren? Is there more energy, more personal grace? What has caused this?

March 15th, 1858.

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To the same.]

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From the French.

* * * The entirely new life of the Christian (1 John), communion founded upon known relationships in which we find ourselves with God, the absolute superiority of the Christian over all that he encounters (the experience of the Epistle to the Philippians), all these things have occupied me much of late. What a position is ours! What known relationships with God, in which we walk according to the new life in which we are accepted in Christ; a life which enjoys Christ, the measure of our acceptance and of our relationships—Himself also the life: happy everywhere (according to the will of God) because we are everywhere in Him, and, in this sense, always ourselves. Still, the tranquillity in which we can enjoy Him is very sweet.

What a scene that is of Stephen before the Sanhedrim! Perfect calm; heaven opened; the history of man, who always resists the Holy Ghost, and trusts in a temple deserted of God; man filled with the Holy Ghost—himself the temple—bearing testimony which they resist. See him, while they are killing him, quietly kneeling down to pray for them, a perfect reflection down here of Jesus, while beholding Him on high. The whole judgment of man turns upon the testimony of this chapter; and his whole position in Christ is there depicted.

[1858.]

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[From the French.

* * * I was very much struck, during the last conference, with the character of the Epistle to the Philippians. It

does not suppose the existence of the flesh in the practical sense, namely, that of conflict with it; to live is Christ—nothing else. Paul can do all things through Christ, who strengthens him. He has never been ashamed, never will be, of himself as a Christian; but Christ will be always, as in the past, glorified in him. This is the normal life of the Christian; the flesh is held as dead, does not encumber him—as he says elsewhere: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

The superiority of the christian life, as being untouched by evil or by the enemy, is very striking; this truth has produced a very deep impression upon me, and has rejoiced me. I knew well that a Christian ought thus to walk; but here is one who has done it, and who knows what this life is. This is encouraging; whatever may be the means by which it is produced, be it a messenger of Satan, if necessary, or any other thing, such is the result. We are associated, through it all, with Christ, who can do and does all, and He is in us; so that it is more intimate than any circumstance whatever. What strength, what blessedness of life that gives! in oneself, for we enjoy Christ; in difficulties, for we trust in Him, and rejoice under all circumstances; in cares, for this life, which has Christ for its object, delivers us from them; in real trials, for the peace of God keeps the heart.

August 14th, 1858.

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[From the French.

* * * I have had much joy in the thought that our names are written in heaven. What repose! God makes no

mistake; He knows whom He wishes to place there, a*ad it will be suitable; we shall not be unfit for such a place. What joy! and if we have to wait, we have what heaven will not give: to work for the Lord where He is rejected, to serve Him well. “His servants shall serve him,” it is said, but that service will be either a service of joy and goodness in which we shall be superior to those who profit by it, or a service in which we shall glorify God directly. But it will not be bearing the reproach of Christ, in the place where we have the glory of participating in His sufferings, even in a very feeble measure. May He give us to be faithful until He comes!

[1858.]

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[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—I have received your letter: I have been deeply thankful to God for what you tell me of ——; although we must still watch, and watch in praying, against the wiles of the enemy, for it is a pure work of the enemy…

I am at Bristol at present, but inactive on account of my knee, otherwise pretty well, still uncertain whether God will restore to me my bodily strength for active work, but extremely happy, never, I think, so happy, in the consciousness of His love, and in peace…. Peace be with you, dear brother; keep near the Lord, and follow His word. You will be surprised at such counsel, but when this fleeting life shall be over, that only shall abide which has been produced by the word. Man lives by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. “The word of God abideth for ever.” May Christ be our object; if we should go, the rest is with God.

I greet all the brethren affectionately.

Yours affectionately.

Bristol, October, 1858.

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[From the French.

* * * The value of revelation, of the word, increases for me daily, in a manner that I know not how to express. What a precious thing to have God revealed in Christ! How the Person of Christ stands out alone against the background of the scene of this world, to attract our gaze, and associate us in heart with God. In this respect, the commencement of the Gospel of John has been of much blessing to me of late. Christ is unfolded there in so complete a manner! He gathers around Himself; He must be God, otherwise He would be turning us away from Him. He says, “Follow me.” He is the Man who makes the way, the only way across the desert; for, for man there is none, since he is separated from God. On the Man Christ, heaven is open; He is, as Man, the object of heaven and of the service of the angels of God.

John (a beautiful example of the absence of all selfishness and of all self-regard) receives a testimony from above, but he speaks of that which is earthly. Now that is but a testimony; but He who came from above bears witness of what He has seen, and in Himself He reveals heaven. He gives—He is— the eternal life, in order that we may enjoy it. What a thing to say, that heaven, its nature, its joys, what it is, should be revealed to us by the word and by the presence of Him who dwells there, who is its centre and glory! Now, without doubt, man has entered into heaven, but it is none the

less precious that God should have come down to earth. Man admitted into heaven, is the subject of Paul; God, and the life manifested upon earth, that of John. The one is heavenly, as to man, the other divine. This is why John has such attraction for the heart. There is nothing like Him.

…There are two classes of religious movement at this time. The first takes the word, sees man, the child of Adam, dead through sin, and will have nothing but Christ, His death, His resurreotion, a heavenly state. The second class holds with the world, maintains worldly connections as an accepted system, and does not consider the world as a system to be passed through by motives outside of that system. People wish to have part in the movement: there is zeal, but they wish to remain self, not to become Christ.

[1858.]

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[From the French.

* * * As to the Epistle to the Philippians (in reading you may judge of this), the christian life recognises nothing but the fruit of resurrection, because we ought to walk according to the Spirit, and never according to the flesh. God is faithful, not to suffer us to be tempted beyond our strength. The Christian is considered as walking always according to the Spirit, and reckoning himself dead to sin, but alive to God. Then there is, “My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness.” If we pretend to the absence of the flesh, or that we have not to take any notice of it, or if we pretend that we have not to judge ourselves inwardly, we are mistaken; and, even if we are sincere, there remains a

mass of subtle things unjudged, and the general state of the soul is below the true effect of the light of God. But the strength of God is with us, to make us walk in communion with Himself.

As to the passage in John 21:18, I do not think that the Lord points out in Peter an evil will. He had desired, that is to say, of his own will, to follow the Lord. He had to learn his powerlessness, because there was will in him, human strength; but at the end of his life it would not be so; another would gird him, and he should go where he would not. There is no question here of an evil will, but it would not be his will which would gird him, or cause him to die. He could, without doubt, bless God for it; but he did not seek to suffer. I am the more convinced that this is the sense, because the Lord adds, “This he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God.” What Peter had to learn at that time, and what the Lord taught, was that the will of man could effect nothing in the pathway of life through death, and that is the only way of life.

November 10th, 1858.

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[From the French.

Dearest Brother,—I was glad to have even a few lines from you, the more so because you tell me a little about the beloved brethren in Switzerland. I am beginning rather to want to see them, but I am waiting for the guidance of God. I had so long neglected England that I was somewhat their debtor; and our God, in His great goodness, has not left His blessing to be waited for. Our conferences have been singularly happy, and blessing is not wanting to the work in general. The number of

brethren is increasing, and the meetings, on the whole, are in peace; where there is anything unpleasant it is rather that God is delivering them from a condition of feebleness in which evil was hiding itself, in which the water was stagnating to some degree. Here in London conversions are frequent, and many souls attracted. What I fear is that too external a work may be doing; still the consciences and hearts of brethren are well exercised, which is a very good sign, and there is a good spirit. I hope that God will cause those most recently converted to reach this exercise of soul, so that they may gain in depth, as they have rapidly gained the assurance of salvation. As to the rest, the work is a work of God, and His Spirit must accomplish it, a work of life in the soul which is settled in real —and thus, blessed be God for it—eternal relationships with God.

May God in His goodness keep the dear brethren in Switzerland; if they are not spiritual, and if God does not keep them in a very real way by His grace, it would be only too natural to fall into this snare of Bethesda, if God permits it to come near them…, When people love the world they go to Bethesda; when they are in a bad state of soul they are inclined to throw themselves into it: when the conscience is upright they leave it. Christ having been placed after their own interests (ecclesiastical) everything is false: they have been obliged to follow a false system in order to hide this, and this spirit is imprinted on everything and everywhere. It has been remarked everywhere. Many souls have been delivered lately… But souls must be kept by the Lord; this is my confidence for the dear brethren in Switzerland, and for the meetings. Without the protection of God the simplest things become

insurmountable, the most excellent, at least the most amiable motives become snares. I trust in Him: He has kept them until now, and I reckon on His goodness to keep them still until the end…

As to your children, dear brother, may God guide you, and may He not allow you to subordinate Christ to anything whatever. If Christ calls you more or less to leave His work in order to take care of your children, He will bless you in caring for them. Our only rule of duty is Christ Himself, We have to do many things in all kinds of relationships. If you follow His will, He will take care of your children: outside His path all your care would come to nothing. I must stop, I have too much to do even; I can hardly hold out longer, but the Lord is sufficient for everything. Greet the brethren very affectionately.

Your very affectionate brother.

London, November 13th, 1858.

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Dearest——,—I read——'s letter before yours, and I was going to say to you that I could not judge it honest. I looked at one paragraph (the first is quite right) and it seemed to me at first sight somewhat obscure, but I will examine it carefully when I have a moment. As to the doctrine, I need not hardly say that I abhor it. and judge that he who wittingly holds it has a false Christ—but one has to be careful even as to words. I have no doubt as to the doctrine I desire to teach. A question came from Manchester, and the answer to holding Mr. Newton's doctrine will appear, written before I received yours. ——is the more evidently on false ground, as Mr. Craik wrote the other day (I read the letter) that he was not aware of a single person at Bethesda who would

consider Mr. N. a heretic in the ordinary sense of the word.

Affectionately yours.

My letter having been delayed, I have been able to read through the articles. The doctrine is quite right, and the very opposite of Mr. N.'s, but not perhaps clearly brought out. It is carefully stated that He always says "Father," in contrast with the atoning work, in which He speaks of being forsaken. He was enjoying the relationship of a Son with the Father. In the passage itself it is clearly said that Christ entered into it for them at the close, afflicted in all their afflictions. The essence of Mr. N.'s doctrine was that He was born under it Himself, and escaped much of it. Here Christ is entering in grace into it at a given time, when God's time was come. I have no doubt that on the approach of the cross, when His ministry was ended, He entered into a new character of suffering in which the power of Satan was to be all exercised against Him in view of death and judgment, which was not before— he had departed from Him for a season; that He viewed this death, though not yet actually in it, as the judgment of God against sin, and thus entered into Israel's sorrow of the last day; that what He saw in it was the hand of God stretched out on Israel; that this was connected in His mind with the rod of God upon them, and that this closely connected itself with His coming death and their sins, but He was not then bearing them.

The fact is rightly stated: what is not unfolded is the way He entered into them; but I have distinctly stated— though of course, in the case of Christ, they were not His own personally, and that Ho entered into the

sufferings for them, afflicted in their afflictions, but—that title relationship of a Son with a Father who was always heard, He was always in the enjoyment of, till the cross. The way the cross is connected in this Psalm with sufferings, not atoning, is of the deepest interest, though it was the time as a whole that atonement was going on; in which the judgment of God, the hostility of man, and the power of Satan—all were against Him. Though the act of atonement was only His drinking the cup on the cross, yet who can doubt that in Gethsemane He was looking at God's hand in judgment, and took the whole of what He was then delivered up to in all its details as coming from His hand, whoever was allowed to do it. God had now shewed Him that He must suffer: He walks as the smitten One in thought, does not answer, recognises it as the hour of the power of evil (which it was not before). He is to be reckoned according to God's counsels with the malefactors, delivered up to the Gentiles, and His perfection is that He takes up this from God's hand, and will from none else. "Thou hast lifted me up and cast me down." (Psa. 102.) Man, then seeing Him thus given up to it, adds every insult and wrong to His sorrow. They are the things done in the green tree, the true vine— what in the dry? Christ's entering graciously, voluntarily, and yet obediently into this place of sorrows, and subjection to the power of evil, when the time of God's will was come, is exactly the opposite of His being born under it, and escaping it by piety. But it is not the atoning work, nor was it the serving in active love to reveal the Father's name. He was going through conflict of a new character before He actually drank the atoning cup.

Note, too, that under the government of God is not distance from Him—a most important and essential difference. My mind is so totally on another ground from Mr. N.'s, that all the terms which are connected with it are not before me. So far from its being distance, that it is said in this passage that even in Gethsemane He does not say "My God;" it would have been out of place, because it was not the expression of the unclouded relationship and conscious blessedness of sonship in which the blessed Lord always stood. On the cross God was dealing with Him about sin. Now all this, which is part of the passage, is in direct antagonism with all Mr. N.'s doctrine. The only thing I see is that it is not fully explained how He entered into it, though the alleged way—Mr. N.'s—is positively denied in the passage.

London, November 15th, 1858.

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Dear ——,—The Observations on the Psalms14 are not so precise as the Synopsis, but there is more freshness in them (this at least), so that I enjoyed it more when I read it. The essential difference is that many more Psalms are applied to Christ in the Observations than in the Synopsis, as is habitually the case. In the Synopsis the remnant is much more prominently brought into view, and I think rightly.

As to Psalm 101, the remark15 that "it is not expressed in the historical order," is the key to what is said. His whole life is viewed as to position, but the close is seen first, as stamping its character upon His sorrows (not atonement). He was isolated, hated, &c, but His mind, as being perfect, saw not merely the fruit of faithfulness, which is not the subject of this Psalm, though He were

faithful in everything, but that the Israel whom He had taken up in grace had to come into judgment. Prophetically the shadow of the cross was cast upon His life, as I doubt not He often in fact anticipated it. His communion with God was perfect with respect to these very things. We have an example in “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify thy name.” Only I doubt not He often felt what the place of Israel was according to God; but as long as He lived, that is, till the last entry into Jerusalem, it was still open to the people to repent. It is closed by “Now are they hid from thine eyes.” Still I doubt not He often, nay always, saw where all was going as to Israel, and felt it in perfect communion with God. This breach was sealed on the cross besides the atoning work. There He took His place under it for the purpose of atonement, but He saw it as the full rejection of Israel too. His rejection, which He felt all through, was really Israel’s rejection. And He could say, “If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, but…”

Now the comment on the Psalm supposes that the full result is prophetically here seen, and the circumstances leading to the crisis there gone into taking their colour from the crisis, but their colour to His spirit in full communion with God. So that words of deep comfort flow from this depth of communion, and perfect thoughts in the trial for those who have to go through the experience of it, in a measure at least, hereafter. Verse 22 shews the full agony of Gethsemane (compare Ps. 103) casting its shadow on the whole; but the circumstances are from without, which are felt, as in verses 4, 9, 10, 11, &c. I think it is more critically exact

to begin from the remnant, but the deepest profit, at any rate, is seeing the blessed Lord entering into it.

Let no one fear that is N.'s doctrine: not only is it not, but he says he does not mean this, and puts his views in contrast with it; and so it is, he wholly excludes this. If his be true, this would have been impossible. He holds Christ was by faith associated wfth the ungodly Jews. I teach how He was the blessed Son of God, in perfect communion, and entering as a faithful One into the sorrows of the godly remnant. Only seeing that for them and to deliver them, there must be a rejection of the nation, and of Messiah as connected with it in flesh, to have it on a new ground—the sure mercies of David, thus proving resurrection. I do not expect many at once to enter into this. The sympathies of Christ they will feel, His atonement they see with thankfulness for themselves, His own sorrows they but little enter into, but that does not make them the less precious, if we can. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father." But to me, this sorrow of Christ is very clear in scripture.

As to Psalm 61, there is no ground for the question: none purely ever felt our sins as Jesus did, their horribleness in God's sight, how they separated from God, our ruin by them. That is not the same thing as bearing them. He groaned deeply in spirit, He groaned in Himself at seeing the power of death at the tomb of Lazarus. That was not bearing them, or meeting wrath for them. This surely is very simple. I dread extremely the sense of Christ's sufferings, the sorrows of the blessed Lord being weakened by the deadly doctrine which the devil has raised up to make them not such at

all, but a relationship with God that made Him feel them for Himself.

I hope I have made it clear: if not, you can let me know. The thirty-first a man must be spiritual to understand: what is said as to Psalm 61, it seems to me any one might who knows what Christ's sympathy means.

Affectionately yours.

Date uncertain.]

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[From the French.

Dearest Brother,—I have learned indirectly that your meetings have been closed, at least for the time. I need not tell you that my heart is with the brethren, and how much I desire that they may in every way be guided by God in these circumstances.

We have already prayed for them here, and God, who is above everything, and who never withdraws His eyes from His own, will take care of you—I am sure of this—and will display His grace, and thus His glory, in your behalf. I entreat you to keep very near to Him, that you may know what there is to be done in His name, that you may be encouraged, and that the light of His countenance may sustain your faith. His support is worth all else. These things do not happen by chance, and nothing escapes Him.

"Affliction," it is said (Job 5:6), "cometh not forth of the dust;" and whatever the instruments may be, those who dwell in this world do not direct the course of it, nor does even the enemy of our souls, in the first place. It was God who said to Satan, "Hast thou considered my

servant Job?" God saw that Job had need of the sifting; the enemy himself was but an instrument in it.

The circumstances in which the brethren are placed will surely be a trial, but, where grace works in hearts—O that it may be so in all!—for blessing. One feels that one is not of this world. The heart is compelled to ask itself, Am I following Christ for the love of Christ, because He has the words of eternal life, because as He said to follow Him is to serve Him? Am I not inclined to accept the course of the world that I may have rest in the world? Serious questions for the heart! … I need not say that, except in the case of matters in which the word is binding upon the conscience, one submits to the authorities; but we do not make terms with the world in the things of God, to make our path apparently easier. I say apparently, for one step leads to another, and it is found increasingly difficult to stop.

May God give the brethren a quiet, patient spirit; may they wait upon God and count upon Him, in the assurance that He never withdraws His eyes from the righteous, and that He will come in when the fit time has come. May they have all gentleness, but also all firmness, while waiting upon God, and let them give themselves to prayer. It is impossible that God should forsake His own, although He may try them. O that God may cause this trial to turn to blessing! May it drive the brethren to God, and bring them closer to Him; may it deepen their spiritual life, and bring them into more intercourse with Him. I count upon Him for you; I have never found Him fail His own, never.

Greet all the brethren affectionately. Let them be much in prayer to God, that will give them gentleness and

courage at the same time. It is no new thing for Christians to suffer for Him who has so loved them. God has taken care of His dear children in France up to the present time. He changes not, and if the brethren are firm and patient this will turn to positive blessing. May God keep them. He is working in France and elsewhere; L do not think that He will remove His testimony from them. He may discipline us, that we may give a clearer, brighter, more heavenly testimony, but He will not leave nor forsake His own who put their trust in Him.

February, 1859.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,— … My stay in Switzerland was a time of trial; I felt on arriving that it was God's will that I should take the journey, and that I had done well to come, but it was nevertheless a time of trial; but God is above everything, and in His goodness He makes all contribute to the blessing of those who love Him. My spirit is replenished in His goodness, for whilst having entire confidence in His goodness by faith, or as to my faith, in my mind I felt at Lausanne that it was a time of obedience, not of the activity of the Holy Spirit in my heart; but there is a time for everything, and God is good in everything. I had been so abundantly blessed in former times that perhaps God thought fit to put me into winter a little, and to make me feel my dependence on Him, which, however, I did not question. I was rather afraid that my translation might not be the best thing to do. I did not know exactly why God kept me thus. The enemy sought to discourage me; faith in the unfailing goodness of God sustained me, but it was -only faith.

Now I am happy; though still a prisoner, I am not suffering, but I have not yet regained strength for work. I believe that the sight of my right eye has improved; I work at home, through the goodness of God. My journey was particularly happy, thank God: I felt it was a serious thing in the midst of work evidently blessed to be stopped, perhaps for ever. Greet the brethren warmly. May God bless yours.

Your affectionate brother.

London, May 3rd, 1859.

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[From the French.

* * * The Epistle to the Philippians has somewhat occupied me of late. What has struck me particularly in this epistle is, that the apostle so places himself in the life of Christ, that he expresses no consciousness of the existence of the flesh. He had a thorn in the flesh, so that it is not a question of doctrine only, it is a state in which the flesh does not act, and cannot lead the thoughts astray; that which appears to be a success for Satan will turn to salvation for Paul. Christ will be glorified in his body, whether by life or by death, as He had always been. To live is Christ, nothing else; to die, gain, for he will enjoy Christ without hindrance. He decides his own trial, without regard to himself, for he knows not what to choose; but for the church it is well that he should remain, so he will remain. He is careful for nothing. He knows that peace of God which passes all understanding—he, who was going to stand on his trial before Nero. He knows how to be abased, and how to abound. He can do all things through Christ, who strengthens him. He is, by that which belongs to the life

of Christ, above it all. He has not, without doubt, attained to the end, namely, resurrection from among the dead, but he does only one thing—the activity of the life of Christ leaves no room for anything else. The more you examine the epistle, the more you find that, during the life in which he has not attained to the end, he knows no other thing than “to live is Christ.”

June 23rd, 1859.

* * * * *

* * * Some news of the work going on in the north, and now at Coleraine, has reached me. You will not be surprised if I write a line, not surely as wiser than any, but having the matter at heart. It is a great thing to see by most holy watchfulness that Satan does not get in, and the flesh under him imitating the working of God; this I had upon my mind as wishing to write. Such a work (it is really always so) is out of our hands where it is real, but one watches responsibly through it, though of the last importance to serve God and His work, and leave the manner in which He pleases to work to Himself; but to own Him thus, it just gives us the title to watch all that in it is of Him. If I doubt His title to work as He sees fit, I am not of His mind, I thwart His Spirit and lose the power. Where I own and bless Him as above me and above all, I can for Him be jealous that nothing dishonours Him, and watch all fleshly excitement and discredit it because it is not God.

I.remember in Wesley’s time they used to be seized with a kind of convulsion in the meetings, and fall down. Some caught this, perhaps some imitated or let themselves go to it. He said, the first person who fell down he would have turned out, and no more did so. It

was well meant, doubtless, but I doubt the rightness. It were better to judge the false thing, if we could, and leave all divine action free. I admit the difficulty of this; we shall not always be right, but in owning God and doing it for Him He will help us through. Let godliness be a great test, sober judgment of self be a fruit; the authority of the word meets the conscience when the flesh begins to appear, generally under pretence of being above and without it—yet not at first expecting intelligence. When the first action by power on the conscience takes place, you must expect feelings to have the upper hand at the moment, and after forgiveness to have the [exercises] in the heart over the means of being forgiven.

But if there be genuine conviction of sin, the work and Person of Christ will have their value when presented, and feelings will give up to this when more reflection and sober action comes in. Jesus Himself will attract, and His promises of forgiveness—His work will gradually acquire due proportion in the soul as it gets on. Yet we have to follow rather than lead where God is working, and only watch the progress, and minister the word as wants arise.

Above all (I need hardly say), dear brother, pray much that God may help you, and hold in grace fully the upper hand, for you must expect excitement. But through grace and nearness to God, do not let yourself be excited. Peter’s sermon was very sober on the day of Pentecost, being after a time of much prayer. Sober and earnest truth from God to them under the work, deep truth for the conscience—I do not speak of knowledge, but deep in the weight of God’s presence, for it is a solemn thing that He should be so near to us, and a

good thing. But He should be nearer to us in secret than even this wonderful action, and then all will be well. My prayers mount up for you and all those wrought on, that God will keep the work; it is His own and in His own hands. Seek nothing—I am sure you do not—for a party in any sense. It is not that I doubt the truth of a divine path, but God works now, and the true path is to make Christ everything. God is working much in many places in these last days. Satan is also working. Our path is holding forth the word of truth, the immediate presence of God, which will be a light through it all. We know who will have the upper hand; also flesh will be sifted, and in the activities of God will be brought to light and judged. Peace be with you, dear brother, and grace and wisdom from God.

July, 1859.

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Beloved Brother,— … It is a time for plain and earnest service, and to remember that the word of God alone abides. My associations with the work of the revival have only made me feel more deeply than ever the need and state of things which pressed on my spirit thirty years ago—the state of the church of God—how prayer and an earnest testimony of truths that may lift it up, and they are the simplest, is needed. I rejoice in the blessed work that has been done; but in what hands it is found, and in what hands the fruits of it are cast! Happily it is in hands out of which none can take it. But while avoiding controversy—to bring, in earnestness of love, what may raise the whole tone of Christianity before souls, the Christianity that takes us by redemption into association with Christ.

I recall, with true pleasure dear brother, the days I spent under your kind roof. Peace be with you, dear brother. The Lord give you to keep up His testimony clearly, affectionately, and fully. The poor church, besides sinners, has need of it.

Ever affectionately yours,

In our blessed Master.

Dublin October 16th, 1859.

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Dearest ——,—My own earnest hope is that brethren will walk on in peace, and take no notice whatever of attacks. I am sure it is the most morally dignified, and the path of grace. If the Lord should break down Mr. ——, they will not have perpetuated his dishonour.

As regards Apocalypse 7, I have for years considered it the most difficult portion of the Apocalypse. But the great tribulation is not my difficulty. Chapter 3:10 I think explains that. The great tribulation of Matthew 24, Jeremiah, and Daniel 12, is confined to Jacob and Judæa. The great difficulty for me is “before the throne.” (Vers. 9, 15.) Were it not for one passage, I might freely take it morally, not actually. The English translation increases the difficulty; “dwell among them,” is not in the passage (ver. 15), but “tabernacle over them,” as the cloud did Israel. But the temple in no way sets them in heaven. In the holy city there is no temple. It is not the character of heavenly worship to worship in the temple. You will remark, they are not round about the throne, but before it. If in chapter 14:3 a[dousin be applied to the 144,000, “before the throne” applies to those on earth; but in chapter 4:5, 6 we have it applied to part of the furniture

of the temple above. That they are not the church is to me clear. They are contrasted in their whole condition with the elders; they are saved by Him that sits on the throne and the Lamb, which connects them with the time of introductory government —though not of the millennium; they give no motive for their praise—a mark of the saints who are properly heavenly; their blessings are relief from sufferings, or being led by shepherd's care to food and refreshment; their relationship with God as before the throne takes them out of association with it—the true character of the strictly heavenly saints. Even the angels are round about the throne—not so these.

I certainly think they are separated pre-millennially—are in relationship with God on the ground of the place He takes as introducing the only-begotten into the world—of His throne above, but before He has introduced Him. Hence they pass through the time of temptation which shall come upon all the world. I do not see that the object is to state earth or heaven, but the character of relationship, and that as the elect perfect number of Israel would be saved, so there would be a multitude of Gentiles spared in the time the throne of God held its place on high, and the Lamb was yet there.

But that those who are thus spared have eternal life as supposed by your inquirer, says absolutely nothing of the multitudes that come into existence during the millennium. So that the difficulty as to the rebels at the close does not exist. The great tribulation here spoken of is in no way confined to the Roman earth. I know of none which is particularly applied to that. But there are persons spared— those associated with idolatrous Jews, whom the Lord judges at His coming. The sun not

smiting them would tend to prove they are on the earth. Unless the army of the beast (Rev. 19), I know of no objects of judgment of which a remnant is not spared. The wine-press may distinctively mark this, and Edom involved in it. To those who have not received the love of the truth who have it, strong delusion will be sent to believe a lie, that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. I can hardly think the dragon, beast, and false prophet do not assemble their subjects to Armageddon—but I suppose rather that it is a general assembly of all.

I was thinking the day your letter came of “Reflections on the Psalms.”

Ever affectionately yours in the Lord.

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[From the French.

Dear Sister,—The questions you ask me, make me feel deeply how sorrowful are subtle questions upon the Person of Jesus; they tend to dry up and confuse the soul, to cause the spirit of worship and of love to be lost, and in its place to put intricate questions, as if the mind of man could resolve the way in which the humanity and divinity of Jesus are united.

It is in this sense that it is said, “No man knoweth the Son save the Father.” (I need not say that I do not pretend to do so.) The humanity of Jesus is incomparable. His was a true and real humanity; body and soul, flesh and blood, like mine as far as humanity is concerned, sin excepted; but He appeared in circumstances quite different from those in which Adam

was found. He came for the express purpose of bearing our sorrows and infirmities. Adam had none to bear: not that his nature was not in itself susceptible of them, but he was not in the circumstances which entail them: God had placed him in a position which could not be reached by physical evil until he had fallen under moral evil.

Again, God was not in Adam; God was in Christ amid all kinds of misery and suffering, weariness and trial. Christ passed through them according to the power of God, and with sentiments of which the Spirit of God was always the source, although they were human in their sympathies. Adam, before his fall, had no suffering; God was not in him, nor was the Holy Spirit the source of his sentiments; after his fall, sin was the source of his sentiments; it was never so in Jesus.

On the other hand, Jesus is Son of man, Adam was not; but, at the same time, Jesus was born by divine power, so that that holy thing which was born of Mary is called Son of God: this is true of none other. He is Christ born of man, but even as man born of God, so that the condition of humanity in Him is not that which Adam was, either before his fall or after his fall. Now humanity for Adam was not changed by his fall, but the condition of humanity; he was as much a man before as after, after as before. Sin came in, and humanity became alienated from God: it is without God in the world. Now it was not thus with Christ. He was always perfectly with God, save in suffering on the cross in His spirit the forsaking.

Also, the Word was made flesh; God has been manifested in flesh. Acting thus in that veritable humanity, His presence in the unity of the same Person was incompatible with sin.

We are mistaken if we imagine that Adam had immortality in himself; no creature possesses that; they are all maintained by God, who alone has immortality essentially. When it was no longer God's will to maintain it in the world, man became mortal, and his strength in fact wears out, according to the ways and the will of God; when such is God's will, he has a life of more than a thousand years—only three score and ten when He thinks fit. It is God's will that life should come to a close, that we should die, sooner or later; except those who shall be alive at the coming of Jesus, who shall be changed, because the Lord has vanquished death.

Now God was in Christ, which changed everything; but not with respect to the reality of His humanity, with all its affections, its sentiments, its natural needs of soul and body, which were all in Jesus, who underwent consequently the effect of all that surrounded Him, only according to the Spirit, and without sin. No man takes His life from Him, He lays it down, but He does this when the moment appointed by God was come. In fact, He gives Himself up to the effect of the iniquity of man, because it was the will of God that He came to accomplish. He allows Himself to be crucified and put to death, only He is master of the moment in which He yields up His spirit. He works no miracle to hinder the effect of the cruel means of death which man was using, or to screen His humanity. He leaves it to the consequence of those means. His divinity is not used to screen Him from it, to screen Him from death, but to add all its moral value, all its perfection to His obedience. He works no miracle that He may not die, but He works a miracle by dying. He acts according to His divine prerogative in dying, but not in screening

Himself from death, for He commends His spirit to His Father as soon as all is finished.

The difference then of His humanity is not that it was not really and fully that of Mary (surely it was), but in that it was that by an act of divine power, so as to be such without sin; and further, in that instead of being separated from God in His soul, as every sinful man is, God was in Him, and He was of God. He could say, “I thirst;” “now is my soul troubled;” “it is melted like wax in the midst of my bowels;” but He could say, “The Son of man who is in heaven;” and “Before Abraham was, I am.”

The innocence of Adam was not God manifest in flesh; it was not man subjected, as to the circumstances in which his humanity was placed, to all the consequences of sin. On the other hand, the humanity of fallen man had fallen under the power of sin, of a will opposed to God, of desires hostile to Him. Christ came to do the will of God, and in Him was no sin. That was humanity in Christ, where God was; not humanity in itself separated from God. It was not humanity in the circumstances in which God placed man when He created him, but in the circumstances in which sin had placed Him, yet in those circumstances without sin; not such as sin made him in them, but such as divine power made Him in all His ways, such that the Holy Spirit was expressed in humanity in the midst of those circumstances. It was not man where there was no evil, like Adam, innocent, but Man in the midst of evil; yet it was not sinful man in the midst of evil like Adam fallen, but Man perfect, and perfect according to God, in the midst of evil—God manifest in flesh; a real, true humanity; but His spirit having always the sentiments which God produces in

man, and in absolute communion with God, except when He suffered upon the cross, when it was necessary, as far as the sufferings of His soul were concerned, that He should be forsaken of God—more perfect then, with regard to the extent of the perfection and the reach of obedience than at any other time, because He was doing the will of God in the face of His wrath, instead of accomplishing it in the enjoyment of communion with Him. This is why there, and only there, He asked that that cup might pass from Him. His sustenance could not be found in the wrath of God.

Our precious Saviour was Man, as truly as I am, as regards the simple abstract idea of humanity, but without sin, miraculously born by divine power; and more than this, He was God manifest in flesh.

Now, having said so much, I entreat you with all my heart not to try to define and to discuss the Person of our precious Saviour; you will lose the savour of Christ in your thoughts, and you will get in its place only the barrenness of the human mind in the things of Christ, and in the affections which belong to them. I have begged the brethren to refrain from this, and they are all the better for it. It is a labyrinth for man, because he works from his own resources. It is as if one were to dissect the body of one's friend, instead of delighting in his affections and his character. In the church, it is one of the worst signs I have met with. It is very sad to get into this way, very sad that this should be shewn in such a light before the church of God, and before the world. I would add, that so deep is my conviction of man's incapacity in this matter, and that it is outside the teaching of the Spirit to wish to define the manner of the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus, that I am quite

ready to suppose that even while desiring to avoid it, I may have fallen into it, and thus may have spoken in a mistaken way in something which I have said to you.

That He was truly Man, Son of man, dependent on God as such, and without sin in that condition of dependence —truly God in all His ineffable perfection: this I hold, I trust, dearer than life. To define everything is what I do not presume to do. “No man knoweth the Son but the Father.” If I find anything which weakens one or the other of these truths, or which dishonours Him who is their subject, I shall oppose it with all my might, as God may call me to do so.

May God grant you to believe all which the word ‘teaches with regard to Him—Jesus. It is our food and sustenance to understand all which the Spirit has given us to understand, and not to seek to define that which God does not call upon us to define, but to adore on the one hand and to feed upon on the other, and to love in every way according to the grace of the Holy Spirit.

1859.

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Dear Brother,—If such a measure should come before you, I beg to call your attention and the attention of the saints to what follows. I have felt pressed in spirit before the Lord to do it since I heard of it; I have no object but that the saints should be free from taking any step till they take it by the guidance of the Spirit, knowing what it is they are doing.

Beloved Brethren,—I have learned by a providential circumstance that it is the purpose of our dear brother ——to propose a common day of fasting and humiliation

as to the state of the saints. I feel deeply, indeed, I have in my little manner acted on it when I could, that the very thing that is called for, and urgently called for, is fasting and humiliation, and deep, deep humiliation before God, as I know the beloved saints have already done so in several places. Hence on the mere point of so fasting I say nothing, believing that it must be left to the Holy Ghost to guide the saints, as He sees good, to such a service. But what I feel bound to lay before them is this. When a common fast is proposed, it supposes of course a common object. All I think the saints would be wise to learn before undertaking to join in such a thing, is, what the common thing they join in is. Further, when we join in a common thing, we more or less identify ourselves with those with whom we join. In the present state of things, I would only suggest to the brethren not to commit themselves to anything they are unacquainted with. My own judgment is that some of the fasts at Plymouth (and I was at one of them myself, so that it is not to blame individuals) were by very far the worst things which have been done there before God—very, very far. This judgment of course I do not press on the brethren; I only suggest to them that, if a common fast is proposed, they should at least learn what the common thing is. I have no doubt what is done truly before the Lord, even in ignorance, will be blessed to those who do it in the end; but we act with power when we act with the knowledge of His mind.

Ever, in true affection in the Lord,

Your brother in Christ.

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My dear Brother,—Being ignorant of the circumstances which have passed, you cannot of course tell to what tests charity may have been put. Still, love is of God, and God is love; hence I trust that it will surmount, in virtue of its divine nature, and through divine power, everything; and indeed so, thank God, I have found it. Still, the love of God, though rising over and covering everything because of its own fulness, and that it owns Christ in the saints, and our own nothingness, is not, dear brother, a blind and unintelligent feeling. I do earnestly desire the church's, rather the saint's humiliation for the divisions and state it is in generally. And I earnestly desire the Lord may be with the beloved ones at ——. In uniting in a matter of the kind, what I feel we have to do is to see the mind of the Holy Ghost, and how far Christ is leading in it. J earnestly desire the common fellowship of the saints in humiliation. Still, as to this particular case, I apprehend I am not wrong in connecting it with the circumstances of the present time, and a certain spiritual judgment of the state of things here (or what may be connected with it).

Now to look really and unfeignedly for a common supplication, if unity in judgment of the remedy be not demanded, at least, the sense of the evil which we have to present to God must be the same, or we shall not be presenting the same spiritual groan to God at all. The common act would be hypocrisy, though each might be unfeignedly sincere for himself. Now I may tell you, dear brother, that it was the judgment of several spiritual and intelligent saints (not of us of Plymouth) that the ground you took would aid greatly, or at any rate would aid, in increasing the spiritual delusion and blindness under which many beloved saints were labouring here. Such, I

do not doubt, was the fact, though individual grace will always be overruled for blessing; and hence I fully trusted the Lord about it, assured that He would overrule it for blessing. This will probably little affect the certainty you have that you are right, but this will hardly govern other people. It is a question merely whose spiritual judgment is the soundest: both may be partial, and both used by supreme divine wisdom for the bringing about His own purposes; though, while God uses both, they cannot actually go together. Hence, while I am sure all the love which shall be in exercise in your meeting will be most surely blest to those who are there (and I trust to others), and indeed all there is of right spiritual judgment, and my heart would go unfeignedly along with it; still, it could not formally, while ignorant of the mind in which it was done, join in what it did not even know—could not, in the sense of possibility.

If there were the recognition of certain things, and state of things—of this of course I cannot speak—then I could not in good conscience before the Lord have anything at all to say to it. It would be both hypocrisy and a positive disobedience and departure from God. My judgment is definite and assured, I believe; and I have no doubt that I have it from the Lord. I dare not, nor would I, of course, depart from it. Any charge of want of charity to which I may render myself liable, would not turn me away, because there is a day coming when every one will receive praise of God. I am content to wait for that, though indeed I have not had to wait for it, through abounding and undeserved grace which thinks of our weakness.

As to our course, dear brother, I have no doubt at all (though admitting many imperfections in the way) that it has been of God. We (that is, those who have come out and met faithfully in our weakness) have found so distinct and unequivocal a testimony to His favour and approbation, and such an evident and sensible blessing, that we have been confirmed in the strongest possible way in that which we have done in faithfulness to God. Ye are content with His portion, whatever men may judge pf us. For my own part, now twenty years that I have been converted, I never experienced so distinct a deliverance of God, nor so sensible a consciousness of the blessing and joy of spirit by the Holy Ghost which accompanies walking in His will. I had no thought or idea of the difference, the total difference resulting from the step in which I have obeyed by faith. I do not think I could express too strongly the transition. I have no doubt at all that there is a delusion of the enemy over their minds.

In many other ways, and in the working in individual souls, the hand of God has been most marked. Your fast meeting would, I apprehend, identify me more or less with that which I have left, as acknowledging it more or less. This in the very smallest degree I would not do for all the world, and I am conscious that I am led of God in this. You cannot be surprised therefore that I am decided.

Ever, dear brother,

Yours in unfeigned affection.

For example, if I believe we are suffering for failure, and, as is stated by many here, others believe they are

suffering as martyrs for the truth, how could there be common humiliation?16]

Plymouth [1845].

* * * * *

* * * I should not admit the cross to be the principle of union, because I cannot admit the work of Christ to be the bond, exclusive of His Person. The cross may gather all, both Jew and Gentile, but they are gathered to Christ, not to the cross; and the difference is a most important and essential one, because it is of all-importance that the Person of the Son of God have His place. Christ Himself, not the cross of Christ, is the centre of union. The two or three are gathered to His name, not the cross. The scripture is uniform in its testimony as to this.

But further, where saints are gathered in unity, without any questionings, they have the truth and holiness to guard. It never was, and I trust never will be, the notion of brethren, that the truth of Christ's Person or godliness of walk was to be sacrificed to outward unity. It is making brethren of more importance than Christ; and even so, love to the brethren is false, for if true it is, John assures us, "love in the truth and for the truth's sake." Supposing a person denied the divinity of Christ, or the resurrection of His body, still declaring his belief in the cross—supposing he declared his belief in the cross and resurrection, but declared it was only a testimony of God's love, and no substitution or expiatory value in it, as many clergymen of high reputation in the Establishment now do— is all this to be immaterial? I shall be told that no true believer could do this. In the first place, a true believer may be seduced into error;

and further, the test offered becomes thus the opinion formed that a man is a true believer, and not the plain fundamental truth of God and His holiness.

Indeed, the letter betrays its own inconsistency, for it says, “brethren gathered round the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ?” Quite true; but what person? Would it be equal if He were owned to be God, or if it were denied? Or if He were the Son of God, the object of His Father’s delight at all times—or if He were a man—or if He were really risen from the dead? I can hardly doubt the writer would say no. I am supposing all this. I answer then, your letter is all a fallacy, a delusion, and denies itself and its principles in the same page. For that is what I insist on, that I must have a true Christ, and that I am bound to maintain the truth of Christ in my communion. I am aware that the letter states we can deal with conduct (with morality) but not with these questions. But this is just what appears to me so excessively evil. Decency of conduct is necessary for communion; but a man may blaspheme Christ— that is no matter; it is a matter, not of conduct, but of. conscience! It is hinted, that perhaps if it be a teacher, he may be dealt with. In truth, the apostle desires even a woman not to let such a person into her house. It is not therefore so difficult to deal with. Just think of a system which makes blasphemous views of the Person of Christ—what may amount to a denial of Him—to be a matter of private conscience, having nothing to do with communion! And here is the very root of the question. I raise one before all their reasoning. I affirm that that is not a communion of believers at all, which is not founded on the acknowledgment of a true Christ. Where the truth as to this is commonly held and taught, I may have no need

for particular inquiry. But that is not the case here. If I find a person even in such a case, denying the truth as to Christ, communion is impossible, because we have not a common Christ to have communion in. But here all faithfulness is thrown overboard. No call to confess a true Christ is admitted: it is a new test or term of communion! Mr. N. himself, and others holding his doctrines, have been invited or admitted. It is said we are to meet as Christians. But a man is not a Christian who professes a false Christ. The letter would have me judge the state of a person's heart. I cannot, while his profession is false: I may hope he is only misled, but cannot accept his profession.

I am quite aware that it will be said, But these individuals do not hold these views. If wholly and not wilfully ignorant it is another matter; but we have to do with another case where, the views being held, they are declared to be a matter of private conscience; that a false Christ is as good as a true one, if a person's conduct is good—we can judge only of the last! Now this principle is worse than the false doctrine, because it knows the falseness and blasphemy of it, and then says it is no matter. I do not own—— meetings as meetings of believers, for fundamental error as to Christ is immaterial for communion —a matter, the letter tells me, not of conduct but of conscience. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead." Be it so. Suppose a person held He was a mere man, and quoted the passage to prove that God raised Him, and made Him Lord and Christ, would he be received? If not, you do try whether a man has the faith of God's elect. If not a Socinian is admissible as a believer; or you make

your opinion of his being a believer the test, entirely independent of the faith of Christ. I go further. It is said you can only require a person to say he receives all in scripture as true. The supposed Socinian would accept such a test at once. They do so. Why should you ask even that? A man may be a believer and a rationalist in theory (sad as such a thought is) and not accept all as the word of God, and say, I am a believer in the cross—you have no right to make a difficulty. If after this you object to any doctrine or insist on any truth, you have not even scripture to lean on against his denial of it. Scripture says, “Whom I love in the truth and for the truth’s sake;” the other says it is no matter. You think the person a “spiritual believer;” the truth of Christ is no matter, a false one is just as good.

I add no human doctrine to a divine one. I make no term of communion besides Christ. I require that those who have blasphemed Him should not be admitted. I am told that it is a matter of conscience, &c„ and that people cannot read doctrines to know whether He is blasphemed or not. These blasphemers have been received deliberately, received avowedly, received upon the ground that no inquiry is to be made; and therefore the plea of additional bonds or terms of communion is all dust thrown in the eyes. Is it a new term of communion to affirm that faith in a true Christ, not a false one, is called for for communion, and that blasphemers of Christ are not to be received? That is the true question. If a person thinks they are not safe in reading the publications, how are they safe in fellowship and intimacy with those who have written or refuse to disown them? I confess I do not admire this argument. Simple believers do not hesitate much, reasoning minds

do. Ask a simple believer if Christ had the experience of an unconverted man. He would soon say, I will have nothing to say to any one who says so. A reasoning mind might make it a mere matter of personal conscience. Is the truth of Christ's Person and His relationship to God a variety of judgment on a particular doctrine? Here is the whole question—value for Christ and the truth as to Himself.

The question of 1 John 2:19 is a formal avowal that if a person was professedly an antichrist, denying the Father and the Son, he is to be received. It is a matter of doctrines [underlined in the letter]. Purging out the old leaven, according to this paragraph, is keeping it in till it goes out of itself. The real manifested enemies of Christ are to be kept in communion —the deniers of His Person and of all faith: they will withdraw! It is well to have met an avowal of the principles of the——gathering. It is, I confess, a little difficult to understand how a real believer can say so… I do not require definitions; what I require is, that when blasphemous definitions have been made, the blasphemers should be rejected. I do not see anything so very deep in saying that Christ had the experience of an unconverted man, and that He was relatively further from God than men when they had made the golden calf, and [that He] heard with an attentive heart the gospel of John the Baptist, and so passed as from law under grace. Is it the shibboleth of a party to reject with horror such doctrines? Or is it faithfulness to Christ to attenuate them by saying that in such deep doctrines we shall not express ourselves alike: only disquisitions on the force of the Greek word ai{resi"…. Heresy in scripture language is not a division —but that is no matter.

The reference to the Ethiopian (Acts 8:37) is unhappy, because it is recognised to be no part of scripture, and probably was added when they applied some test. The assertion about Romans 16:17 is a very poor evasion of the text. There is not the smallest pretext for saying that it refers to the unity of the body; which is not at all the subject of the epistle, being only briefly alluded to in chapter 12 in reference to practice. “Cause divisions” is referred to; but there is nothing to divide; if there be not a true Christ as the basis of the meeting, there is no true unity at all. The reference to the Galatian church is an unhappy one. That epistle was not written about discipline, nor could it be, but to bring back the whole body of the saints in many churches to sound doctrine. But it shews that false doctrine was more terrible in the apostle’s mind than the worst false conduct: not a wish of kindness, not a salutation, not a gracious word—he breaks in at once with rebuke and reproach, and closes with resentful coldness—while in Corinthians, where the most horrible wickedness was committed and gloried in by all, he says all the good of them he can.

It is not practical love to love them, not for the truth’s sake, but to comfort them in blaspheming Christ—saying it is a matter of conscience. It is not real love to the members, nor love for Christ’s sake, to despise Christ so as to bear blasphemers against Him. I have certainly not left the Establishment to accept blasphemers. I do repudiate the creed of a Socinian, or a Mormonite, or an Arian. If the writer does not, I am sorry for it. It is all nonsense talking about anything in a tract being a test. The truth of the Person and glory of Christ in a tract or out of a tract, is a test for those who are faithful to Him. I cannot talk of liberty of conscience to blaspheme

Christ, if by liberty of conscience is meant, as it is here, communion.

January 14th, 1860.

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13 See page 182.

14 [See “Observations on a Tract entitled ‘Remarks on the Sufferings of the Lord Jesus.’” 1847. “Collected Writings,” vol. 15 p. 103.]

15 [See “Present Testimony,” vol. 4:p. 218. In the “Synopsis of the Books of the Bible,” afterwards published separately, the paper in “Present Testimony,” vol. 13:1-165, was substituted for this.]

16 [This, and the letter preceding, refer to the same meeting as that which drew out the letter given on page 97, and go with it.]

Section 9

[From the French.

* * * I sympathise with you, dear brother, in regard to your dear mother. Doubtless, until all is desert, and that heaven, Christ, is all, these bereavements break the ties, and make us feel that it is the desert. But it is well, because it is the truth, and because our souls need it. We must be severed [from it]. The first Adam belonged to what? belonged to the earthly paradise. All that is lost. The ties of the life down here remain, those even that God has formed, and that He finds in their place, but death has come in, and the Holy Spirit is a power that detaches us from everything, and binds us to that which is invisible, to Christ in heaven and to the love of the Father. Sometimes this is done at the beginning in a violent way, sometimes little by little; but God works in His own, for He has prepared for them a city, has already given them part in a heavenly citizenship. And He is good; He raises us up for heaven and to heaven… No doubt we have our troubles; I know it well, but we have an ever faithful Lord, faithful and full of love to bless us. We can count oh Him; then the rest will be more blessed, more full of the knowledge of His own joys, for He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: and if we have by grace ever so small a share with Him in His sorrows, we shall have it in His joy for ever above. The cross now, and we know very little of it—Himself, dear brother, and the joy and the glory with Him, that is our prospect.

London, [1860].

* * * * *

[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—I believe that the request for the Hold Spirit is a proof that the professing church denies itself, any more than ever now, that God has, in a remarkable manner, manifested the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth. He has acted in an extraordinary manner, has almost shewn Himself to sight, so to speak. I perfectly understand that we are called to bear with expressions which betray ignorance, when the desire of the heart is good and according to God, and that God can grant these ignorant prayers according to His own wisdom.

Individually, I do not take offence when a Christian prays that God would pour out His Spirit upon the church but if the professing church present this request, it is saying, We are unbelieving with regard to the presence of the Holy Ghost, that which has made us to be the church. But now that God has manifested His presence by an action of Hi a Spirit, such as has not been seen since the day of Pentecost, they do not recognise, any more than before, that He is present by His Spirit. They pray that He would send Him, that He would pour out the Spirit, but they do not believe in His presence in the church.

Already, in Ireland, the Presbyterian clergy are trying to put a stop to lay-preaching, that is to say, to that liberty which was the effect of the powerful action of the Spirit of God. We see these young souls placed under the direction of unconverted ministers, so-called, or else under the direction of those who oppose assurance of salvation.

I believe that we may very rightly ask that the Spirit should act more powerfully in us, in the church. This is a

thing much to be desired. One can ask for oneself to be filled with the Holy Spirit; and it is always well to try and take the good side, as much as possible, of what is said by the heart of a Christian. But it is none the less true, that the request for a greater measure of the Holy Spirit flows from unbelief as to His personal presence in the church; and the fruits of this unbelief will be met with again.

… I think we must take the passage which you quote, with its context: “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure.” The direct application of it is to Christ. I believe the principle to be absolute. When GoS gives His Spirit, He does not give Him by measure. He has given Him now, in virtue of the ascension of Christ, and being given, the Spirit is here. It is not a question of measure, but the presence of a Person who distributes, who unites, who leads, who bears witness, &c, and he who says “a measure of the Spirit” denies His presence and His personal action; and it is a very grave and serious form of practical unbelief in the church. I would bear with ignorance, but if any were formally to reject the truth of the presence of the Spirit sent down to earth, I should have a difficulty in associating myself with that.

February 10th, 1860.

Dear ——,—As I am going to the other side of England, and hear you are very bad, I come to pay you a visit with this little note, as I had the advantage of talking with you when I was at——; yet I have but few words to say to you, as what God has graciously set before us is very simple; and thankful we ought to be that it is so. And what is deepest is simplest, that is the perfect love of

God. Our difficulty is to reconcile our state, sinners as we are, with His loving us. Now that is exactly what the gospel shews us. Through that unspeakable fact of the death of the Son of God, His love has been shewn to us in what He did for our sins. He commends His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us—His love brought quite near to us where we are. Hence it is that it is only when we know where we are that we understand this love; that is, when we have learnt by divine teaching that we are mere sinners in ourselves, that in us (that is, in our flesh) dwells no good thing, we find that Jesus in this love has come to us there, and, though the Holy One, has been made sin for us. Oh, what a thought that is! How it opens the heart to guileless confession of what it is, and all the sin that is in it, so that it gets rest and peace with God.

I trust you enjoy this rest of heart. The work of Christ is perfect: He knew all our sins and all we were when He gave Himself for us, and has put all away, made us, if our sins were as scarlet, as white as snow. Think of your being really as white as snow before God, and you are bound to believe that, because it is the sure and revealed value of Christ's blood. Death has put an end to all we were in God's sight. And now, trusting you have this peace, and assured that it belongs to you, let me speak of another thing, the love of Him who has done this work for us. Think of Him, of His love, of His becoming a man for us, of His going willingly to death for us, that we might escape: how He must have loved you to do it! Do you think He loved you so as to do it? What a wonderful thought that the Son of God should love a poor thing like you, and want (He who wants nothing) to have you with Himself for your happiness

and as a part of His own, the fruit of the travail of His soul. See what a difference this makes of death; it is not dying as some think it; it is going to Him, to One we love, to One we know, to One who has loved and loves us; it is departing and being with Christ, If your soul has peace, think much of Him and His love, and may He be very near you. He refreshes the spirit, raises above weakness and pain to think these are but outward things for a little moment, and what we are going to lose is only sickness and what is mental and perishable, to be with One who has loved u# in spite of all, and takes us to be with Himself. Think much on Jesus—I do not mean as if you could think much in your weak &ate, but looking to Him—and lean on Him as a sick child lies in its mother's arms because it has no strength, not because it can do much. Peace be with you, dear——, and much of His presence, the true source of joy and strength. If you go a little before us to that blessed One it will surely not be your loss.…

Your affectionate servant

And brother in Christ.

1860.

* * * * *

* * * It is the greatest joy to me that the hearts of the saints have been turned to souls, not surely from the Word, but charity thinks of souls. I remember often in olden times saying to you, remember the people have souls.

As to the work, I heartily and with deepest thankfulness delight in it. No doubt human infirmity may accompany its effect and working amongst men. Does that make one

turn away from the manifest hand of God? There may be in given cases accompaniments which make it impossible to join in particular meetings or acts, but where God is free, where the Spirit is, there I ought to be; and if I cannot join, as I could not when Christ is preached of contention, rejoice for all that, that He is preached and brought to souls. I see that it will be a judgment on the professing church, because it seeks the credit of God's work, and does not own the presence of the Holy Spirit, and I have no desire that the truths which have made us own that and our place in the last days should be in any way enfeebled; but if full and happy liberty were left anywhere to the Spirit of God, nothing that grieved Him maintained, this consideration would lead me rather to cultivate intercourse. I judge it would be a deplorable sign if brethren could not freely rejoice, where God evidently works, but I have no desire in having my heart large, and tender too as regards the Lord's work, to have my feet out of the narrow path.

It is a very great joy to me to know these dear young C.s are converted. Give my kind remembrance to their father and mother, and tell them how heartily I sympathise with them. I was greatly rejoiced too in ——. Surely I remember him, for in two or three weeks I had become greatly attached to him. I never saw, I think, a soul receive Christ and the gospel as he did, a soul open under its influence as his did. The Lord grant his wife may follow his path. I trust the O.s may be in testimony there also, and that they may remain humble, serious, simple and unexcited.; but I say cultivate these droppings of divine grace, this spring-time of the soul. There is need of building by the Word, but the earliest fruit of an awakened soul will be feeling, not knowledge,

and this will become feeble and unhealthy if not fed by the word. But this process went on at first, and has given the Epistles, but we see the weakness which may accompany it; they would have given their eyes, but did not hold fast justification by faith. All this needs the continual work of the ministry—not to make a fuss about the first feelings, the flowers which precede the fruit, but to labour therein to feed the soul.

As to conversions in singing, there is nothing at all unscriptural. If the truth is in the hymn, spoken of with divine affections, or souls' affections expressed respecting a truth already outwardly admitted, it is quite within the ways and operation of the Spirit of God to act on the soul in a quickening way by it, not without truth, but by truth so addressed to the soul. I do not say that the work will be there as deep, or the foundation as solidly laid at the moment for after exercises, as if it was the direct application of the word by the Holy Ghost to the conscience, but the heart receives Christ convincingly and lovingly, so as to love. I have ever said that the smallest atom of Christ suffices for the Holy Ghost to quicken by, if it be really Him. No doubt a profound conviction of sin by the word casts off a mass of imaginings of the flesh by a deeper inward work, which such a conversion leaves undiscovered; but if God works, He will do His own work, and bring it to a good issue.

The work in Ireland has confirmed me largely in the truth of all I have learnt connected with brethrenism, so called, but it would be deplorable if I could not rejoice in God's acting wherever His own blessed.sovereign goodness is pleased to do it. I do so with my whole heart, and if one is not ready for Him, there may be first

last and last first, without the truth being weakened: salvation was of the Jews; alas, it was in result more for others than for them; the fields were whiter for harvest elsewhere than there.

May the brethren be found with their hearts free and their feet firm; and they may be of the largest blessing to the church of God at this moment.

Here, God be thanked, God has largely blessed my visit, and the brethren I may say are in peace.

[Nismes, April, 1860.]

* * * * *

Dear——,—I suppose from your letter that your boys have never been baptised. If such be the case, it is clear to me that they ought to be. I baptised myself, a number recently converted at Stafford, very recently. I look m no way on baptism or any other ordinance as a matter of obedience. I leave behind me, as being simple ignorance to refer to it, all reference to John's baptism, which was before the death and resurrection of Christ, and as far as it went would have hindered His being put to death. I reject all notion of a testimony to what we have already received, because it is entirely contrary to scripture. As to obedience; not only is obedience to ordinances, in principle, legal and unchristian, but the language of the word is, "What doth hinder me?" "Who can forbid water?"— language wholly incompatible with the idea of obedience. I reject the idea of its being witness of what we have, because I find in scripture, "Wash away thy sins"—"Buried with him by baptism unto death"—not because you are washed, or are dead—"Wherein also ye are risen"—not because you are already. I see a command to baptise, none to be baptised; nor were the

apostles baptised, save Paul. But I see it evidently to be the way in which disciples were received to Christ publicly and outwardly.

It is a mistake to think that it has to do with the unity of the body: for this Christ had to ascend on high and send down the Holy Spirit, and “by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body”—but of this unity the Lord’s supper is the sign, not baptism. This goes no farther than death and resurrection; what is individual, that the flesh is hopelessly bad. Men are dead to it in Christ and alive in the power of resurrection only, of which profession is outwardly made in baptism —not that we are so, but we enter in (outwardly) by this door, by dying and rising again, namely, in owning Christ dead and risen for us. There is no entering into the heavenly and eternal blessing but by the reality of this, nor properly into the outward establishment of it in the earth but by the sign of this. This is the confession made by baptism. This is, I am persuaded, the intelligence of it: as to your dear boys, this I am assured should be their mind, to do it intelligently. The recognition that if any man be in Christ, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit life because of righteousness; that there is no mending, no remedy for the old man but death; but that in entering Christ we die and rise again in the power of a new life, in which alone we live to God.

The Lord bless them abundantly, and keep them in the deep sense of the truth of this, and in much joyful confidence in the grace of God, the Saviour, and our Father, and in Him who has called them in His love. How thankful I am to think of them as different from what they were when I saw them, though, I doubted not kind, good boys.

Yours.

1860.

* * * * *

Dearest ——,—The London Bridge meeting has been for some time on my mind, and I judge that something must be done. Several causes contribute to its want of influence, and even jealousy as to it, which exists in certain gatherings. Formerly there were many brethren, as ——,——, and others, who exercised a pastoral care, which had a great influence on individual blessing and calmness. Souls were thought of more, decisions of assemblies less, though arrived at when needed. The number of brethren and meetings was less, and the great body of brethren more in one meeting in Rawstorne Street, the rest being succursal, so to speak. Now there are many almost equally important meetings. Hence the difficulty of maintaining the common action is a real one; but if there is a hearty loving desire to do it, it can be effected, surely, with God's gracious help.

These affairs of Mr.——have increased the prejudice against London Bridge. I regret altogether still the course of——and your own. The more I reflect, the more I feel that it did not rise above the circumstances to act with God in them, but was under their influence. The last act of——finished the matter, and though the brethren at London Bridge did not go with you two, the public effect was the same. ——, seeing this, did his best to destroy its influence, and to awaken jealousy. But I am satisfied that at present in those most uneasy as to the action of London Bridge there is no desire for independent churches, but quite the contrary; nor do I see any great difficulty save in the case of discipline. I

should take the ground, not of contesting the duty of the local gathering to investigate and form its judgment—it must be practically so done, you do so I am persuaded at ——, —but that if they hold there is one body in London, they ought not to impose their judgment without giving an opportunity to others to know what decision they had come to, and make their representations if they had any to make, which might often arise.

What seems to me ought to be done would be to invite the chief men among the brethren from every gathering, writing to one only, to propose their coming together to confer upon it, not forming a decision to be announced, but what could be proposed to all the gatherings when it had been laid before the assembled brothers. Thus, suppose I wrote to—— or—— at Deptford, to propose that the brethren there who were interested in the general course of the gathering should come, say to—— at the Priory, and the same to the rest; and then they consulted and arranged that the brethren really interested in the gatherings should meet in any given place on a Saturday evening, the place being agreed on by all, and that the responsibility of these brethren should be felt. It would then have to be considered how in cases of discipline (in receptions it would go on, I suppose, as usual) matters should be arranged.

My impression is that the local gatherings must come to a decision; nothing would hinder consultation on Saturday evening, but they owe it to the others to certify it before it is finally executed. They can come to the decision, and then communicate it through the Saturday evening meeting to all the others, and like a person proposed, it would be final if nothing were said. If any who heard it had any difficulty, they could communicate

with the brethren of the gathering who had come to the decision. But this would be considered when together. You must remember there is not a body formed and grown up in one gathering, nor any practical body of elders acting together among the saints as a whole: one must look therefore to God to draw out of what materials exist what He can form to help the saints. And if they help one another all will be well.

The brethren, on consultation, will see what is to be done in ordinary cases of discipline, but they should remember that in sending the names of others as put out, they impose on other brethren the task of registering their act without any power even of objecting. If there be no intercommunication, then we have independent churches, or at least are on the way to them. You may regret the young men, but you must look at the main point, the union of brethren who care for the saints, in common care. In our former Friday morning meetings they were not there, and if one may regret their absence, the union of service in the gatherings is first to be considered.

Do not feel uneasy at young brethren growing up into service. We were all young once. I am delighted when I see them getting into serious service, but I do look for pastoral care. The regular work of evangelisation is more to me than excited meetings, but if the Lord converts He converts, and we must rejoice. The excitement of the moment will pass away, what is solid will remain. One has to go through it, like all else, with God. The power of God is shewn in all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness. I am at a conference of labouring brethren here for a few days. There is blessing in the neighbourhood, and a large number of saints, but

devotedness and labourers everywhere are wanting. But there has been a great deal of blessing… I must close…

Affectionately yours, beloved brother.

St. Agrève, August, 1860.

* * * * *

Dear——,— … We have just had, I believe, a most useful conference at St. Agrève of the labourers of these parts; many brethren of the neighbourhood came, though it was a busy time towards the close of the harvest. I think I got decided blessing myself- We read Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1 Corinthians, 1 John, four books of the Psalms, besides various questions and particular passages. It was serious, and the Lord's presence felt—very quiet.

I shall (D.V.) be this week either at Geneva or Lausanne, or both. Indeed, I have delayed longer than I thought. Many places I have not been able to visit, but I have been at several new ones—more or less time. The work of evangelisation extends, but the line from Nismes to Vigan wants visiting… But the extension makes the want of labourers felt, though through mercy there are one or two raised up, and some I doubt not hidden, through want of devotedness in us all.

I have still my visit in Germany before me, at least for my new edition of the N.T., of which only 200 copies remain. Kind remembrance to your household.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

September 2nd, 1860.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Dear ——,—I am thankful that —— has withdrawn his tract, and borne his witness as to B… We have sometimes the thought of forcing things to our aspect of them. God is above men, sometimes judges, sometimes corrects, sometimes lets things die out in patience when there is no evil will.

You say nothing of what has been done to maintain common action in London.

Here the work maintains itself, and there have been conversions in several places. Everywhere almost room is more needed than hearers for the room. I trust my visit has not been without blessing. A simple gospel, a gospel which is one and which Christ is, often surprises, and at least commands the thoughts of the world. The new neutral gospel, which admits Christ to perfect humanity, and which the evangelical school are generally too dull to discern the evil of, is horrible to me, and a true Christ withers it astonishingly.

Affectionately yours, with love to all.

If the Lord will, I shall occupy myself diligently with the translation when I return. I have got Germany and Holland to visit, the latter in any case briefly I suppose, on account of the language, but there are now some fifteen meetings there, and conversions, and two or three labourers, and the field extended in Germany, but I may be in England first.

Lausanne, October, 1860.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Dear——,—I know nothing of what has passed in London but what you have sent me, for which I thank you. I

regret the licensing of W. Street, because I look on it as a point of union with the world. It requires ten or twenty heads of families to have it…

About the unity of the saints in London my charity is anxious —about the means little. Independent churches would be a serious matter, and there has been an effort of the enemy that way. But I await the dealings of God.

I have had excellent meetings round here, and in the Canton of Neuchatel. There is certainly a desire to hear, and in some cases conversion, but I do not know that in the old meetings there is much energy of life. In numbers there is progress generally. In France evangeUsation is blessed, but there are weak points in the old meetings… I answer a number of letters arriving at Lausanne for an evening…

If the Lord gives me time in England I shall probably print the whole New Testament, when I have thoroughly revised it. But I often regret not being wholly in active work, and thus hesitate between localised labour, which often spreads wide, and evangelising on fresh ground, where I am always happy. I find a full simple gospel always received gladly by some; and it is good to face the world.… We want more devoted-ness everywhere—that is the great point. My natural spirit longs for quiet work at a centre; but whatever the Lord wills.

Affectionately yours.

Lausanne, October, 1860.

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…I believe we ought to preach the love of God to sinners, and appeal to them more than we do, though I do so much more when addressing a mixed crowd of

probably careless people than in the assemblies where you would hear me. In these you must remember that the great body are believers, and want rather to be better founded than called. All I look for is that the preaching should be such that it should convict of sin, and the impossibility of sin and God going together, so that it should be well understood that there is need of reconciling. And here Christ at once comes in, and atonement and righteousness. Holiness precludes all sin from God, righteousness judges it. This I believe the sinner should understand, so that he should know what love applies to, yet that love should be fully preached. It does itself often convict of sin, for the conscience has often its wants already, and this draws them out, so that men find consciously where they are. But conviction of sin under righteousness is a very useful thing if grace be fully preached with it, and both unite in Christ.

I think it very important that preachers should go to the world, especially now, with a message of distinct love to them. All I desire is that it should be love manifested in Christ, so as to bring out the sinner’s condition to himself; that it should not be mere easiness as to sin; that it is a gracious love to sinners—grace abounding over sin—grace reigning through righteousness, than which nothing is more perfectly grace. Sometimes I think the love of God is so preached as if it were a kind of boon of the sinner to accept it. It is God’s joy. Still, as a sinner, his being a debtor to God ought to i»e before his soul… I count evangelising the happiest service. Yet my heart yearns over the saints and the glory of Christ in the truth too. Happily there is One above who does all.

[1860.]

* * * * *

Dearest Brother,—I am sure it is of the utmost importance that you or any of us should systematically study the word. You could not do better than give regularly, and, assuming the first of all things direct communion with God, the first fruits of your time to the regular study of the word. A taking the Spirit without the word is a false pretension to power, out of the place of obedience and heart subjection. As regards the guidance of the Spirit and method, only in the highest form I find both in the apostle. If we are “beside ourselves it is to God,” if we are “sober it is for your cause.” There is a power which takes us, as it were, out of ourselves, where God is in divine energy, but there is a calculation of love which is divine too. He was in God’s presence in power through the Holy Ghost, but the love of God working in him made him think of others —two blessed ways of being delivered from self. Sober for your sakes is the method, the calculation of love for others.

As to reading itself, the scripture is plain; “Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.” I find two ways of reading scripture: putting through grace my heart and conscience before it, so that it should act on me as subject to it; and studying it to seize it with its bearing, connection, and depth. It should be a first thing to be filled; then draw from the stores of communion, and then when real the free action of the Holy Ghost. The scripture distinctly speaks of order and method, as it does of the free action of the Holy Ghost. 1 Timothy is, nearly all of it, methodical direction; only now, when outward order is become the power of evil, and Christians are individualised in it, power is become the

main thing—God being thus manifested—and all saints not being gathered, the general order cannot be there. And this is the trial of brethren's faith. But this does not hinder the general principle of order, still less individual order and method. I never thought of such a thing, Unless special claims come, I always work till dinner-time in the house from the time I am up, then visit, &c.

Next as to the Sunday school: it is not for me a question of neglecting the Lord's Supper and remaining to keep the children, but of devotedness to the service of Christ, for which one deprives oneself of a wonted enjoyment, and thus in no way of the delight in and desire of it. It is not as if a servant is obliged to stay, but as if a mother stayed with a sick child —she would feel the deprivation, but do her duty; as if an opportunity offered to preach to sinners and a person went once and left the breaking of bread. It would be a question of his being called of God and devoted to it. The question then is of one devoted to the children as a work for the Lord, and then giving up a Sunday in three for the work of the Lord, and as devotedness to Him. This must be a question of the individual's feeling that he is called to it as devotedness to the Lord. There is an accessory question; that is, whether the taking care of the children is necessary to the prosperity of the school and their good. If so, I should feel no scruple or difficulty in remaining so to keep them. Habitual giving up the Lord's supper for the school I should object to.

As to the meeting: they have already had such in ——, I suppose. It may be simple, I should suppose, to write to a known labourer in a given place, and say that it was the desire of those actually labouring in the word to study somewhat together, and invite such. I should

rather think, unless there were a very great desire in labouring brethren to come together, the easier way for you would be to invite those around in actual England, or nearly accessible places, and have the meeting in a private house. It should have thus more a confidential character, not of the meeting in a public assembly. If the desire is great among the brethren who are actually labouring, it may give occasion to a wider circle of country. Nothing would hinder your asking any individual brethren who are accustomed to go everywhere if so inclined.

I am writing, discussing translation of Romans into German, … but I believe, or hope, I have kept myself pretty clear.

Be of good courage, dear brother, be strong, and He shall strengthen thine heart. Read Psalm 27, I mean for the way the heart looks to the Lord.

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

Peace be with you, dear brother. Kindest love to the brethren. I shall be glad to see them all.

Ever affectionately yours.

[1860.]

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* * * I have already told —— that if I can I will gladly assist at the proposed meeting. It will depend under God on my work here, and at Elberfeld where I have to prepare for the press a new edition of my German Testament, the first being nearly out of print.

As regards the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it is to be remarked, that though the word be not used, the fact had practically place for Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. (Acts ii.; 8:16, 17; and 10:44, 45.) You will find the words “fallen upon” and “poured out” so used as to arrive in sum in one common fact. Still, I think this is a confirmation of the thought, that the gift or the pouring out of the Holy Ghost is an original and primary gift to the saints, though each receives the Holy Ghost when he has believed, as regards his own particular portion in it. (Acts 19:2.) The three preceding passages shew that on each distinct part out of which the church had to be formed God put the seal of His Spirit, giving it a divine and independent title to relationship with Himself and to the common unity. But this once formed, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in the one assembly, there was no such formative and sealing power to be looked for, because the Holy Ghost was there, and to abide there for ever. It is an effort at re-commencement of what has already a responsible position before God in virtue of having the Holy Ghost; and to look for its coming on the church is to deny that it is there, and that we are responsible in this way. God may pardon and reply to ignorant expressions, but deliberately used it is incredulity. The last passage shews that individuals partaking of it is a

distinct and very important point. To doubt whether Samaritans or Gentiles could receive it, so as to have share in the new privileges, was, if an unfounded doubt, one well worthy of God to resolve in grace, yet in the way of a common unity—I do not mean exactly of the body here, but of the assemblage on earth. The desire that the Spirit of God may act mightily is good; that He may be poured out —may be pardoned and blessing given, but—is unbelief. I can have no doubt that the work in Ireland will be to the judgment of the professing church.

As regards 2 Corinthians 5:10, the use of “we” depends on the context. It is used for Jews, Christians, men by the apostle, and in even vaguer senses. In this passage the following verse demonstrates, it seems to me, that it is men: “knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” Why, if they were not objects of the judgment in question, which formed the ground of the terror? He did not persuade men that they might come under judgment as Christians, but to be Christians because they were subject to it as men. It seems to me very simple.

The rest of the MS. on Psalm 16:has been sent.17 I got immense blessing by this study of the human position of Christ, but fear it is little clearly developed for others. My writings are my course of arrival at truth, not my exposition of it when attained; my lectures are, sometimes: but I am more and more clear as to the Jewish character of the Psalms, though details of faith are instructive. In the Gospels, save in the answer to the Samaritan, Christ never presents Himself as the Christ, though as a fact it is certain that He did so, and His disciples too! nor demanded vengeance but mercy—in

the Psalms always. The way this connects Him in spirit with the latter days is evident, and even the place of legal righteousness in His life, though this would be less readily understood; but it is brought out in Psalm 18.

The Lord gave me two souls for Him the last few days at Vevey. In France the work extends: not only so, but lately one from the valleys sent to drag in the French gatherings into looseness, met so much firmness in the two first that he has returned. The Lord directed everything; they were without special help of labouring brethren, and it has done good.

Ever affectionately yours.

1860.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Dearest ——,—It seems to me that the argument as to Revelation has no force at all, and must come from a person who has not taken the trouble to inquire much into the views of which he judges…

The city in chapter 21 I believe to be the church, because it comes down from heaven from God, and yet more because the prophet is invited to see the bride the Lamb’s wife, the heavenly city in contrast to Babylon. Whereas the city in chapter 11 is a city on earth trodden under foot by the nations for forty and two months, where there is testimony before the God of the earth, and it is in connection with Christ’s taking possession of earth and sea by power. The question to what the term city applies is in no way guided by the new Jerusalem, for that conies down from God out of heaven, and from this fact is evidently, as from its whole description, a

figure, and more than a figure, a symbolic city. This is on earth before the other is revealed. The question to what city does chapter 11 refer must be judged by the conclusion to which we come as to the bearing of all this part of the book, and of chapters 10, 11 in particular. I believe a certain prolonged application can be given in the sense in which John said there were many antichrists, but they were not the Antichrist. In this moral sense, then, passages may have an application to the present order of things; but I do not doubt that the things which come after “the things which are” do not belong to the present order of things, but to the time when God is bringing in His only begotten into the world, when He is busied with the government of the world, and-hence with the Jews who are the central object of that government. Hence it is said that the witnesses stand before the God of the earth.

The same argument applies in all its force to chapter 7, but more than that. It contrasts in the distinctest way the tribes of Israel, and those of the nations and tongues; to make this the same class is absurd, upon the face of it; to make the tribes the elect and the other not is equally so, for those of the nations are gathered out for blessing; a 4ittle serious simplicity soon decides this question. As regards the 144,000, which is a question of detail, I can understand that it leaves more room for doubt; but in chapter 7 I see all the servants of God of all the tribes sealed before the judgment. In chapter 14 I see a special class most particularly associated with the Lamb, having His Father’s name (not their Father’s) on their forehead; that is, I see, having passed through suffering from their nation, analogous to Christ, and marked according to this special place, and His cortege

in the kingdom; I believe them therefore a class apart and marked out before the harvest, “first fruits” of the new system. Chapter 7 has no way this character. The number makes no difference; it is a mystic one, 12 by 12 by 1000.

As regards the application of Luke 15 to a Christian turned aside, I have often heard it, but I reject it altogether. The fact of God’s graciously receiving back a wandered Christian is of course true, but such is not the purpose of the parable. The first verses shew, as distinctly as possible, that that is not its purport. The question is between the Pharisees and Jesus eating with and receiving sinners. He thereon gives the picture of God’s love in seeking and in receiving sinners. The two first describe the seeking (as I believe by Christ and the Spirit), the third the reception. The reception back of a Christian fallen had not its application here. Further, the introduction of the eldest son carries us back evidently to the Jew, or any legally self-righteous person, but literally to the Jew in “all that I have is thine.” The principle is shewn in the two first, joy in heaven over a sinner that repents, and the third the way of original departure and return. Hence all that is seen of the elder is not an original estate, but the Jews’ jealousy of the admission of sinners of the Gentiles. The notion that “son” carries with it the reality of being born of God is all a delusion; because then the eldest ought to be one; whereas on the footing of grace (which makes sons) he would not come in. Adam was the Son of God; “Israel my firstborn.” The remark you refer to is all a mistake, because the first parables shew the seeking, the active love of God; this, the reception by the Father of one who

returned. I have myself no kind of doubt of the true application…

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Chaux-de-Fonds, November, 1860.

* * * * *

To the same.]

I know not that I should have any great objection to compare Matthew 24:and the Apocalypse in many general features; but then I see the gospel times, such as we speak of them, entirely left out. The prosecution of the gospel to all nations is only mentioned as necessary to the end; the subject, and this is the essential difference, is the trial and position of the remnant in Palestine, and this as to detail the only sphere. Though indeed all is very vague in the Revelation beyond, still it does speak directly of the world, and Matthew 24 (save in the cited passage) does not.

I admit the man-child to be Christ most fully, though I may bring in the church in Him. I do not admit that no angel represents Christ. It is an ignorance of the structure of the Apocalypse, in which in a special part all is angelic.

As regards the names of the tribes of Israel—if by the Israel of God the church is meant, I suppose the city does mean this, only it is in its public governmental character, the twelve apostles, not Paul, its foundation. I do not use the term Israel of God thus, but if he does, it is so. I have no doubt of the connection of the three systems, giving the real foundation part to the twelve apostles—creation and providential governmental power, government in the earth in Israel, and apostolic.

But he is not in a condition to seize such relationships, being buried in a world-church himself. The taking up of the man-child (Christ) and the casting Satan out, brings necessarily the 69 and 70 weeks together… one cannot but see the beasts of Daniel referred to, and Ezekiel and Gog come in another category of prophecy; this would be easily shewn even in detail.

The seventh head is one which is a head of the Roman Empire, such as Charlemagne or Bonaparte who is at the head for a short time; and then the beast at the end is the extraordinary eighth head, like in nature one of the former ones and who is destroyed.

Dear——,—— has never got out of his head local constituted order, and the unity of the body I doubt ever really into it. The Lord will, I trust, direct the brethren, and, still more, the matter itself in London. It may be that common action there may not be spiritually enough for…

Independent churches would drive many out of communion, who are yet uneasy at London Bridge. I am not prepared to say it would not exclude me entirely. At any rate, the whole question is one of great import, and any rash action in it, or pressure of principles, unadvised. But I only take——'s action in it as an element in God's ways. The communication of lists would be an outrage on conscience, if the gatherings are independent; the non-communication, a door to the relaxing of all discipline. The case at present is a practical difficulty; a rash solution of it might break up the brethren (if God allowed it) everywhere. For myself, I await the result, quietly trusting God, and as far as I may be given to do it, labouring for real unity. There is a

tendency from circumstances to independent action. If independent churches are formed, of course I should not belong to them, or I should never have met at all as I have. Some have driven at this, but it was from the enemy. But serious brethren should weigh the consequences of a given course. Suppose independent churches were formed in London, and a considerable body of serious brethren declined forming part of them as a long settled conviction, the question would arise before all the gatherings in England—could they be received, or could those churches be owned by them.

We have had a most useful and happy conference in the snow at the Chaux-de-Fonds, which I left to-day for a week at Lausannt.

Affectionately yours.

Lausanne, December, 1860.

* * * * *

[From the French.

It is remarkable that in the New Testament no one speaks of righteousness by faith, except Paul. I have found many souls who understand forgiveness, but who know nothing of the righteousness of God, and for whom the presentation of the day of judgment is often good as a touchstone, in order to see if they are really on the footing of divine righteousness in their relations with our good and faithful God.

June 19th, 1861.

* * * * *

[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—I have just received your letter, and thank God from my heart that He has strengthened you, body and soul. He is ever faithful, ever good. We can always reckon upon Him, whatever the case may be. His love changes not, and He is always thinking of us—wonderful it is, but true— and He numbers the hairs of our heads. Surely it is wonderful that the God of glory enters into all the details of our lives, and ever with our blessing in view—"He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous"—but He does' enter into them, and "all things work together for good" to those who love Him. Remember me very kindly to Mrs. ——: may God bless your little one too. It is a care, surely, in such a world as this, but a care which God, if we trust in Him, can take, does in fact take as an occasion for fresh proofs of His faithfulness and His goodness. May God grant that you may both be faithful and may know how to bring him up for Him.

With regard to the —— matter, I look at it in a rather different light from the way in which it was told me, at least. Our dear brother F. told me a little of what had passed. I do not look upon the position of those sisters as excommunication. The assembly alone could excommunicate them; but when they said, to J. and others, that they did not wish to come, he was free to say, as his own opinion—and that of others, if they authorised him to say it—that that was their opinion. I do not say that it was a wise thing, or according to God, but that they were free to express their opinion as their opinion. If the flesh produced that opinion, it is clear that it was not according to God. But I do not think that a brother or sister has a right to withdraw, and return at their own pleasure. The assembly must have its word to

say about it. It might be that the person who had withdrawn had committed all manner of sins during his absence. Therefore, if any one stands aside, the assembly must say whether it can receive the individual when he may wish to return. I hope, and I will say I have good hope, that this will be so, that the assembly will be blessed and re-established by grace. If it goes on in humility, arid in a spirit of dependence on grace, it will be so. If grace works in the hearts of these sisters, they will judge what has been of the flesh in themselves.

Perhaps——, having been accustomed to rule, may have shewn, on his part, a want of spiritual savoir faire. I am sure that your own part is to labour according to grace, and to communicate to souls what God has given you for them, at the same time feeding your own soul. Besides, that is what is far the best thing for the assembly itself.

I doubt its being God's will to deprive a soul of the Lord's Supper because it is in a bad state. The word says, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." But if I saw a soul in a state as to conscience which sin had produced, and if he did not know where he was, I can, it seems to me, suppose a case in which I might advise a person to keep away until he was clear; but as a general rule, one cannot exclude people provisionally; it is only in peculiar cases that I could give this advice. Pastoral care is the remedy for a soul in a bad state, not temporary exclusion. This care is sometimes rather wanting amongst brethren, and instead of this expedients are used.

I think the "strangers" (3 John 5) were people who did not belong to the place, principally brothers (perhaps others), towards whom they exercised hospitality, and

especially labourers for the Lord. Diotrephes would not have it. You can see that the second epistle warned the elect lady not to receive those who did not bring sound doctrine concerning the Person of Christ; the third encourages Gaius in his hospitality. I think that these were in general Christians—at the same time approving his hospitality as a whole (compare Heb. 12:2)—on account of what follows. Diotrephes would not have it, wishing to have the assembly to himself, and to break the link with the apostle and all the brethren.

As to the word “Gentiles,” Diodati writes the words “have gone out from amongst the Gentiles.” But this is not received by many, still there are very respectable names which accept it. I think John, like Peter, was still much attached to the Jewish cradle of Christianity; thus in 1 John 2:2, “our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” Paul himself does this very often, as in Galatians 3, where he uses “we” (Jews) “you” (Gentiles) “we” (Christians). I think it is rather a question of believing Gentiles than of unbelieving, but it may well be that they did not wish to take anything from their relations. The apostles considered the Jews (even the unbelieving ones) as brethren, not in the Christian sense, but in the national. Paul does this in his preaching. The Gentiles were only Gentiles, and it may be that Diotrephes would not receive labourers from among the Gentiles; and that these labourers were to be received (it was their title—amongst Christians, Jews by race) just because they would not receive anything from the Gentiles, their relations, unbelievers or otherwise… Good-bye, dear brother. May our good and faithful Father, full of love, be with you, encourage you, and

keep you near to Himself; and in the enjoyment of the love of Jesus one is always happy, always encouraged.

Your affectionate brother.

1861

* * * * *

To the same.]

[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—I am not sorry that the brethren have seen that they were wrong in their way of acting. This often gives the heart more confidence in acting, and in serving the Lord. I hope that the assembly will now walk in peace, and again look for the Lord's blessing. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace. It is not my thought at present to interfere, save by prayer, with the course of the assembly at——. There are times when we should leave it to the Lord to act. I trust grace will lead the sisters also to recognise that they were wrong. If the assembly walks in piety—that piety which flows from true communion—I think that is the chief thing just now; it gives, with humility, a firm judgment, and waits on the Lord, jealous for His glory, and seeking to do His will; does not say, "You are wrong and I am right"—where the "you" and "I" play the great part—but, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Moreover, until one is in this state of soul, it is impossible to walk rightly. To restore the soul, so that these souls, so dear to the Lord, may glorify Him, is our chief business. Not that the state of the assembly does not interest me, for I am deeply interested in its condition. If I had stayed in France longer, I should have been glad to spend some time at ——. It was there, too, principally that the work in the

South began, when —— settled there, and there were only four women, formerly dissenters. But I do not see that a direct action just now where others are at work would be of any use whatever, at least in point of blessing. I rather wait for the action of God Himself. There are Christians on both sides, and I hope that grace will triumph in their hearts.

With regard to Italy; this is my position in this respect. When the work began at Florence, and certain persons were mixed up with it, and then some Italians, in consequence of the malicious talk of the Genevans, were frightened at the name of Plymouth Brethren, I felt that I could not act with them, and to raise questions for those inexperienced souls would have been cruelty. I could only commit the matter to God; but with patience the time for acting and witnessing for God comes, if we wait on Him. One grows weary of evil, and of what is of man, when there is the desire for Christ. I believe, though this may be a small thing, that time is dawning in Italy, but it is still—not to say always—needful to wait on God. One cannot but respond to the wants of faith. It is not like a first preaching of the gospel; but I believe wants are beginning to make themselves known; and I am sure that our good and faithful Master, and the God of grace will meet those wants; I have confidence as to this. Our brother —— is going there for his health. I hope he may be of use, though he goes there to recruit—God knows. However this may be, I believe God Himself will work.

I believe the neutral party is declining; in one or two places, worldly Christians take the place of something of this kind, and it flourishes, but along with much worldliness; still, in general we see that it breaks down,

that they have not the power of God. Moreover, where it flourishes outwardly, souls in need of Christ leave them, and come amongst brethren. They try to sustain themselves by the activity of the revival, but it has no foundation. Conversions are numerous on all sides, and there is excitement, and even some of our brethren who are active in it are deceived in their hopes by counting up the conversions too hastily. This does harm in a measure, but all the same there is much of God in it. The work is somewhat superficial, but true conversions are very numerous. This need? care, for the meetings are increasing enormously, and these inexperienced souls must be established. This is my special work just now, and though I sometimes sigh a little to be preaching the gospel (with this, however, I am engaged at the same time) I am very happy in the work. Besides, in general the brethren are going on well, and there is life, and a brighter waiting for the Lord. If it were a question only of increase of numbers, we should be in a most flourishing condition, but I believe, through the goodness of God, there is much more than that. This engrosses the brethren. There is weakness, no doubt, but they experience the goodness of God. In Ireland there is much blessing.

Be of good cheer, dear brother; we must work for a little while, and with a strength which is not our own, but which is enough for everything; and we work under the eye, and encouraged by the goodness of Him whose love never fails us. Count upon Him, abide in Him, feed on Him; then work patiently on, according to the strength He gives you, “strengthened with all might according to his glorious power.” Remember me to —— and to all the assembly warmly. May God grant them to feed on the

Lord continually, and to covet piety and communion with Him. I am away from home, and I see that I have not your last letter with me; if I find there is anything important in it, I will write from London.

Your very affectionate brother.

Rochdale, June 28th, 1861.

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[From the French

Very dear Brother,—Through the multitude of my occupations, I had rather overlooked an important subject in your letter. This fresh breaking out of the doctrine of freewill ministers to the pretension of the natural man not to be entirely lost, for that is just what it amounts to. All who have never been deeply convicted of sin, all those with whom this conviction is based on gross and outward sins, believe more or less in free-will. You know that it is the dogma of the Wesleyans, of all reasoners, of all philosophers; but it completely changes the whole idea of Christianity, and entirely perverts it.

If Christ came to save that which is lost, free-will has no mere place. Not that God prevents man from receiving Christ far from it. But even when God employs all possible motives, everything that is capable of exerting influence over the heart of man, it only serves to prove that man will have none of it, that his heart is so corrupt, and his will so determined, not to submit to God (however much it may be of the devil who encourages him in sin), that nothing can induce him to receive the Lord, and to forsake sin. If, by liberty of man, they mean that no one forces him to reject the Lord, this liberty exists in full. But if it is implied that, on account of the

dominion of sin of which he is the slave, and that voluntarily, he cannot escape from his condition, and choose the good—even while acknowledging it to be good, and approving of it—then he has no liberty whatever. He is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be; so that, they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

And this is where we touch most closely upon the root of the question. Is it the old man that is changed, instructed and sanctified; or do we, in order to be saved, receive a new nature? The universal character of the unbelief of the present day is this: not formally denying Christianity, as in former times, or rejecting Christ openly, but receiving Him as a Person—they will even say divine, inspired (but as a matter of degree)— who re-establishes man in his position as a child of God. The Wesleyans, as far as taught of God, do not say that; faith makes them feel that without Christ they are lost, and that it is a question of salvation. Only their fear with regard to pure grace, their desire to gain men, a mixture of charity and of the spirit of man; in a word, their confidence in their own strength makes confusion in their teaching, and leads them not to recognise the total ruin of man.

As for me, I see in the word, and I recognise in myself, the total ruin of man. I see that.the cross is the end of all the means that God has employed to gain the heart of man, and, consequently, that it proves the thing to be impossible. God has exhausted all His resources; man has shewn that he was wicked, past recovery; the cross of Christ condemns man—sin in the flesh. But this condemnation having been expressed in that another has undergone it, it is the absolute salvation of those

who believe, for condemnation, the judgment of sin is behind us; life came out of it in resurrection. We are dead to sin, and alive to God, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Redemption, the very word, loses its force when we entertain these ideas of the old man. It becomes an amelioration, a practical deliverance from a moral state, and not a redeeming by the finished work of another. Christianity teaches the death of the old man, and his just condemnation, then redemption accomplished by Christ, and a new life, eternal life, come down from heaven in His Person, and which is communicated to us when Christ enters into us by the word. Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism, pretends that man can choose, and that thus the old man is ameliorated by the thing it has accepted. The first step is made without grace, and it is the first step which truly costs in this case.

I believe that we ought to keep to the word; but, philosophically and morally speaking, free-will is a false and absurd theory. Free-will is a state of sin. Man ought not to have to choose, as being outside of good. Why is he in that state? He ought not to have a will, any choice to make—he ought to obey, and enjoy in peace. If he has to choose good, then he has not got it yet. He is without that which is good in himself, at any rate, since he is not decided. But, in fact, man is disposed to follow that which is evil. What cruelty to propose a duty to man who is already turned to evil! Moreover, philosophically speaking, to choose, he must be indifferent, otherwise he has already chosen as to his will—he must then be absolutely indifferent. Now, if he is absolutely indifferent, what is to decide his choice? A creature must have a motive; but he has none, since he is indifferent; if he is not, he has chosen.

But, in fact, it is not so; man has a conscience, but he has a will and lusts, and they lead him. Man was free in paradise, but then he was in the enjoyment of good. He made use of his free-will, and consequently he is a sinner. To leave him to his free-will, now that he is disposed to do evil, would be cruelty. God has presented to him the choice, but it was to convince the conscience of the fact that, in any case, man would have neither good nor God. I have been somewhat oppressed with sleep while writing to you, but I think you will understand me. That people should believe that God loves the world is all right; but that they should not believe that man is in himself wicked beyond remedy (and notwithstanding the remedy) is very bad. They know not themselves, and they know not God. The Lord is coming, dear brother; the time for the world is passing away. What a blessing! May God find us watching, and thinking only of one thing—of Him about whom God thinks—Jesus, our precious Saviour.

Elberfeld, October 23rd, 1861.

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[From the French.

I have owed you a letter for a very long time, my very dear brother, and have thought of writing, but being continually travelling, at conferences, and pressed by chamber work, your letter has remained among the unanswered ones. At length I take up my pen, and be assured that my silence has not been from want of good-will or of interest, for indeed your letter interested me much, as news of the brethren always does.

My stay of two or three days here, after a conference, gives me a little time to answer you. I know something

of the “dolce far”—but of the “dolce far niente”—little comes to me. Still there is rest in God, and we do not fail to enjoy it, and there one has nothing to do but to enjoy; this gives strength, too, for work… Be of good courage, dear brother; in God’s appointed time we shall reap, if we faint not, for His strength is made perfect in weakness. Our brethren at——have a good deal of independence, but I have always found that with a little affection one could make one’s way happily with them. One could wish that there were a little more order sometimes; but there is a good foundation. However, it is Jesus who can do all, and His grace that does it.

…In connection with your work, dear brother, seek the Lord’s face and lean on Him. When the body is not robust one is in danger of doing it as a task, as an obligation, and the spirit becomes a little legal; or one yields to weariness, and is discouraged before God. Work is a favour which is granted us. Be quite peaceful and happy in the sense of grace; then go and pour out that peace to souls. This is true service, from which one returns very weary, it may be, in body, but sustained and happy; one rests beneath God’s wings, and takes up the service again till the true rest comes. Our strength is renewed like the eagle’s Ever remember, “My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness.” May communion with God be your chief concern, and the sweet relationships in which we are placed with Him. All is well when we walk in them; then we discern and judge everything, day by day, which hinders communion, and so the heart does not become hard nor the conscience blunted, and we readily enjoy those communications of grace which give strength. Yes, seek, above all, personal communion with the Lord.

As to your Italy; truly, dear brother, everything is very dark, and not for Italy alone, but for the whole earth. The world will soon no longer be enough for the ambition of man; but that will be checked by Him who has the right to do it. England, hitherto so prosperous, is in difficulty, like all the other countries. American affairs tend to her destruction; with France it is still more so; and also in Austria, Poland, and Turkey. Here the artisans are out of work. Then enormous preparations for war are being made everywhere. What a small thing is the wisdom of man! But what of that? The Lord is coming, and we belong to heaven. In the church there is neither Greek, barbarian, nor Scythian. We are Christ's servants, sure of our Master's victory, a victory which will give peace to the whole world; meanwhile —in the place where He has set us, witnesses to the peace which God gives even now. The love and grace of God which set us in close connection with heaven, fill our hearts, and we know how to carry to distracted and suffering souls that calm and peace which nothing in this world can destroy. We are not of the world, as Jesus was not of the world. Our life comes down from heaven and returns thither as to its source. Abide there, dear brother. It may be that in the world we shall have tribulation, but there is One who has overcome the world. May God in His grace keep all the brethren in this mind, so that at the least some may know how to bear the impress of peace upon their faces, because it reigns in their hearts, in the midst of this world of trouble and care for so many. Everything that comes to pass, comes to pass under God's hand; not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him; He forgets nothing, nothing escapes Him. Then, too, the Lord is coming. Oh that His children thought of this! I believe that this truth has more practical power in

the hearts of our brethren in England; God be praised for it. Conversions are still frequent, the meetings increase, and fresh ones are formed; there is a little more devotedness, and, I think, a good spirit and unity. There are some meetings which are ten times more numerous than they were last year, and others twice as numerous; and though there is more activity, and there was a time of peril for some who were in danger of being drawn into the current of the Revival, I believe the principles of brethren are dearer than ever to them. There is much which is superficial in this revival; more here than in Ireland, but many true conversions besides.

Your very affectionate brother.

Elberfeld, October 30th, 1861.

[From the French.

* * * * *

* * * The conviction that the same spirit which is at work here is working in France to popularise German unbelief, and that, consequently, it is an organised work of the enemy, has induced me to reply to the English publication which serves as the flag of the infidel party. I am engaged with it at present. The result of my examination has been, not only that the Bible has gained yet greater value in my eyes, but that I am fully convinced of the superficial spirit and falseness of the upholders of infidelity. Their knowledge is nothing but a bringing together of all the objections which are built upon suppositions and reasonings, without foundation. There is a want of conscientious investigation, which strikes one when one makes such oneself. There is nothing historical in their history. It is an unlimited confidence in the power of the human mind in these

days (for until now people have always been mistaken), which is truly ridiculous. They think they are able to say that such and such a thing must be so, that such a period must be of such duration, &c.: that must be, or cannot be—never that is. The whole system of Bunsen, their Corypheus, is but a reproduction of Philo, the platonist Jew, with the name of Christ which they have attached to it, more or less, for appearance sake. They count the long lists of Manetho, the dynasties, and the great number of kings who have governed Egypt, and give them as an evident proof that the world has lasted, or must have lasted, twenty thousand years at least. When the monuments are examined, we find two, four, eight of these kings on one single monument, reigning together, one often subordinate to another. Then, the fact of being free from the grooves of old theology, without having faith, makes unbelievers of them. They knew only that routine; the ice is broken, and, having had nothing but that, nothing at all is left. Truth does not exist. They have seen that the old forms are not tenable, and nothing remains to them. I admit that one has to come out of the old forms, but we ought to bless God that, in place of forms, His grace has given us the truth; we have much to learn, without doubt —more to realise, but a divine certainty with regard to what we possess. What a sweet and peaceful thought!

… They have discovered what brethren, through grace, have discovered before them, that old things are passing away; they note the difference of character of the sacred writers, but they only touch the surface; and all that is of God, all that is connected with His wisdom, His grace, His goodness, they ignore, and are utterly without eyes to see.

London, December 3rd, 1861.

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[From the French.

* * * As to this article in the ——, I have not seen it, but I have a general idea of the doctrine it contains, and I hold it to be entirely false. Something similar—the same doctrine, only pushed to its furthest consequences—shewed itself (not amongst brethren, but outside), so that I have had to do with it. I believe these views are calculated to do much evil. There is a literalism which to me errs greatly in interpretation. Often the intelligence occupies itself too much with the word, without question of souls, and without having to do with souls, and it is speculation.

The passages in Matthew and Mark, and in Luke also, depict the rejection of the Jews, children of the kingdom according to the flesh, and the children according to grace, received. Also, to take the bosom of Abraham literally is nonsense. The idea of the bosom of Abraham is the best place, in the eye of the Jews. For the Jewish system, riches were proofs of blessing; but the Lord lifts the veil and shews the other world, but He depicts it from a Jewish point of view. For a Jew, Abraham was the head of blessing, and the poor man was the nearest to him, like John leaning on the bosom of Jesus at the last supper. If we take these passages literally, the wicked rich man ought to have a body (Lazarus also); then one drop of water ought to have been able to relieve him. It is real nonsense. Those whom we call the Fathers of the church amused themselves with the same speculations, which proves to me nothing more than this, that the sense of the passages has not been seized, nor, with

regard to this, the bearing of redemption and of sin. Matthew 8:11, 12 does not apply to the time of the establishment of the kingdom on earth; it refers to being with Abraham who will be raised, on the one hand, and the Jews rejected on the other, which they will not be when the kingdom is established. If Matthew 13:42, 50 applies to the judgment of the reign, I reply, the judgment of the living is as final as that of the dead: Matthew 25:46 proves it. When we hold firmly fundamental truths, we are saved from these mistakes, which result from conclusions hastily drawn from passages which do not speak of it.

The case of the wicked rich man was certainly not the judgment of the kingdom, for it was immediately after his death. If Matthew 22:13 spoke only of a temporary judgment, no hypocrite would be subjected to any other; if this judgment is not temporary, then the whole system falls. But see the effect when parables which state general principles are used for the details which will accompany them: 1. There will be only one man judged. 2. All who profess the gospel must live till the end, and be judged on the earth. Further, thirdly, it is those who are called, not chosen; they are not saved, or verse 14 contradicts verse 11. All this is but to save themselves. In Matthew 25, the Lord says, “I know you not.” This is not so if they are only rejected for the kingdom. If they mean that those who are excluded from the kingdom will be judged all the same before the great white throne, Matthew 25:41, 46 shews that it will not be so.

Luke 13:24-30 proves the contrary of what is said. It is the total condemnation of those who had the pretension of being children, of having the kingdom by right, and the revelation of the admission of Gentiles… Naturally I

can say nothing of the details, for I have not the article; but I understand the principle of this system, and I believe it to be entirely without foundation.

London, 1861.

* * * * *

[From the French.

* * * I tell you this news, because it is right that brethren should be interested in their brethren wherever they may be, so that they may pray for them. We do not count enough on the intervention of God, that He hears our prayers and that He acts, He who disposes of everything. So we do not bring Him enough the difficulties which spring up in the work. How many times have I found that in presenting all to Him, He has acted, in blessing by means that one could not have foreseen. Only, we must stay close to him. John was accustomed to be near Jesus, and when a solemn case arrives, he is in the position to ask of Him an answer, according to the intimacy of his trust in Him—confidence. We have no right to anything, but near Him we enjoy the communications of His love. The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him.

In connection with what you tell me about evangelisation, be it of the appeal to souls, I am as far as possible from thinking it a low thing. A faithful brother, who had at heart the walk of the brethren, reproached me for devoting myself too much to it, more than twenty years ago. I have no regret, far from it; I feel that other brothers have a greater gift for it; but it is a joy to me, when God gives me the grace of being occupied with that part of the work. In these last times this work is of the greatest importance. Also, God has led many people

into it. With some there is what is superficial, so that a work which acts more deeply in consciences becomes also necessary; but, here at least, it is as if God would urge souls into a place of safety before the end. Thank God, there is more zeal among brethren on that side also; but I believe that, in all times, blessing within is in the measure of the spirit of evangelisation. The reason is very simple. It is the presence of God which blesses, and God is love, and it is love which makes one seek souls. It is not at all to despise or neglect the care of souls that are christian. Nothing is more important in its place, but it seems to me that the two things go together where the love of God is found. Nor is it any more to neglect what are called the principles of brethren, principles to which I always attach the greatest importance, as the testimony of God in these last days. It is the word which makes me receive them as the truth at the beginning; experience has made me feel the importance of them for the whole church, and that in the sight of the Lord and as the testimony of God essential for these times. But God loves souls, and if we do not seek them He will set His testimony elsewhere. He loves us, I believe; but He has no need of us. May He give us only to be faithful to Him, and He will certainly bless us. His patience also is great.

London, January 23rd, 1862.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,— … With regard to——, what shall I say to you? It is all so painful. For my own part, the longer I go on, the more importance I attach to the judgment of the assembly, but I am deeply distressed for

poor ——. I think that God is dealing with him also on account of his unyielding spirit, because his will is so little broken. He even boasted of never giving way. Now God is obliged to say, Well, I will make you give way. If not, He breaks us. But this troubles me, because he has been blessed, devoted, and has suffered for the Lord. But God wants that we should be submissive; and it is His grace. Will goes for nothing; we are worth nothing, and must recognise that it is all grace. I know for myself that if we yield to His grace, God is full of goodness. He does not take pleasure in correcting us, very far from that; He spares us a thousand times, and blesses us.

I was glad to hear, dear brother, that you are in better heart. Be so. If this courage springs from confidence in Jesus, it will never fail you. His strength is made perfect in weakness.

Remember me very affectionately to all the brethren. I had a little hope of visiting the South, but my eye has lost me a good deal of time.

I have now in prospect a voyage across the Atlantic, to visit the brethren in Canada. If I do not go there (for it depends, humanly speaking, upon a brother who is labouring in those parts), I may very likely see you again this year in France. If I go to Canada, I think we shall start shortly, in the course of this month. It is a long voyage for me at my age; but it is in the Lord’s service, and I am encouraged to undertake it. I should greatly like to see my dear French brethren again, but I know not whether or when God will grant me this joy. May He preserve them for the day of Christ. May He keep them in devotedness, humility, and the joy of communion with

Him. My soul is much knit to theirs, and my prayers are for their eternal good.

May He bless you, too, dear brother. If God prospers me on my voyage, and if I have time to see the brethren, I think I shall return from Canada this year. There is much to do here and in Ireland, and there is, thank God, blessing in many places.

Your affectionate brother in Jesus.

London, July 2nd, 1862.

* * * * *

To the same.]

[From the French.

Very dear Brother,—You are mistaken if you think I have looked upon you as a -drone; such an idea never entered my mind. I have sometimes thought that you were wanting in courage. I do not doubt that the opinion you gave of yourself may be correct. As to ——, I am not acquainted with the details;——had told me in a general way how the case stood. The whole story has been very painful to me, not only for the sake of the family (and I have felt this much), but also on account of——himself. He has been a devoted man; and has been in prison for the Lord’s sake. I think it a burden (or at least should be a burden) on every heart, to think that he is where he is now. I do not at all know just now what brought on the catastrophe, how the inquiry was occasioned, or the matter again brought forward. But we must look higher than the instruments. If the hand of God is.upon us, it is still His hand, always His hand in love—but His hand. I do not think that the evil that has been judged in this poor brother is the only thing which has compelled God

to put him, a labourer— for he was one—under the rod. His unyielding spirit made discipline necessary; at least, so it seems to me. God would never have allowed the evil, but He could have brought a heart to bow, to repent, without bringing him forward before everybody, as He has done. And how many Christians who were falling has He treated with a tenderness and gentleness which man might have said they did not deserve, which they themselves have said and felt they did not deserve —for He does not delight in wounding us and breaking us down. Why has poor —— been more in public on account of his faults? It may be, that such an one has been the instrument, and that some have been embittered against him; but God holds all hearts in His hands. What I hope is that God in His grace, God who always acts in love, will work by this means, grievous as it may be, to soften this brother, to induce him to judge himself, to humble himself before God, and surely God will bless him; and this I desire with all my heart. It may be that God saw that it was necessary to treat this evil with rigour, lest it should take root. In every case, we must look at His ways.

I have formed no judgment as to your moving from ——. God guides us, and orders what concerns His beloved church, where the wisdom of man is wanting through our weakness, and even by means of our weakness, where the heart is right. I hope you may be blessed at ——. I do not blame you at all if you give lessons. I desire with all my heart that God may send forth labourers into His harvest; but no one can go beyond his gift, and what he does beyond it can only be hurtful to himself, perhaps to others. Yes, I ask God to raise up labourers, and that there may be faith and devotedness

—this I ask with all my heart. But I do not pretend even to form a judgment upon every case which arises.

You may be sure that I am deeply interested in the work, and so the activity of the labourers affects me closely; but I believe that our God keeps a strong hand over all, and my trust is in His goodness and faithfulness. Naturally when one is much interested in a thing, one thinks of all that happens. But I am accused of letting things take their own course too much. Still it seems to me that I trust in God that the work is His own. If I can help in that work, it is a favour which He confers on me, but I think that often when we wish to guide and govern too much faith is wanting…

Remember me affectionately to the brethren. If I do not start for Canada, I have some hope of seeing them. May God bless and keep your wife.

Your ever affectionate brother.

I have just had some very good meetings in the country, and the brethren generally are getting on well.

Bristol, July 27th, 1862.

* * * * *

Dear Mrs. ——,—As regards Romans 11, it is clearly the root and tree of promise from Abraham. No saint before him became the head of a stock, so that they should be for blessing —children of such a thing. None answered to the converse of Adam the head of a fallen race. The promised seed was of course the one in whom all was made good, and so Gentiles come in according to Galatians 3. But there was a natural seed, to whom the possession of promise in this world was assured, and in whom it will be made good—that is Israel, and the

apostle is shewing in this chapter that they are not cast off as a people. That stock of promise remains, but many branches have been broken off, and Gentiles have been graffed into their place, that is, of enjoyment of the promise on earth. But then the Gentiles are no natural seed, and draw their standing by faith. If they depart from this, if they do not abide in God's goodness, they will be broken off as the Jews were (save the remnant), but the tree will abide still in the earth as the place of promise, and the Jews be graffed in as to their own olive-tree. It is quite evident that the olive-tree cannot be the church; that could not be the own olive-tree of unbelieving Israel who were cut off when it was set up. But the tree of promise was originally theirs; even Christ came of them as concerning the flesh. Nor has God cast them off, as this chapter is written to shew. Only they were set aside by their own rejecting the promises to be mere objects of mercy.

If there be anything these few words do not clear up, I shall be glad to write again.

Faithfully yours in Jesus.

1862.

To the same.]

* * * There is a principle which we must keep in mind in reading prophecy; that is, that the prophet takes up circumstances near his eye, and in which the faith of God's people were then concerned, going on to ulterior and final events in which the government of God should be displayed and closed. The transition from one to another is not always at once perceptible: still, once the principle is recognised, it is generally easy to see where it passes from one to the other. A notable instance is in

Joel, when a plague of caterpillars and other destructive insects prefigures the northern army at the end of the age, to which the prophet then turns, yet not losing sight of the question of earthly plenty, as you may see. Yet the language changes in chapter 1:15. It is abhorred before it was there. Yet in chapter 2 the images are kept up, and, chapter 3:24, 25, distinctly alluded to. In Isaiah 19 it begins with the present things: in verse 16 it begins to pass on to the ultimate events, taking present judgments as the image. The inroads of Nebuchadnezzar are the prefigurement and partially the commencement of final judgments, because all are part of the government of God, Chapter 20 is a special prophecy as to an earlier attack by Assyria on Egypt. Tartan, it appears, was a title, general, or some such thing. Sargon was, it seems, founder of a new dynasty just before Sennacherib…

Ever affectionately in the Lord.

July, 1862.

* * * * *

[From the French.

* * * Truth is eternal and love endures for ever; both are in our precious Saviour; let us hold them fast through grace. In these last days everything comes out more plainly as the dawn of the day draws on; I can say that the truth of eternal things has a reality that it has never had. Christ becomes more and more everything; the things which perish have only an appearance. We have always to fight, but that which is not seen is eternal, and is ours by grace. May Christ dwell in our hearts by faith…

Canada [1862.]

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17 [“Practical Reflections on the Pealms.” See Collected Writings, vol. xvii p. 22.]

Section 10

To the same.]

[From the French.

* * * The objection made to the use of 1 Corinthians 7:14 has no force. Among the Jews, if one married a Gentile, or vice versa, the Jew was not profane, but he had profaned himself; the children were profane, and the Jew had to send away both wife and children. The husband did not cease to be a Jew, though profaned, but his children were profane, and therefore they could not even be profaned, for that which is already profane cannot be made so.

Now, grace being come, it was the reverse which took place. The unbelieving husband did not cease to be an unbeliever, but he was relatively sanctified (not holy); then the child was holy, not inwardly in its soul, but it had right to the privileges which belonged to the people of God on earth, privileges from which the child of a mixed marriage among the Jews was debarred, because he was profane. He was no more a sinner than any other, but he was excluded from the circle in which were found the blessings accorded by God to His people, and they were great as the apostle says…

* * * * *

To the same.]

[From the French.

* * * We are in the last days, and evidently God is acting in grace to withdraw His people from evil and judgment; but there must be more devotedness, more separation.

May God in His goodness work; there is still much to be done in calling out souls and establishing them in the truth, so that they be not carried away by every wind of doctrine. There is so much unbelief, and the human mind is so active, that souls are exposed to dangers of every kind. God keeps them, and His own are, after all, always in safety; only the snare is no longer formalism, but the rejection of everything, or the substitution of opinions for divine truth. Yet I believe that it is a fine moment for one who is decided. We must be Christians in good earnest, and accept the foolishness of God as wiser than men, and the weakness of God as stronger than men. A humble walk, in entire dependence on God, looking unto Jesus, is singularly blessed in these present days, and soon will come the rest.

[Date uncertain.]

* * * * * *

My dear Brother,—I should have been very glad to have seen you, and shall be so still, if the Lord so orders it. Meanwhile I will answer your letter briefly. I could not, of course, present myself as a Baptist, because I could not be one, and necessarily could not say I was, nor of any sect. It would violate my whole conscience in the church of God, and in these last days especially, for I do not doubt either that we are in them. I feel it is of the last importance to keep my testimony distinct—I mean distinctly in that truth which I believe the Lord would maintain as His own. I should receive a Baptist or an Independent cordially as a Christian, but I could not give any other testimony than what I believe to be the truth. I am very glad you preach the gospel wherever the Lord opens a door. But I apprehend your desire to have

access has led you to dim a part of that truth which might have seemed likely to shut the door to you. Do riot suppose I am judging you; I speak simply from the contents of your letter. I doubt that faith is shewn in lowering my own position from the light I have, to coalesce with that which has it not. I may adapt my teaching to all persons in grace, but not adapt myself to their want of teaching. I have seen, dear brother, those who get into the forms of brethren, who had no faith in the reality of the unity of Christ's body, and who—when the support of those forms failed them—naturally sank, from not personally holding on to Christ according to the power of that truth, into the common course of what then might surround them. But such are not upon equal ground of blessing with those they have last got amongst them—[that of] the light which the others have left—because they have not the conscience of having left any. I think it very likely, from what I know of the gathering of M. at the time you were there, that there was very little light or feeling as to the church being the body of Christ, and that it ought to shew itself as such in the earth; so I am not surprised it should not have had much hold on your mind. What I should say to you would be to preach as earnestly and as devotedly as you can, to seek the salvation of the souls around you, and search the word diligently to see if there was not an unity of the body of Christ through the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and hence if sects are not wrong. See if that presence of the Holy Ghost be not a first principle of Christianity. I dare say, if you wished it, some tracts or books on these subjects which would serve as finger-posts to you might be sent down. The scriptures would, of course, remain as the treasury of the truth itself. We facilitate our path by running into the channels dug by

men for the current of Christianity to run in, but we do not always maintain the testimony of the word by it.

As to the Lord's coming. It is not the subject always to bring to souls, though connected even with conversion by Paul to the Thessalonians; but at least it ought to be everywhere the expression of our own hope, so that it should be confessed and known to be our hope. Thus I may use it with the best wisdom I have for others, but it ought to be known as my faith with them who have to say to me—as my faith, not my opinion. I do not doubt that Louis Napoleon is doing his own part assigned of God in preparing the way of forming the Latin empire, but no man can say he is personally to be the head, because scripture has not said it. It is a mere man's opinion. I do not believe even that the head of the beast is antichrist at all. I believe that the second beast is antichrist (Rev. 13), not the first. But, I add, to me the Lord's coming is not a question of prophecy, but my present hope. Events before His judging the quick are the subject of prophecy; His coming to receive the church is our present, heavenly hope. There is no event between me and heaven. There are between this time and Christ's judgment of the earth. Now we are blessed with Christ; as His bride and His body, we appear with Him, reign with Him: the great peculiar blessing of the church is being associated with Christ Himself. The government of the world is another thing; prophecy lights up that as a candle in a dark place, but I am of the day. It is this especially Christians have to learn that they are one with Christ, blessed with Him. And this applies to everything. "My peace I give unto you"—"That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves"—"The glory which thou hast given me I

have given them”—“That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them”— “I have given them the words which thou gavest unto me” —“I go to my Father and your Father; my God and your God.” This brings perfect love so close to our hearts that it is very precious, and thus we nourish ourselves with that love.

I should have been glad if you could have come to Guelph. But God’s will is better than all opportunities if we are clear as to that. May the Lord bless you in your toil for your family. I was very glad to get your letter, and shall be glad to hear from you again. If you write for any books or tracts, do not mind the cost, I will send them. They sometimes refresh us in the wilderness, and you could have some gospel ones to distribute. Have you any place you worship at with others besides your preaching? I do not doubt we are in the last days, but I do not confound the government of the world and the portion of the church—Christ’s body. You will find in Revelation 12 that when Satan is cast down to begin the three and half years, the victory of the heavenly company is celebrated as complete, and their tribulation and conflict over.

Peace be with you, and blessing upon yours, is the sincere and earnest desire of Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Toronto, September 17th, 1862.

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[From the French.

My dear——,—I take account of public discipline. Whatever be the feebleness of brethren, I find that it is important before God to give to discipline all the weight

of faith. To me it is a principle all the more settled, that the church is feeble and in disorder. I own that one may be mistaken in particular cases, but to acknowledge the church of twos or threes, is for me an essential thing. This necessarily causes reserve in my intercourse with you; it does not change my affection or desire to see you happy and blessed, but affects our communications.

There is another thing: I do not say that you would not have recovered peace with God, but there is another consideration, namely, the way and the government of God towards those whom He loves… The impression remains with me, that on some points your heart is not altogether open—face to face with yourself and with God. There is, up to a certain point, a desire to hide more or less what has passed; it is human nature; but when it is a question of knowing if a soul is restored, that is everything, so to speak. I do not wish to know evil of you, and much prefer not to know it. If the soul is restored all the past is null, and I wish to forget what could only cause the heart sorrow. If God remembers it no more, His own may well do as much. Such is not my difficulty; the only question is if the soul has now judged all the evil. The judgment of evil in its roots, and power over self—deliverance from the power of sin—go together. You must not confound peace and communion. One may have peace, not have the least thought of anything being imputed to one, and not have the joy of communion, because there is something that grieves the Holy Spirit, or some forbidden thing that the heart retains, or a state of soul where there has been evil, and-where, though recovered from it, the work of God in the heart is not accomplished. I do not think some forbidden thing is your case; it may be that something yet remains

to be done that communion may flow in the peace of the soul…

Confidence destroyed is the most painful thing in the world; the consciences of brethren are shocked, their hearts distressed. It may be that the effect of it is manifested, but it is not for you, dear ——, to complain of the lack of tenderness or of consideration in your own case, I am sure that when the work in your soul is completely accomplished you will become reconciled with those whose confidence you have destroyed. … There is the natural pride to overcome, as well as the judgment of the fruit that the flesh has produced. Humility before man is often the best proof of restoration before God. I prefer being behind your expectation as a man, to failing in faithfulness, in a truly divine interest for your soul before God. You may be certain that if you were really restored, and that the results of grace were produced in your heart, the past would never remain in mine as something against you. The forgiveness of God is for me the source of happiness; it leads me to rejoice with those who are pardoned, not to impute evil to them or to remember it. You can count on that; what I look for is a melted heart, softened, distrustful of self, a heart where the new man prevails in every respect over the old man. The evil of the old man is easily forgiven, when there remains (in a practical way) but the new.

There, dear ——, is what holds me back. There is reserve, waiting, not lack of interest or of heart for you, but a waiting for the work of God. It does not seem to me to be entirely done. It is no lack of affection to desire that it may be…

London (Ontario), October 2nd, 1862.

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To the same.]

[From the French.

You will doubtless think, dear ——, that I am hard and heartless with regard to you, all the more that my last letter scarcely met the expectation of your heart. But I place myself —at least I try to—before the Lord for you; not without considering the needs of your heart, but putting even before these the good of your soul as well as the glory of the Lord, which is connected with it. I write now that you may know that I am not unmindful of the need of your heart, that you may feel that I take account of it, and that I desire to see the grace of God meet you on this side also. I do not cease to love you. You had a natural character, where with much affection and energy, there was but little moral veneration. Now when one is away from the Lord the bad side of the character shews itself at once, and the moral sensibilities grow weak, and this is what has happened to you. The restoration of your soul will take place by your being led to judge this, re-establishing, and in a certain sense I might say, establishing the judgment of the new man, of God, on this side of your nature. One may follow the leading of the Spirit of God as being born of God, and walk well in abandoning the allurements of the old man, without having judged the character that no longer produces its fruits. If we walk humbly with God, this will be done little by little, almost without our being aware of it. Otherwise, if there is confidence in oneself, negligence, this character which was dormant, reproduces itself in a fall. Then there is not real

restoration of soul until this is judged. This is what is called in Job 33 “to shew unto man his uprightness” or his duty, that is to say, what is the right place for him before God in the inner man.

I do not speak of the fruits which this character has produced —it is easy to judge that—but it has to do with oneself. It is then that pride disappears, the wish to excuse oneself. One is before God. If the course of others has broken us down we are thankful, we see in it the hand of God, and not of men. But above all there is the sober judgment of oneself, a clear perception of one’s own character, but humiliation before God, because one takes the side of the new man and of God against oneself. There is gentleness and graciousness. I am myself what God detests, and I cannot bear the thought of being detested by God. I do not speak of imputation, I suppose we are clear as to that; but I speak of the fact that Christ is in us for communion, and we have been—what?

When we think of what belongs to us, not of our position before God, but that Christ can dwell in our hearts by faith, and that our intercourse with God can be real in the purity of the Spirit of God, and up to what point our natural character, our flesh has led us, then the heart shrinks. To think of it is despair. We need that uprightness of Job; when grace acts it is the restoration of the soul; communion is re-established; the heart finds God again. We are always exposed, even to relapses, until we have reached that point. But when we have, it is peace; the will which shews itself in the acting of the natural character is broken, and we walk with God; we can follow Christ, not before. May the Lord indeed work

in your heart, and exercise it according to His grace. I shall be glad to know what your state is.

1862.

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Dearest——,—I had been praying as to this matter in—— Street. That meeting began with the activity of some with little fellowship of brethren on that side the water, and became a refuge even to those who sought agitation. God has shewn the weakness, but delivered the simple. There may be some to be regretted (all in one sense), but if those delivered walk in grace and firmness, and individually so too, as grace gets the upper hand in the others, they will be delivered too: complete break with some, in the state they are in at present, I look upon as a mercy, a great mercy. There is sometimes a little tightness at——, but they are united and care for one another.

All this abuse of brethren I look upon as a sign that God delights in their testimony for truth. I feel in every respect, more than ever, the immense importance of their position, and that in respect of the question of truth too, only it is a narrower path. Standards and church authority are proving an utter failure, infidelity making, alas! often cobwebs of them. I hear dissenters are in the same perplexity. The matter of Colenso is most significant. That there is grace for union, and union holding fast the truth, is just the best and only testimony that can be given for God now; and if we look to Him He will maintain it.

Union without the truth many would have. The dissenters uneasy, yet in practice (here at least), hold it for indifferent. God has exercised us for this point by the

Bethesda question, which I look upon now as the greatest mercy. There is an attempt to keep up unity by mere organisation. There was organisation at the first, but that too is a failure: three have tried it in different ways among brethren, and have in result broken up what seemed to have power, firmness, grace and knowledge. It has not stood. I believe in the ruin of the church, but I believe that Christ will be where two or three are gathered together in His name.

As to dear——, I do not see that it is more than "I have not faith in it." I think I could explain that to him. I have faith in God for it, feeble faith, and in presence of all kinds of difficulties, but I have faith in God. I have never known Him fail those who trust in Him. Obedience is the path of power—that was settled in our controversy with the Irvingites—but not of apparent power, but of having God with one, a little strength, not denying Christ's name, keeping His word, keeping the word of His patience. That is what we have to look for now, not apparent strength; obedience, grace, and union in dependence on Christ, waiting for Him, waiting as He is waiting. Where there is this, there will be a testimony, and just what the world cannot understand. "Infirmities" is the weakness in which Christ's power is displayed by maintaining what is so weak. Why attack brethren so much, but that they feel there is what they cannot deal with—what works on the conscience? From what you say of the pamphlet which I have not seen, I should think it would do good, as the unbelief is betrayed in it.

I have answered the Record,18 Quarterly Journal of Prophecy,19 &c, since I was here, but my path here has been very quiet. I have been kept here at Hamilton longer than I thought, as many serious souls are getting

blessing. I know nothing as to their joining brethren, as it is called, nor have I inquired; but they are getting peace, seeing what the church is, and hence what the state of things which are so called is, getting through grace faith according to the truth. I have never asked them a word about brethren, but the work is full of interest—not numbers, but souls in earnest. Yet everywhere I have been souls have been added or restored. Of course there are fears and opposition, but this must be expected, yet there is distinct, evident blessing for souls in earnest. I have the bush to visit yet…

Some new towns are opening too, where our brother E., who has been greatly blessed, had not been. He really (though there were individuals who had come out, but recently got loose and had material things) may be, viewing it as a whole, considered the founder of the work in Canada. I have followed his footsteps where he had laid the foundation, save here, and in one or two new places, and even here the nucleus was indirectly through his means. In general there are very nice brethren here indeed, and caring for one another—of course ordinary trials, but grace and fellowship.

I had a tolerably bad attack in my eye, but thank God am quite well. We have had fine weather hitherto, and often pretty much like England, only drier.

I have set about the Synopsis of the Revelation since I have been here and have enjoyed my study of it.

Peace be with you; my kindest love to the brethren, and many unfeigned thanks for their prayers. The Lord sparing me I shall see them again, but I do not see my work in Canada finished yet.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Hamilton, [received], December 12th, 1862.

Dear——,—Here and in the U.S. the church and the world are more mixed than even in England, so that the testimony of brethren is more definite and important as far as the sphere goes, and things seem to point to an awakening as to this in the States. I have been invited to more than one point: how the Lord will lead I know not. In this place there is no very apparent fruit in the meeting. Two have been restored, but I think a working of the testimony in the consciences around, more perhaps than anywhere. Only Toronto would be compared. Several have found peace—one who had fallen into infidelity—and a full salvation, a translating into the kingdom of God's dear Son, the church, the Lord's coming, have laid hold and deeply exercised the consciences of many. At Toronto I have a larger congregation. Here the very work in souls made them afraid, and get warnings, though the last indeed is the case in Toronto. At Guelph, where our conference was, the growth of the assembly has been rapid since. I suppose, the Lord willing, I shall go when I take it as my starting-point for sleighing on into the bush and the shores of Lake Huron, where I am expected. I do trust the Lord will keep up and deepen even the awakening of souls in this place. The American habit of joining a church for respectability makes the church regularly worldly, but there are a good many Christians, but in a dead state. In Canada there are about 250 brethren, and walking intelligently and happily everywhere. The great instrument of this really was E., though of course others have laboured in detail, but all was confusion till he was here. We are now in snow and I am old; but save a day

or two, no very violent cold, scarcely calling to wrap up as much as in England, but it is coming, I suppose, with Christmas… I have got on a considerable way—chapter 15.—with the Revelation for the Synopsis, having at last felt led to take it up fully. You will have seen the "Brethren and their Reviewers."

I cannot but feel that the Lord is working here, and that my journey here was most timely. There is nothing of éclat; but in these last days a solemn settling of principle which will under grace be important for this country, nay, for the whole continent. The foundation of the truth as to the church's position, its hopes and its salvation, have been brought home to all classes of Christians, and the authority of scriptures singularly exercised its power in their consciences. This too has strengthened the brethren. The Lord only knows the result. We must only work on while it is called to-day. My kindest love to the brethren, and thanks for all their kind interest in me and my work. May they be blessed in the fruit of their prayers, and in their own souls too.

I have enjoyed Luke much lately, as presenting the Person of the Lord.

Hamilton [received], December 24th, 1862.

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Dear Brother,—You will, I trust, have got my letter. I gave you some account of ——. It is so far difficult that there is nothing very striking or salient, though it seems to me the Lord is evidently working. Souls have been added to the assembly; but it is not so much this as the working of truth in many, in which the Lord's hand seems to be manifest. Then, of course, too, opposition

has been at work: it is, all a useful experience of patience.

But our spring of labour must be in the Lord, not in effects. He has to say, “Then have I laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought and, in vain: yet is my judgment with the Lord and my work with my God.” We are often encouraged as He never was, but we must depend on Him for energy to work. Perhaps I am wrong to say “never,” for the woman at the well of Samaria evidently was sent to His soul, when driven by jealousy out of Judea, and one anxious soul shewed Him the fields white for harvest, and gave Him meat to eat man knew not of. But we must be in the secret of the Lord to have this kind of-encouragement. Perfect grace in Him gave Him to see the bearing and import of the working of grace in others and the immensity of such facts; so in the poor woman (Mary) who anointed His feet in Bethany. But then He is a source of strength and blessing and encouragement to us which, though perfect in communion with His Father, He had not, because He enters into all our difficulties and infirmities, and loneliness —has a word in season to speak to him that is weary, as having passed through the sorrows.

I have known much what it is to have little retirement in the villages of France and Switzerland. But where there is the earnest desire of it, and we are in the path of the Lord’s will, He makes opportunities for us, and makes—when there is diligence—our opportunities profitable by His grace. We have in such cases to use diligence to seize moments, but even in going from one place to another, if alone, we find such, and richer sometimes than longer times where there is not the same diligence of heart with God. And then be sure moments of longer

duration have a value which otherwise they would not, and are rescued from idle intercourse otherwise. Still it is always of the last importance to take care we have always moments of communion, as nothing can supply their place, and our work flows from God when we have; and there is the seriousness and earnestness of dealing in God's behalf with souls in their eternal interest.

I think we ought to look for fruits as a sign that God is working with us, but it should not be the spring of labour, but our intercourse with Him so as to have His mind. Peace be with you, dearest brother, and may He give you to be much with Him.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Hamilton.

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To the same.]

Dearest Brother,—I should not have suggested such a plan to you as you speak of. I feel in such cases that gift and all else must find their own level, and my hearty desire would be, I need not say, to have labourers in the Lord's vineyard. It must depend on your own consciousness of the Lord's calling. But if you feel that there is not a call for work which absorbs your time, I believe that you would have more energy for work if you were occupied in some way. But if you have energy, and are drawn out into the work so as to fill up all your time, I should be very sorry to see you spend it in other labour. There is another consideration; occupation would, I suppose, tie you to one place, and if your gift is evangelising, this might be a hindrance, if visiting it would not at all. I think your selling about something

would be a very good testimony, and would not hinder your giving it up if you felt your heart led out to work. Do not let momentary discouragement form your judgment. I sought at first to do something myself as a testimony that it was an honourable path, but was so called hither and thither for work that I never really entered on it. I believe that the work of——is forming itself, and hence do not doubt that the movement of active brethren may take a more definite shape. If you find a door open, go on. If you have not, and you find anything to do, do it by all means. I believe it would be a good example. If you can do both—by all means. But if you find your time occupied with work for the Lord, work on. If, in spite of seeking souls, you have time on your hands, it is a very good thing you should employ it. We had brethren in France who worked at some trade, one a watchmaker in the summer and harvest, and evangelised all the winter, when the people were free, and several have done something—one of them, one of the most efficient labourers we have; but it does not hinder his work, for he is very active.

If you have time necessarily unemployed, get some good work for necessary uses, but do not be discouraged because at first souls do not fall into your hands. It is quite right not to be a burden if we can, but at the same time you should think of the work, not of that. It would be a loss to leave Christ's work merely to live. Christ has ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

It is to my mind wholly a question whether you find in Christ's work real occupation for your time in evangelising and visiting. If not, then it is all quite right you should fill up the remainder. In that case labour

would only, I think, strengthen your hands for the Lord's work. If you gave up any part of His work for it, it would be a mistake. You have then to see if the energy which sets to work is in exercise. Let Christ's work be the governing and principal thought.

Affectionately yours.

Hamilton, 1863.

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To the same.]

Dearest Brother,—I was glad to hear you were occupied and found openings. I judge any occupation, such as commercial traveller (which I mention because some one said you thought of it), would engross you, and lead you where divinely-given work might not be. All I should think of, supposing your time was not fully occupied, would be to do something which would fill it up, which you could relinquish when service called. In a wild country this is even easier than in an old one, only it requires a little faith and energy. If you found you were not called in your heart to work, that is a different question. It depends on our love to souls. God draws out our hearts after them when He moves us to serve Him in these things. Then it is a great matter to follow the Lord's leading where His Spirit is working, and, above all, self-sacrifice and devotedness: this, above all, I feel to be the great matter.

There is another thing that you will have to consider, that is, that true work is not like ordination to an office where a routine is to be gone through, and, if blessing comes, it is all well. There are exercises of soul; there is, even when we have the truest desire to serve, so much

in us that has to be exercised to fit us for service. You might say, did not.Paul preach at once? Yes; but he was then set aside for some years till Barnabas went to seek him. Moses was forty years thus set aside. Now I do not say that every one is thus, as to the form of it, set aside; but as to the flesh—making nothing of us—it is true. It may be by, as to men, a little valued exercise as to ministry, so as to be cast on the Lord, and our motives purified; or, where more-exercised gifts are, so that, though we may work with blessing in less conspicuous spheres, notice is elsewhere. This is not a question of gift exactly, but that maturing of the vessel which connects gift with the state of soul, so as to give on the one hand subjection, earnestness, and seriousness; and enables the labourer to connect truth with the souls of his hearers. Now when the Lord calls us and exercises us thus, we may often be occupied partially with other occupations, as not having our time filled. I should not feel happy at the thought of seeking one's mere livelihood, if called to serve the Lord, through anything like a want of faith. It mars faith for the work itself, just as mere worldly occupation or attention to men, however amiable. We are not our own; "occupy till I come" is the word. All I look for in the last case I have put is where work does not call. It is healthful not to charge the church. It is not healthful to neglect work where it does call, not healthful even to our own souls. Our heavenly Father knows we have need of all these things. We have also to consider the difference of gift. All is not public speaking; visits, reading meetings are as important in their own way as public discourses, sometimes work when other work cannot be done…

My earnest hope would be that the Lord has called you to work. But suppose (I do not in the least judge so, or the contrary) the Lord had given you more of a pastor's and teacher's work than an evangelist's, this naturally requires more maturity even for the teaching, still more for pastorship. During the process we might, in a measure, spare the burden to the church: if it dragged us out of the exercise of the gift or the service which matured for us, it would be a great pity. In a certain sense I believe I was put into official ministry immaturely; but I know God makes all things work together for good to those who love Him. You are perhaps as happily placed for growing up into ministry as may be. If anything which leaves you free you could do, as I said in my last, it would be so far a testimony. Elders (Acts 20.), though counted worthy of double honour, are exhorted to labour for their temporal wants. A moving evangelist would find it very hard unless he had a Paul's energy. If brethren are scattered, not having a home is an advantage: one does not waste just half one's strength in returning to it. It greatly facilitates the work. I have largely worked in this way. If the work is local, save occasional visits to a distance, where one may stay a night, it is better to have one, a gîte of some sort.

I trust the blessing continues at Hamilton, but there are first last, and last first. May He keep us doing "this one thing" and walking with Him.

Affectionately yours, dear brother.

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To the same.]

Dear Brother,—I shall be very glad to hear how you get on. I feel how little power I have myself of acting so that there is power of motive on the conscience. I have felt latterly that I need more faith in the willingness of Christ to bless. I so fear dragging men beyond their faith that I do not encourage them enough in the path of faith. I think I used to do it more. But I have the greatest dread of any one's acting beyond his faith; but then one ought to be able to present Christ so that He should be a sufficient motive, but for that one must have faith to bring Him in oneself. The Lord grant us do so more; I am sure devotedness in oneself is needed for this—not merely not to have another object, that I think I could say—but to have this in earnestness and energy. The Lord be with you.

Affectionately yours, dear brother.

Hamilton, 1863.

Dearest Brother,—I am wholly ignorant of your London affairs to which —— alludes … of course, all interests me about the brethren, but I leave even the reaching of news to the Lord, as all else; for it is a part of our moral existence, as all else. I am aware of the attacks, but that, though unhappy, in itself is a sign of good, and of the power of truth, and the means of good. I have no doubt truth is spreading and penetrating as it never did. Of course, it tries timid people here and there… As to the work here, I have not much news to add. I came here with snow to go up north to the bush. We had forty-seven degrees of frost two days before at Toronto; the thaw has come on and stopped me, as sleighing is generally impracticable. There was in a day or two a difference of fifty-five degrees, fifteen degrees below

zero to eight degrees above freezing-point. I hardly know now when I shall get up north till this thaw goes, but my visit to Guelph is all right, at any rate… I was glad to leave the work at Toronto and Hamilton for a time, for it to settle, and take its bearings a little without me, as it is of growing interest. I have had meetings at houses where no one would have dreamed of it. The work is not so much adding, though souls have been added to the. gatherings, as the real penetrating of truth into souls around. This work is all, I may say, new, both as to clearness as to the gospel, the question of the church, and the Lord's coming. At —— the Kirk minister has preached it, I fear too soon, but a number of souls are learning and feeding on the truth, and I trust the brethren established and taught in it themselves.

I know not how far I shall reach in the States, but more than one door is open. But what a field, and of a character so difficult! Even in this country, looseness and worldliness reigns, with attachment to the importance of a course one had embraced—bigotry to party and indifference to the truth—but some souls sighing after more reality….

My heart has not left either the continent of Europe or England, but for the moment my work is yet here. It exercises patience, perhaps, because the truth is penetrating into layers of yet unreached materials, but it seems to me a real work is going on in souls.

Peace be with you.

Guelph, January, 1863.

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Dearest——,—I feel the seriousness of the crisis or position in which the testimony of the saints of God is placed by the controversy which is going on. It has, in a certain sense, come to me by surprise. And I am perhaps, in a certain sense, better able to feel it by being at a distance. I am in no hurry, but I feel it very sorrowful on one side, and very encouraging—uncommonly so—on the other. When the tract came out on the "Righteousness of God," I had not the remotest idea of the tumult that would ensue, nor, I may add, of the low state in which the evangelical body, as such, stood. God (I am well and thankfully assured) will never leave His own, but the professing body seems to me to be breaking up into Puseyites —who (as the Pope said to some of them lately—not ill) are as the church bells who call the people into it, but are always outside it themselves—on the one hand, and rationalists on the other; while the evangelicals are incapable of holding with power any truth to maintain what exists. This brings out any true testimony, if made public, into a very special place. They are making that that is amongst us public by their attacks. I believe it to be the one true scriptural ground of the church of God, and with that, the true, full gospel of grace. That I have felt, as all well know, for years. But this breaking up of what Establishment or Dissent held, the public place of profession, even if a lower ground, brings out the truth into that place, not as assuming it, but as the necessary consequence of the attacks against it.

But I do not think that we have anything to do but to pursue peaceably onward the testimony we have, seeking, above all, its realisation in true devotedness, and practical separation from the world. No part of the

testimony of God is more important than this, a greater witness that we are not of it, that we follow Christ. I dread the saints getting tired of unworldliness. It was the first decay of Christianity; it is always our danger. It is often what gives falsehood its power over the conscience of the world. They see motives that master what masters them. This may be imitated to propagate error, but truth and goodness should have it naturally of the Lord. I feel very anxious for this as to brethren. I do not doubt that full truth and grace is the weapon of God, but the vessel that carries should be the devoted effect of the truth and grace it speaks of—this, and that the Word should be held fast in all its integrity. Multitudes I doubt not, and indeed so have heard, who would reject the stupid inanities of the “Essays and Reviews,” or of Colenso, yet have their natural unbelief set free, and the word of God has lost its absolute authority. This works two ways: one sets reasons (this is human will) above all —man may believe this or that, but he does not believe God; or, in the weariness of the want of some authority, some rest, men turn to the authority of the church, and are degraded from a reliance on a holy God to reliance on corrupt man. The acknowledgment of the holy scriptures is of the essence of the acknowledgment of God now, and our security; though the revelation of a personal God whom we can trust, known through Jesus, is eternal life and blessing.

I am daily more struck with the connection of the great principles on which my mind was exercised by and with God, when I found salvation and peace, and the questions agitated and agitating the world at the present day: the absolute, divine authority and certainty of the Word, as a divine link between us and God, if

everything (church and world) went; personal assurance of salvation in a new condition by being in Christ; the church as His body; Christ coming to receive us to Himself; and collaterally with that, the setting up of a new earthly dispensation, from Isaiah 32:(more particularly the end); all this was when laid aside at E. P.'s in 1827; the house character of the assembly on earth (not the fact of the presence of the Spirit) was subsequently. It was a vague fact which received form in my mind long after, that there must be a wholly new order of things, if God was to have His way, and the craving of the heart after it I had felt long before; but the church and redemption I did not know till the time I have spoken of; but eight years before, universal sorrow and sin pressed upon my spirit. I did not think to say so much of myself; but it is all well. The truth remains the truth, and it is on that we have to go; but the Lord's dealings with the soul, connected with the use of truth, have to be noted.

I have nothing very new to communicate as to the work. I have been partly occupied here with the death of two beloved ones, brought in since I was here—one converted: the sweetest deaths, and most perfect distinctness of grace and peace you could see, a witness and edification to all. I was kept by the weather from starting for the bush, as we had no means of sleighing: meanwhile these beloved ones went, one aged, the other leaving four little children. Sunday week another soul found peace, and is now in communion; but this has kept me from the more direct sphere of my work. I have worked, of course, all the same. I am sure with patience, and looking only to the Lord, there must be blessing…

We have had 52 degrees below freezing-point, fine healthy weather, but it stopped my preaching at a place I was much interested in when there before—Acton—where I found many hungry souls. It is astonishing how many souls a simple full gospel, filled with Christ and His love, finds famishing. D.V., Monday we start for the bush, 40 miles off, where there are a good many brethren, godly, intelligent men; some six or seven years ago a place of bears and wolves… They kept 400 of my answers to Colenso for this country; they appeared Wednesday and all were gone Saturday, and no more to be had, though inquired for.

Yours affectionately.

Guelph, February 10th, 1863.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,— … After all we go on, though in different circumstances, pretty much as you all do. Man and the world are the same, though the forms may vary. The indifference to truth is more common here; the denominations do not seem to trouble their heads about it—more pushing to settle oneself; hence the testimony of brethren, if there be devotedness, and the truth is held fast, is more decided. The case is still stronger in the United States. I have no doubt if God raised up a testimony and it were content to be nothing, it would be most weighty there. As it is, though there be no Establishment, and all sects are alike, they are dreaded as in the old country: every error is allowed, though brethren under a ban. But this is all well. Yet for testimony I have found the door open in some way everywhere… But one has to trust God for His own time of doing the work. I should like to see people decide

faster; still His own work goes on. I have a tract on hand here on Romans 7:and viii., which one is ever obliged to dwell on, and I am going to publish again “Why do you Groan?” corrected. So I work for the old country too…

Ever, beloved brother,

Affectionately yours.

Minto, February, 1863.

* * * * *

To the same.]

Beloved Brother,—I got your letter on my return here from the bush. We did not linger longer there, though there is work open, but which would have required residence… In sum, the work is going on, and I believe, healthfully. I, who have but a short time probably here, would naturally desire to see it go faster, but I am sure the Lord is right, and it is only saying I have little power. Still there is general blessing. But I cannot help desiring a blessing which may reach America too, and devotedness with the opening of truth. I seek only the Philadelphia state, but that I do seek. I am most thankful for the prayers of the brethren. I do not doubt they have been a blessing to me in my weakness…

I had a most unsatisfactory communication with——. It is not merely a rejection of the word “wrath,” as a crotchet; he came out when pressed, with a denial of all real propitiation. He had withdrawn certain expressions of evil doctrine which use scripture phrases, but said, when he was asked what he meant by propitiation, that it was God shewing His favour to us through Christ. The point was gone through carefully and in every shape, and he consistently and deliberately denied all real

propitiation. I judge he is fundamentally and utterly unsound on the foundation of our hopes… He has amazing confidence in himself,, and I do not believe he has ever been before God in his conscience as a sinner…

I have got to Toronto—hard frost again; here it was 64 degrees of frost when we had 62 degrees. I must close.

Ever, beloved brother,

Affectionately yours.

Guelph and [finished at] Toronto.

* * * * *

Dearest——,— … In general the work is going on happily, and people's hearts are in it. Souls are converted, brought to peace, added to the saints quietly, and if we would desire more spiritual power, still we cannot but thankfully see the Spirit of God working… Here, the world even says, Christianity is put in quite a new way. It is simply that salvation is preached.

The case you mention20 has occurred before… It is a very trying and sorrowful case, and calls for a lowly and retired walk in the person concerned. The refusal of divorce is the only additional circumstance. Did the woman refuse it, or how came it to be refused? It must be recent, as the court is. This may modify the case, because it may have been a recognition of the bond by her conscience. But this apart, I judge the church must take her as she is when converted. I suppose a heathen, who had been married and separated, and had ever such a long history, and then was married, converted and baptized—I should certainly take him as I found him. I look upon the man's act as a breach of the tie before God, namely —the tie as broken (Matt. 19:9); and that

the church must take the person as it finds them when converted.

The only other question connected with it is, the state of her own conscience when she married the last time. Did she consider herself free, or as then committing a sin? This may affect the present state of her conscience. But I should take her, as before the church, as married to her present husband. But she should walk softly.

Affectionately yours.

I think the truth has come out more clearly here in Canada, in contrast with mixed law and world and gospel, than anywhere.

Toronto, February 26th, 1863.

* * * * *

Dearest ——,—I have not seen the latest attacks… It is a solemn time, because it seems to me the throes of the Establishment, but in opposition to truth. But it only leads me to go on calmly with the truth; the rest the Lord provides for. I have no thought of entering into any dispute with adversaries and those who attack. I think you will find, and it has been my comfort when I have recurred to them, that in all my controversies, French and English, some great fundamental or practical truth has been in question. On this question of law and righteousness, it seems to me that as to any present service I have written enough in a controversial shape, because the truth is fully out. For disputation I have no taste. The statements of the Record as to my doctrine are false, I fear deliberately so. They have been brought here largely by the clergy as a pamphlet. I have printed a fly-leaf of two pages with two columns, giving their

statements and mine, but have pursued no further argument. The circulating the attacks here comes from their uneasiness and from the progress of the truth. I know not that I could very clearly bring before you or brethren the state of things here.

There are conversions by no means unfrequeutly, and souls brought to peace. We have had from among them, as from other Christians seeing clear, pretty constant additions to the gathering. But truth, proving Christians, as in our place, is working largely and sometimes deeply in many minds. First it is the enjoyment of the blessed truth of our relationship to Christ and the Father, and Christ's coming, and then comes the discovery by the persons and their friends that this means breaking with the world—by ministers, that it means leaving their place or losing their flocks; then it is a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof, or fear to come there if there is a work; then wants of souls that bring them back—sometimes staying away with a bad conscience: in Hamilton particularly, but also in Toronto, this has been going on—quiet, humble, dropping in meanwhile and enjoying. We have been preached against, and it has frightened some and strengthened others, who saw the truth was with us—led others to inquire. There are many in H. deeply exercised, and some here… I can pray for them now, which is a comfort to me. I felt I ought to be able to reckon more on Christ for them. I felt as if the children were come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth. I blamed myself for this, lest there should be knowledge without Christ enough for motive. This is what is going on in a great many souls, and some when they found the real blessing thought we did not sufficiently bring forward these truths. But really

foundations have to be laid, and we must give meat in due season.

This, though I leave it all to the Lord, exercises me as to staying here sometimes. I of course thought to be back in the fine season: I do still; but when I see the work widening and deepening, it is difficult to fix a moment, and should it link on to the States seriously, it would be yet another ground of prayer. It has even crossed my mind that I might return and come back again if the Lord so willed. I am growing old, but having once crossed, it is not so formidable; and I have nothing to do but to serve Christ. He knows the future and I do not. Of the two Ian better here in health than in England. I have work, and am anxious about it, in both England and France. At present I leave it, even in my mind, in the Lord's hands— thank God it is surely there, and I am happy to serve while it is called to-day. But I have received the deepest and pro-foundest conviction, that the truth that the brethren have been taught of God is the special testimony of God for these days, and these are serious days—the last days. Our path is simply to seek the good of souls, as much as lies in us to five peaceably with all men, but to hold fast the testimony God has given us, to keep His word and not deny His name. Thon I confess I look earnestly for devotedness in myself and in all.

You need not fear my getting enamoured of these controversial pamphlets. I find such blessedness in scripture in the revelation of God, that though my mind is engaged in the reasoning when writing, or as long as the question is before me, it is all poor and wretched to me when once I have done with it; even the truth that is there has less attraction in controversial shape. But one

has to go through a kind of outward life, a life having God for its source, furnished with the truth which takes its form from the circumstances through which we have to pass. As soon as they are over, the mind returns to its own relationship with God. Only we have to take care that all is guided by the word of God in it. This was true of Christ. When tempted in the wilderness all was perfect according to the power of the Spirit, and He returned in that power to Galilee. But His occupation, so to speak, in the conflict, was with other things than His own joys, or even the meat He had to eat, even in service. And so in our poor measure with us—special service and conflict to which we are led by the Spirit, but which is in no way our own joy and delight, or good of souls. Yet we have to do it, and trust Him with our joy who will keep it for that day. Even here it is not a development exactly of what I might be occupied with among saints (I do not speak of our own meetings as saints) in England. The great groundwork principles have to be brought out and developed. I do not deny I am often tried by the incapacity of saints to get on, beyond settling the foundation for themselves—everybody seems at home if you get into Romans 7—I mean everywhere. Still I feel the promulgation of truth is of vital importance for the church. Some may rail, but simple souls find the true ground of standing and liberty. That comforts me; they are hid from the wise and prudent, but while the war is going on, many a simple soul is drinking in the truth… All are fully warned against us, with renewed energy, so that the meetings [which] from two or three had grown up, are gradually less numerous again; but with this, souls ripening and getting decided. I am afraid sometimes I take this too quietly. I expect it. After all, if the Lord opens the door,

none can shut it, and I read “an open door and many adversaries.” “Long time therefore abode we, speaking boldly in the Lord.” Meanwhile, souls in earnest clearly ripen faster…

Kindest love to the brethren; may they walk in unity and peace. The Lord keep us simple, peaceful and subject to scripture. If it be a time of breaking up and evil, it is a time of great blessing to those who are simple in heart. There is this difference as to your Corinthians,21 (though I have often felt what you have said, on account of the printing and publishing which all read), the apostle was writing to them in their right place, though walking wrong. To the Jews, whom God was visiting at the close, the Lord when they stumbled only gives them harder things: I admit they were unbelievers, still there is an analogy: crumbling Christendom wants the truth. Peace be with you, and all the beloved brethren: I trust and am assured they pray for us. I find sensible progress in my last visit (weekly) to Hamilton. People are more than ever occupied with the truth.

Affectionately yours.

Toronto, March, 1863.

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* * * I sit down at last to write a line or two to you on my return from the States. I was some 130 miles into New York State, speaking to souls- there, and then passing through Canada to Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis, on the Mississippi, and some 50 or 60 miles beyond, across the country on the skirts of the war—though not feeling it, beyond soldiers being about, an encampment in sight where E. distributed tracts, &c, but a sad state of things. The church is more worldly in America than anywhere

you would find it, that is, the professing bodies, the world—professedly such—inordinately wicked; yet I doubt not many Christians, and some really devoted ones. Scripture has little authority; not that it is openly denied, on the contrary, it is respected and owned to be the word of God, and so on. But giving truth, and quoting it to prove and unfold truth will not do; you must reason about it, or the sermon will not do: the ministers more sceptical than the hearers, as in such systems is generally the case. But there are souls who sigh over the state of things and long for something better. My object was to visit the French and Swiss brethren, which, save in one locality, I through mercy effected, and was out in the prairies, living among them as in old times, and glad indeed to see them as they are. And it has renewed bonds with the saints in general, cheered them, and I trust been directly healthful to them. The system of coming to America, taking up land without being able to pay for it (which they gradually fell into, as it is the custom), had brought them spiritually low, pinching as they must to pay, or careless in paying. But they have felt it, and there has been a reaction in conscience, which has had a most healthful effect on them, and there is a lively desire of profiting by the word. Many neighbouring French came, and their meeting-house could not hold the people…

I quite trust the Lord sent me there; I was about 2,000 miles in the last four weeks, besides preaching and walking. But the Lord helped us, and He took care of us in every way. Even when wandering in the forest near the Swiss brethren (they break the prairies where there are any streams, and are of considerable extent), I left E. sitting in the forest, and lit on the son of the Swiss

brother with whom I stayed, ploughing at the edge of the forest, two miles and a half from his house. At Chicago I was among Americans, and though I felt the desolation, met some who earnestly desire better things, and I have faith as to that great but (usually speaking) poor country; but I think any true spiritual mindedness and devotedness (not mere outward activity) would be more despised there than anywhere. Those who begin must be content with a day of small things, if God gives such, as I think He will, before the Lord comes… But everywhere a plain, full gospel the most advanced are ignorant of. This is what is wanting everywhere; then devotedness, and unworldliness. I hurried back; for the work is going on in Canada….

I suppose I shall return this summer, but I am not without the thought, if the Lord will, of coming back next. The Lord raise up labourers in His grace. There is still a great deal to do here; I have happy news from France. But oh! when one thinks of all the wide work there is to do, how all depends on grace—there my heart turns when it seeks to embrace all the work—one is cast on One who can do it, who has loved the church and given Himself for it, and one's soul gets rest; yet how I long for more concentration of heart. This is the lack I feel; of outward labour I could hardly do much more: but to carry it on within with God, to allow no distracting thoughts to fritter away the mind, where, as it is by grace and takes the form of intercession, c ncentration is power—there it is I feel my shortcoming, y t feel it, alas, so little, or it would be mended, certainly. The blessing of the church and gathering souls into it is what I have at heart, yet how little I can carry it to God. Yet the gracious Lord has shed His light over my path here.

What is my thankfulness for being permitted to serve Him, I could not tell to man. How bright the prospect when it is over, no tongue here can tell. The Lord be with you, dear——, and your little ones. You know that the Lord is all, as well as I, yet it is well to call it to mind to one another— all else will pass away. Give my kindest love to the brethren. The Lord be with them. They will remember me in their prayers.

Affectionately yours.

I have written hurriedly the day of my return to Toronto.

Toronto, May 21th, 1863.

* * * * *

My dear Brother—I was very glad to get your letter, and to know too that the Lord has thus far blessed you and led you on. Your littleness is anything but a reason for the Lord's not caring for you, or—I may truly say—my own unfeigned interest in your blessing. You may believe that, my heart had not forgotten you. I suppose I shall return, the Lord willing, to England this summer. I shall have much study work to do in London, but if allowed shall be most glad to come and see you. I have to seek, of course, that my steps may be guided of the Lord in the work, for He has His own work and His own way. I am thankful you are free.

The more I go on, the more I approach the glory and rest that remains to us, the more I see how sad the condition of soul of most Christians is. I have just travelled some 2,000 miles, of which 1,800 in the United States. It has brought home to me with fresh present consciousness how sad the state of things is—a certain measure of outward evangelical activity, but minds

absorbed by worldly activity, the word of God without power, spirituality almost unknown. Surely there are exceptions, but that is what characterises the state of things. The non-professing world in the States is wicked to a degree; blasphemous language to excess—in the east drunkenness dominant, lawlessness of spirit everywhere, and corruption of manners. Yet I do not doubt there are many saints. But Americans do not deny this: little family life; young married people go and live in hotels for cheapness, and corruption is rife there; and those who have houses go to the hotels to find company and spend the evenings, little at home. Yet it is a religious population, men would say: people join churches for respectability, but christian life is feebleness itself.

I have seen too the universal state, not confined to America, that those who are converted are as if-outside God's house and circle, and desiring, hoping, praying that it may be well with them, and that they may be found within; but not in adoption within, seeking to live up to their place—the true liberty which is in Christ. I do anything but despise this, I was a good while so myself; but it lowers the whole tone and character of Christianity. The only safe state, so to speak then, is rigid legality and devotedness on that ground—a kind of Thomas à Kempis life. To know that we are risen with Christ, in Him before God, alters all. It sets us free before Him, and free from the power of what was contrary to Him. He is our life, and accepted before God, our path is through the wilderness towards Him. Blessed thought! soon we shall see Him, and be with Him in unhindered adoration of heart for ever.

The Lord be with the dear brethren. Here there has been a good deal of blessing, and the brethren have been cheered and are getting on. A good many have been added, both newly converted and from sects. The Lord is working in others. Ever since I returned last week I was at a new place (Clinton), where I found the word have much power from the Lord on souls. I hope to be allowed to return there.

Peace be with you, and all needed grace.

Ever affectionately yours in the Lord.

May 21th, 1863.

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Governor,22—You will perhaps recollect one who went up in the train from E. to D., now about a year ago, or not far from it, and be surprised perhaps to receive a letter from him from Canada. But though I have been much occupied —as you may suppose I did not cross the Atlantic for nothing— I have not forgotten our conversation in the train, and I crave to hear how you are getting on. We have had here the Governor of the Jail fully brought to the knowledge of salvation, and to walk with the saints of God, as he still does. (He would still like another place, but awaits the Lord’s leading to find him something.) His dear wife, already a believer, was led to see she ought to be more entirely separate from the world and live more devotedly, and so she did thoroughly, and the Lord has taken her. She expected it, and was longing to go. No cloud came over her peace and joy. She suffered dreadfully and long, but no impatience was shewn; all was bright and all peace. She left four children, charming little ones; we had them in the house where I was, to spare the nurse while she

was ill. She saw them, gave them her blessing, and bade farewell, but it raised no lingering look behind. Another dear old man, only six months converted, died just after, rejoicing with all his heart. We buried both not far apart in the deep, deep snow, which indeed kept the earth soft enough to be opened (for sometimes they cannot bury), committing them to Christ till the resurrection.

And now how would it be with you if thus called? Is all peace and right with God? You know yourself that you need it. You know that Christ is the only way to have it. Let me add a few words as to the fulness of it. He appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. That work is finished. It can never be added to, nor taken away from. Its value does not change. But the Spirit of God works in us to shew us our need of it, makes us see that we are sinners, that we are lost in ourselves, leads us (perhaps by deep and painful convictions) to the sense that there is no good in us, that when even to will is present with us, how to perform that which is good we find not. We find not only that we have sinned, but that there is a law of sin in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin in our members. But when—really humbled about this and convicted in our own hearts, removing all pretensions of righteousness in ourselves—we turn to Christ, we find that He has died for this, that He has been a sacrifice for sin as for the sins that burdened us—has been made sin for us, has put it away for us by the sacrifice of Himself.

Thus we get peace and liberty of heart before God, because the sin is put away between us and Him; Christ has made a full expiation. Sin does not exist as between God and us. When He looks on the blood of Christ He

cannot see sin in the believer, because when Christ shed that blood He put it away. Thus we get liberty and power too, because submitting thus to the righteousness of God, having Christ for our righteousness, we are sealed with the Spirit, which gives us power and shews us Christ, so that we get strength and joy, and are able to glorify Him.

How is it then with you? Are you still a worse prisoner than those you are watching over, or freed by the redemption that is in Christ? Have you been brought to see, that if you refuse life through His name you must perish? Do you seek that you should know Him, or are you joining with His enemies—hail-fellow-well-met with the world that to its judgment and ruin crucified Him? If we have His Spirit we know that we are in Him, and all is peace and joy too, because we know the Son of God and abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. I shall be glad to hear from you. May the blessed Lord in His grace direct your eye fixedly on Christ.

Ever truly yours in Christ.

I am here for the Lord's work, and have found a great deal to interest me. The Lord willing, I shall be back some time in summer.

Toronto, May, 1863.

* * * * *

Dearest Brother,—I rejoiced to hear through Mrs.—— that God had encouraged you still… Often patience finds its issue in blessing. If a door is open, many adversaries are a reason for continuing long in a place…

As to the "three days and three nights;" it is the regular way of Jewish computation. Even in years, if a king

began to reign, at the end of the year, the whole year was counted to him; so if one had been a part of the same, to him too, so that this has to be taken into account in chronology. So the same period is called six days after and eight days, according to the method of computing; rising on the first day morning it was the third day, beginning at six in the evening—the whole of Saturday, and from the afternoon of Friday. It is evident that the computation is a regular one, and no mistake, for it is given with open eyes as the fulfilment of what had been said: they had no idea it was not a fulfilment… Peace be with you, and blessing.

Ever, dear brother,

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

1863.

* * * * *

Dearest Brother,—It seems to me unreasonable that gatherings should be called upon to give out names, with their own responsibility engaged thereby, and not have an opportunity of objecting or delaying. The Saturday meeting had for its object that those interested in the various gatherings should have an opportunity of fellowship and consultation, so as to effect concurrent action. That they bound anything is an utterly false accusation; and the way the enemy has sought to assail this meeting, through unprincipled attacks or personal feeling, is a proof to me that it is of God. The reading out the names even in the gatherings concludes nothing, for the very object is, that if there be objection it may be mentioned… But it was long ago felt that it was desirable that a name should not be publicly given out until all practical inquiry was made, as it was very

disagreeable to have a name publicly mentioned, and demur made thereto on moral grounds, when it could be avoided. Hence the previous inquiry and consultation. Till they are announced to be received, nothing is officially done, but the previous inquiry is the ground on which that takes place.

Now in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the testimony of the local gatherings must be relied on, and that is to be desired; but it would not be, if the others were precluded from saying anything where they may possibly have something. And surely, if I am to give out people's names, I must have liberty to make a difficulty if I have one; and the case has arisen, and the previous inquiry just what gives efficiency to this process. If brethren who care for the saints were present from all the gatherings, mutual consultation and godly care would take place; and, while they could not, and are not meant to decide anything, they could bring the names, or anything else, before all the gatherings, with adequate previous inquiry, so that things should not be done rashly. Confidence would be produced in common action.

The notion of —— I totally repudiate. London is not as large as Galatia. It is utterly false, and there was no agglomerated population, where a person could walk on a Sunday morning to another part of the town, perhaps when under questions of discipline, where he resided… But I go on the facts; the analogy is wholly and practically false. The difficulties are practically great in London, but with cordial co-operation they disappear; and I believe in the power of the Spirit of God to overcome the difficulties which arise from the immense size of the town, and produce common action. If every

one will go his own way it cannot be; but you have independent churches and members of them. In Galatia a man was of a local church, and if he went to another place took a letter of commendation. Could I take one, say from the P., every Sunday morning I went down to P. or K. ? We are necessarily one body in London, and with grace can so walk.

I mourn these efforts to dislocate the united action hitherto carried out, but as yet will hope that we may not have the testimony that we have not enough of the power of God's Spirit to overcome the practical difficulties, but are obliged to confess that we give up the testimony to the unity of God's church in London. ——'s practical independency, or Congregationalism, I repudiate with every energy I am capable of. What I earnestly desire is, the cordial co-operation of brethren to maintain common order in one body according to the scriptures and the unity of the Spirit of God; and I earnestly pray that the beloved brethren in London may be kept in grace seeking it, in the faithful desire of union, and service in lowliness of heart, and I am sure of the faithfulness of God to help them, and carry it out in grace for them. May the Lord bless and keep them. I have laboured with them, and suffered with them, and trust the Lord that He will bless them in the unity of the Spirit of God. May they remember that there is one Spirit and one body.

May, 1863.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—I was glad to hear from you; you have had so far the good part, the afflictions of the gospel this time, though a sorrowful kind of them. We do well to

note God’s ways, how far our path is the path of faith, so as to meet His power—the path of His will. As to——, I do not much attempt beyond what God leads me into, though I have found the energy of faith always rewarded. The Lord, our gracious Lord, has His own time for——, as elsewhere. ——’s case is sorrowful, but I note that the Lord never allows evil to remain hidden in connection with brethren. Better to have none, but else better it should come out.

I could not refuse the testimony of the world as to the sin of the saints. Supposing a Christian had been drinking only with worldly people, the likeliest case, and all, with no appearance of malice, said he was, could I reject their testimony? I should not certainly go hunting up for testimony against a brother from worldlings, but I should not reject an honest testimony to facts rendered by them. Most sins would be committed with worldly people, and probably with them only; and the dishonour to the Lord is before them. I never would hunt up evil; but covering it up where the question has arisen, and probably some know it, cannot [but] leave distress—cannot be blessed. The Lord guide the brethren there, and give wisdom.

I have been at ——. There are elements of good and the moving of the waters, but in which we have to wait on the Lord. But we should look for more power. In all our journey we want to be more wholly Christ’s, enlisted by Him and our hearts in it with Him. But oh! we are poor in inward springs; we get on, but our life does not pass enough between our souls and Him. It is not that I am not happy and confiding; I trust Him with my whole heart, but I want something more decided. It is a great point to be where He would have us. There is never free

power else. Yet the harvest is plenty and the labourers are few.

I have written a new paper on the Righteousness of God, more an exposé of the whole scripture view of it. I feel it an immensely responsible thing publishing it. Yet I feel it must be faith with God doing it or not at all, and that I must be individually responsible for it. I feel more than ever that it sets one on a basis apart from current evangelicalism. I have no doubt of the truths in it; we have held them probably all before us, but it puts it out as a whole, and though not controversial, does denounce the opposite doctrine as false. I have been greatly interrupted in writing it, and I fear there is repetition, but that is a small thing. One owes it to Christ not to put a false statement as to divine righteousness. Things strike me sometimes—save the kind of guarding comment of James upon itj no scriptural writer [save Paul] ever speaks of justification at all. Is not that remarkable? We have many truths connected with it, but the thing itself never treated or spoken of. The word of God is very large, and I find eternal truths very weighty. May our eye be single and our spirits subject to God. Give my true love in Christ to all our brethren in——. I hope to see them, but I follow the work as well as I know how.

Ever, dear brother,

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Toronto, 1863.

* * * * *

My dear Brother,—We ought not to confound the last Adam and last Man (1 Cor. 15.), though, from never

having got it straight in my memory, perhaps more, I am always doing so, the thought being vague.23 Last and second, moreover, are both important. He was second as contrasted with the first, last as no other will come after Him as a head of race. Adam is the Hebrew for man, but then looked at as a race, and personally the head of a race. Man is generic in the sense of character, what he was. But I get both, brought together in verse 45. “The first man, Adam”—and here Adam becomes a name, but intimating still, I believe, the representant of a race, though what that man was is in question, and that was a living soul; “the last Adam” (last man would not do, it would be the last born into the world), hence I have simply the last Adam; there is no other race of men after this. I have found both terms needed for the Continent, when they would confound Him with the first, and say, too, He summed up the perfection of His day, but we shall have a pure, perfect representation of the race yet. In verse 47 I have it characteristically—the first man was earthy, the second heavenly—because here it is characteristically in contrast with the first. So that “Adam” is the head of the race: “man” first and second, the two characters of man.

Next, was He the second Adam here on earth? Personally no doubt He was, but not properly. As the first Adam was not actually head of a race before his fall, and hence, not in this special sense first man Adam, though personally he clearly was so—though not as head of a race; so Christ was not the head of a race till He had accomplished the work of redemption and began a new position for us as risen. But personally He had life in Himself, and could quicken, and did; but He had not taken the place of second Adam to be the head of a race

till He was risen. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone.” And it is the risen Man that will have all men subject to Him in the millennium—nay, He is glorified (Eph. 1): He died too, rose and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Personally He had a title, for all things were created by Him and for Him. But consistently with God’s character and His glory, He could only take it consequent on redemption. He is thus as man made Lord and Christ. As Son of God He quickens whom He will, but this is not head of a race as last Adam. There He is man, according to God’s counsels, in a new position. Hence the “sure mercies of David” are based on and cited as a proof of His resurrection. The Lord will be for ever the man, head of all others, in glory; only that second and last refer to time circumstances. Last Adam is as none coming after Him, not as closing the Adamic race, unless, indeed, that is what you mean. But the Adamic race is not closed actually save for faith. God since the cross holds it for lost and condemned, while dealing in infinite grace with it as such. Faith sees it is all over with it, since it has rejected Christ; its moral history is closed. The ends of the world have come upon us, and the judgment of the world (morally, not its execution, of course) took place in the cross.

As to Adamic, it is a mere human word, and if understood it is all that is needed. Our first business is to get at what God means in scripture in His own account of it, and then at our own language, which is often right in our meaning, but partially so, and can be taken otherwise. Thus man’s moral history is closed in Christ, but not his actual till judgment. Just as we are

dead (Col. 3), but not actually so. Scripture is always right, we partially and imperfectly.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Often, too, when we get hold of a truth we are engrossed by the new and important side of it, and for exact truth have to modify what we say in expressing what we have got hold of.

[Date uncertain.]

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18 “Collected Writings,” vol. vii., p. 459

19 Ibid, vol. x. p. 49.

20 Namely, “the position of a woman whose husband left her and his child, and went and married another; she, some while after, unconverted, marries a man who takes her and her child and cares thoroughly for them. She becomes converted, and wishes to break bread. Is she to be dealt with as an adulteress now the case is known? Or, the husband having broken the tie and set her free by marrying another woman, can her present position of wife to another be recognised by the church of God? Her present walk is of good report before the world; and when her husband tried to get a divorce, it was refused him by reason of his misconduct towards her.”

21 It had been suggested that the age is Corinthian, and unprepared for such truths as put out in “Brethren and their Reviewers,” and in a tract on “The Righteousness of God”—“I would say such precious matters are rather for the ‘spiritual’ than for the Corinthians, as was Paul’s ‘hidden wisdom.’”

22 Governor of a jail. “I was speaking to him about his soul, and he asked me to write to him.”

23 Queries:—

“Is it right to use ‘Adamic,’ in contrast to Christ?

Is it correct to look at the Lord Jesus as the ‘last Adam’ in the sense of His closing the Adamic race?

Do the second Adam and the last Adam convey the same thought?

And, is it correct to say that the Lord Jesus was not the second Adam when He was Man here on earth, and only became the second Adam in resurrection?”

Section 11

My beloved Brother,—You must not call yourself old as if you were tired. The Lord was never weary, yet the Ancient of Days; you have to renew your strength as an eagle to bear fruit in old age. I have heard little in detail of England, a little while back, only enough to learn that the Lord has been very gracious. I was able to trust Him, though knowing nothing, for I need not say being here does not hinder the brethren in London and elsewhere being on my heart.

I was not surprised at the breaking up of——, nor am I at their seeking some human resting-place now, for it was begun in self-will, and not with God. Often what we have to do is to leave things with God. He will not always use us in everything, but He will always do His own work, and we can or ought to trust Him for it. There are many things where I have had to leave all to Him, trusting Him fully, but feeling my path was to be still and do nothing—some through my own fault, where I had to cast myself specially on Him, some through the fault of others; but He will always do what is right…

I fear sometimes that dear——'s sanguine and hearty mind gives too glowing a picture of us here: still, the Lord has most graciously blessed us and is still blessing us, that is certain; but grace has its conflict with the opposings, and fears of nature as elsewhere. The Episcopal clergy are peculiarly bitter, but it is natural to them as, in certain respects, the worst going. Here they have no pretension to be the religion of the nation, and they have only their superstition and Judaism to lean upon, and those that are saints with a bad conscience.

What an awful show up of the Record… It is surely far better to leave such, even if we know all the details of their evil, without entering into conflict with them. It seems to me that the Established or Episcopal body are very rapidly sinking in character. It is one of the signs of the last days. Here the Wesleyans are hand-in-glove with the Papists, to gain political influence, and have in every way a bad reputation. Yet we have some dear saints from among them.

There is progress, too, among the Indians, among whom dear ——is working. They have three of them been with us in our general meeting, really uncommonly nice people. I purpose in two or three days visiting them again… Our meeting has been really very much blessed, and the presence of the Lord felt really among us. There were a good deal over 100, perhaps 130, about the half men.

I trust dear——, too, has got quite clear. He, too, has learned what the church is; he avows he never saw anything about it… We wait for the result as to the outward form, but the blessing is evident, and God is full of grace and faithfulness…

Poor——, you ought to have profound compassion for him. It is a sad picture of our poor nature, and in this case I do pity him immensely… It is a wonder he does not bow in heart under it all: but what is our nature—what is yours and mine, if grace does not keep us? But we ought to trust Him. In general the gatherings are going on in peace. I believe souls are still inquiring and seeking at Hamilton, and individuals in more than one new place getting hold and having got hold of truth. The testimony still tells on conscience. The Lord make His

beloved people faithful and devoted, that His testimony may be made good and increase and keep its hold.

I think one thing characterised the meeting just closing — more care for the church at large—and this gave a certain power, as it always does. It is not surely as full as it ought to be; still, concern for the Lord's people is dear to His heart.

Affectionate love to the brethren and your own house.

Ever, dearest——, affectionately yours.

Toronto, July 14th, 1863.

* * * * *

Dearest ——,—I should indeed have been glad to see you before I left; but our place as Christ's servants is to serve peacefully, where He calls, and to wait for all personal blessing till we get it with Himself, working while it is called to-day. Our sabbath will be with Him. This gives great rest and joy, too, now, but it is a joy which always looks forward.

At Montreal the Lord has been very gracious indeed. I had, too, a nice visit to Ottawa, where, though there were some fruits of isolation, I found subjection to the word, and sincere desire to serve Christ… I got, too, amongst the French Canadians: missionaries are hopeful, but it is as such a sorrowful picture of systematised missions, yet some of them true devoted people, but then chiefly unhappy: their support by the so-called churches exercising the most unhappy influence on those engaged in this work. The work itself is of deep interest to me. All this ought to bring us low before the Lord, and lead us to intercede earnestly for His work and people. I must close.

I still cherish the hope that I may be in Canada next year, but the Lord knows.

Affectionately yours.

[1863.]

* * * * *

My dear Brother,—I was very glad to get your account of the work, and so happy a one. I am sure true devotedness is the secret of power, and specially in these days; and that the value of brethren can only be if we so live in service for Christ, and for Christ specially among the poor: sunapavgete toi'" tapeinoi'", not "condescend" as so falsely translated in English. (Rom. 12:16.) We must remember that we are in the last days. Things are even going very fast, but the Lord is above all: He gathers together the tares in bundles. Patient continuing in well-doing is our path.

As regards your difficulty as to baptism, I am sure patience is our path there too. I can conceive nothing more false than a baptist testimony—more poor than a baptist church: the whole thing is a mistake. We are, according to 2 Timothy 2, purging ourselves from evil in a great baptised mass, thinking to begin and found, as with heathen, in a false position. But there has been such confusion and abuse that one must have patience with those thrown on these ordinance-ways of correcting them. They do it conscientiously. I should not stir my finger to hinder their own acting for themselves. If it was made a part of the testimony of the assembly as such, I should not go to it. I should not make any fuss, but keep my own place.

Dear —— assumed this position in —— that they baptized believers (himself the most inconsistent of men as to it) but admitted others. I said at once I could not go in that case: I went in the unity of the body, not on sufferance to a baptist meeting, and the thing was withdrawn, and said not to be meant in this way. Nothing would induce me to go to a baptist meeting; I would as soon go to popery. I should have objected to giving up the prayer meeting, and any public declaration of its being a part of their testimony; their private view of it, of course, they are free in. But we are called to peace. They attacked me once about it at——, and I found they could not answer at all from scripture. The person who attacked me was convinced, I think, that they were wrong; certainly they had no answer from scripture. But I would not trouble one of them: I do not admit their baptism to be really such at all; but they do it conscientiously, and believe it such, and I am content, as I accept the ordinance as Christ's. They must leave my conscience, free, too; I can bear with, but cannot bind my conscience by their ignorance, and Pam sure it is. If the assembly takes the ground of being baptists, of course I should not go But, I repeat, we are called to peace, and no individual (o. multiplied by many) expression of opinion would move me at all. It always does mischief where it is held, and narrows the spirit; but when the assembly is not formed on it, I am freee Seek peace and pursue it. And the Lord give you peace always, by all means.

Here the Lord blesses: numbers are a good deal increased, I have been in the States. Everywhere a growing sense of the worldliness and low estate of so-called churches, and spiritual persons ill at ease; but

there must be faith to act. I am off to New York, where the Swiss have called me. And then after Philadelphia, for a visit to Massachusetts, where there is testimony. The Lord has graciously helped me hitherto. I must close. Hold to what is essential and keep close to Christ; of your own thoughts be distrustful.

Ever affectionately yours.

Canada, September, 1863.

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[From the French.

Dear——,—Patience is often a great remedy, because there is a God who acts. You can well understand that the state of Lausanne has been a subject of deep interest to me. But there are cases where we must let God alone do all. If we had the energy of a Paul, perhaps good would be done, and evil would shew itself much more quickly by means of the spiritual energy of a man; but it is hardly so now. I have held also to its not being a personal disagreement between me and ——; but a matter in which the consciences of the brethren should be engaged. This is why I made no inquiries, I did not seek information about anything. I prayed. Perhaps you can remember that is what I did at the dissolution of the old assemblies of ——. I guessed more or less what was happening in principle, but I was ignorant of the facts.

I do not know what letters you speak of that have been published, perhaps those that I received from——a year and a half ago. In any case, I do not pay any attention to insults and personal abuse. I have had enough not to disquiet myself much about them; I hope for sufficient grace to account of myself to God, who loads me with

His goodness and pardons all my mistakes. At this moment the contempt in which the brethren find themselves is changed into hatred… I believe it is a good sign. If the brethren only walk well, I do not fear anything. Everything is dissolving. Where there is the truth and intelligence of the position of the church, Satan directs all his efforts against that; faithful, this will only do good; unfaithful, God will replace them by others; the testimony He will maintain. Those who have not the faith of the position will not remain there. It is a question, no doubt, of making united paths for the feeble; this is lacking, it seems to me sometimes, but no one will escape the difficulties and the exigencies of faith, if he walks with us.

I hope, indeed, to come to Switzerland. I cannot say exactly the moment, because I am kept here until certain engagements, of business, are terminated. You should have patience and decision. I desire union with all my heart, but being outside I should like better to see that it was solid before making it… If the foundation of the assembly is solid, it is well; if not, I prefer to wait. Only we should desire union, and have faith in the faithfulness of God to keep His own. If we seek truly the good of His own, we shall lose nothing by it, even though we make for ourselves enemies. If there is not faithfulness at bottom in the meeting, I should prefer to remain alone; but do not take notice of personalities.

I cannot say anything positively, I wait the manifestation of the will of God; but I have the thought of visiting Switzerland before very long…

Your affectionate brother.

London, November 23rd, 1863.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—I was very glad indeed to get your letter and hear of the work in Canada, to which, as well as the beloved brethren there, I have become deeply attached. I know not if my years and strength will permit, but I still (if they do) hope to visit America again; but, if allowed, should think of the States too, but that would properly require a younger, more energetic man, and we must look to the Lord to carry forward His own truth… It is a matter of thankfulness to hear of the places opening, and our wisdom is to follow the Lord's leading in this. I do trust the blessed Spirit of God will continue His own work in spreading the truth in Canada, for it is.God's truth and a blessing from Him, knitting the heart with Him according to His revelation of Himself, though accompanied with trial, as it surely will be. I see, too, the Lord more jealous of any evil among brethren than anywhere; they profess to have more truth, and He will not allow inconsistency with it, judges it, or puts them to shame. It is a blessing, surely; but still a solemn thought.

Here the truth is spreading: I do not mean merely the numbers of brethren, and meetings increasing, though that is widely the case; I do not now know them all; but around us people are beginning to feel they are in the last days, and all is moving. They want something real; are holding meetings on the Lord's coming, and the like. The path of the brethren is simple in the midst of all this, to walk peacefully and graciously in the truth, but in it. All this stirs up others, and, feeling justly that the testimony of brethren is at the bottom of it all, they attack them with virulence. We are more hated and less despised than we were. The attacks are violent and

unscrupulous, but often defeat themselves, and more strangers come to hear. I have felt the Lord with me since I returned, though a good deal knocked up with accumulated work and this climate; however, I have got on.

Here the brethren are getting on happily, and with a deepened tone and more union than when I left. A real difficulty in this immense place where we have now eighteen gatherings, is to go on as one—as separate in some sense as if they were twenty miles apart in the country, yet necessarily altogether from being raised up in the same town. The Lord has graciously provided, too, more visiting, in sending one or two to London.

I daily see more how entirely new a place grace has set us in. One must not thereby set aside or weaken our responsibility in our old place, which Christ fully met as was needed for God's glory; but He has let us in by having perfectly glorified God in that work, into the holiest of all by the rent veil, to be partakers of all the holiness and of all the blessing that is there. I find new scenes of delight thus opening to me. I seek in my ministry to settle souls strong in the foundation, and have had interesting fresh developments of the progress of truth in Romans: meeting the old thing (chap, 3); resurrection, only as far as life (chap, 4): love first mentioned (though grace is in a general way alluded to in chapter 3) in chapter 5, and thus leading into the new Adam standing; and in chapter 8, after the discussion of law, bringing us into Christ and Christ in us. My mind is still working on this, that is, inquiring in scripture. I was greatly interested in connecting Titus 1:2, 3, John 1:4, 1 John 1:1-3, and 2 Timothy 1:9, 10. What a character it gives to the life we have now, going into the new and

heavenly place by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, before the world, after all its present state, and out of it in spirit now, but (blessed be God) in communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; our conversation and polivteuma in heaven. But I believe I must close.

The Lord give you, dear brother, to keep very near Himself, and to remember that we are in the last days, and have to follow Christ wholly, and serve as those that wait for Him. Kindest love to the brethren, and the Lord bless your labours. I am finishing with two or three talking to me. I leave (D.V.) for Switzerland to-morrow.

Ever, beloved brother,

Affectionately yours.

London, December, 1863.

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* * * There are difficulties in your case which have to be overcome, but I am sure there is grace in Christ to enable you to do so. And “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.” I should be sorry to see —— leave, because I am sure it is the testimony of the Lord, however feeble the witnesses may be; but comparatively I am little concerned in that, if——hold fast by Christ. The danger is, that if it be the place of faithfulness and testimony, the leaving it is the downward path into the world… We have necessarily a good deal to learn, and till we have learnt ourselves we never know fully the value of Christ so as to leave the heart at rest. But grace can keep us waiting on Him while this process is going on. This is what I look for, for you and for him.

Popery is a rest for the flesh, and Satan is busy in the many distractions of the day in suggesting it; but it is really in its principles apostasy from the truth and church of God; not that I think any safe from it (though God can keep them) till they know redemption. Once I have believed Hebrews 10, Popery is the denial of and hostility to Christ; till then it may look like piety and humility (but is “voluntary humility”) and what not. It does not tell its heresies and abominations till you are in for it, and the spell of Satan is over a person; for its actual wickedness is beyond all belief. But if Christ is my righteousness, it is all a lie from beginning to end. It is really infidelity. Christ became a man to be near my heart and I trust Him, and God thus in Him. They tell me no, I must have saints and virgins, because He is so high above me. It denies His gracious tenderness: men, mortal men and women, are tenderer. This is a horrid denial of what He is. But see you hold fast through grace to a perfect redemption. Study Hebrews 9, 10. Learn your own heart, but cast your need on the perfect grace of Christ, and find what His heart is for us in patient and loving mercy. You will find peace and rest…

December, 1863.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,— … In general I have had very good meetings in Switzerland; there is plenty of need; where there have been difficulties, God is, I hope, working, and His good hand is over the brethren. Everywhere the manifest work of the Spirit of God is seen, and the violent efforts of the enemy. What we have to do is to persevere quietly, but with redoubled devotedness, in the Lord’s work. This is a time in which faith is

manifested by that quietness of soul which flows from confidence in God, and that devotedness which shews that one has the consciousness that everything traditional, everything external (evil excepted) is crumbling to pieces. The way is a very simple one, if the heart is simple; a very peaceful one, if the heart enjoys communion with God; happy there, we peacefully discern what will be most to His glory. I think that what has been a real subject of grief here will certainly be the means of blessing…

Peace be with you, dear brother.

Your very affectionate brother.

Lausanne, February 7th, 1864.

* * * * *

* * * The unity of Christ's body being the ground assumed, all Christians have, in principle, a title to be there, the Lord's name being maintained as to doctrine and discipline. If you insist on a certain standard of intelligence beyond Christ, before receiving them, you prove that you are not intelligent, and you abandon your own (namely, God's) principle.

At the same time, it is all well that young converts should wait; it would do them no harm. The great requisite for receiving, is satisfaction as to membership of the body of Christ… The principle is "one body and one spirit;" the resource, now that all is confusion and inconsistency, is Matthew 18:20.

[1864.]

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* * * There are three ways of looking at Christ: as dead and risen; as ascended and seated on high; as coming again. Now of these three great branches of christian truth—justification through the death and resurrection of Christ, the formation of the church in connection with Christ ascended and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the second coming of Christ to receive His saints and judge the world—the Reformation did not go beyond the first, the preaching of justification by faith. The last two were not even touched, so to speak. Similarly, Christians in general do not see these truths at the present day. Neither the distinctive calling of the church, nor the character of the Lord's coming again for us, is entered into beyond sayings and opinions. These are the great truths to present to their apprehension, rather than to begin with ways of meeting…

[1864.]

* * * * *

Dearest——,—I have been rather wondering not to have a line from you, and some account of all the beloved brethren in Canada… I should like to know everything about all of them in as much detail as possible. I feel knit up with Canada in a way almost strange for beginning it at my age, though indeed the kindness I received, as you know in it, warranted the feeling. But I think it was partly that as it was really a matter of faith for me crossing the ocean, the Lord blessed it in my fellowship with them. But whatever the secondary cause, I have felt specially the blessing of interest in and communion with them. I should be quite disposed, were I younger, to begin in the United States, too, but then it would require patient. and arduous service; that I see…

I have been in Switzerland, where I was comforted, though sorrow in the church carried me there. After all, I never had such good meetings.

Everywhere I think the Spirit of God is at work, making men feel that Christianity ought to be something more real. But infidelity and denial of inspiration spread in an astonishing way, but I find in the Lord one is always happy. Did I look, as I once did, even unconsciously to anything here, I should be dismayed and overwhelmed; but I do feel the heavenward path and my home there every day more simply mine. I am here for one of the translations, which a good deal made me leave Canada when I did. The German I have not yet set to work at.

There is a good deal of conversion going on in France, particularly in the Ardèche and the Doubs, but also in the Pyrenees, and a new field in Vaucluse. In the west also there is blessing, which is a new field of work. And the Lord has raised up some labourers. In Switzerland they are lacking, and the lack is felt. But God is wise in all things, even where we feel loss, though it be to our shame… I think (D.V.) of returning for a while. I am going (D.V.) to England for a short time, inconveniently to me, but the beloved brethren in the north are free Easter week, and have a conference [Bradford, March 25th], and have begged me to be at it, so I would not put them off. I shall have to return here. We are just going to have a little local conference, that is, three days of reading here. The letter of one invited tells us of an excellent evangelist of the free church who is delivered, and of the interesting progress of the work in the west (Charente)… In Germany there is widely extending work.

I hope still to get out again to America; but the Lord will guide. Work is plenty here. But if I go, though longing to see them all, and surely hoping thus to do so, I should think a little of the States, as I have some doors open in one or two places. But all this is in our blessed Lord and Master's hand. For my part, my journey to America has done me a great deal of good. I feel more than ever to belong to the Lord, and myself and the church not to be of this world, and look upward. The very infidelity current has helped me too, for all things help those who are with the Lord.

I really do not know brethren to whom I have become more attached than those in Canada, and good reason, from all their kindness. My affectionate remembrance to all you may see in your going about. We have had a Canadian winter everywhere, even in Italy, skating at Florence, and weeks of hard frost in Switzerland, and even in the south of France such weather as I never knew there.

Peace be with you, beloved brother, and the Lord's blessing on your work, with kindest remembrance.

Affectionately yours.

Pau, March 3rd, 1864.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—I felt the death of dear——more than I can tell you, just as he seemed to be coming out too into evangelising work. I felt the deepest interest in him and his countrymen, and it came upon me bowing my heart before the Lord, but I know all His ways are best and good; I have no doubt of His love or wisdom. That feeling was never weakened, but from His hand it spoke

to the- heart, not to arouse the will, but to bow implicitly to His wise and holy ways in a world of sorrow; but of His goodness I have no doubt. I am very glad you are a little amongst them: if you see them after receiving this, give them all my kindest love and truest sympathy.

As to the clergy, though you and I have been both somewhat in a similar way amongst them, we must only leave them to their own ways. It is sad, but all else is useless. I do not expect anything from them, when acting as such, but what is heartless and low. I have known many saints among them; but still I say, when acting in the spirit of their order, such (and the world knows it) is their character. There is a distinct loss of moral sense and sensibility. As a system, nobody can describe the horror I have of it, but in general I see no good in attacking them in any way: some I have personally much loved. As to Dr. C. and Dr. C, I do not think much about it. One is so low, that any one of any right feeling can easily judge it, and his ignorance too, and the second is decidedly heretical on the Newton doctrine; but little the clergy care about this; but in such cases it is always the best way to leave it all to God: "Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord, my God." As to ——, as I once said to another in a different case, you get as dirty in contending with a sweep as in hugging him. But our part is to live above these things, and to think not of attacks but of souls.

The opposition arises from the progress of truth, and from the consciousness they have that all their affair is hollow and crumbling. In England, the judgment of the Privy Council, deciding that the clergy is not bound to hold the scriptures to be inspired, has thrown dismay into their ranks, the rather as it overthrows the

episcopal judgment. There is a commission to change the terms of subscription. In France, the result of a question in the Bible Society is the public proposal to make two churches of the national body. Those who would [have] a confession left before: one who is infidel and excluded is founding another on his own basis. Popery, of course, profits by this, yet those same men pretend they alone can meet it. Positivism, that is, that we can believe nothing but what comes under sensible experience of man's power is rampant; the most absurd and lowest of all forms of infidelity. I asked one the other day if he could tell me if I had a soul. No. That I had not one? No. That there was an eternity? No. That there was not? No: he might probably perish like a leaf. I asked the pupil if it was not leading to absolute ignorance: it was admitted. Another told me he did not know what conscience was; perhaps intelligence and habits mixed, heart and affection, warmer blood. You may conceive the degradation of all this.

It is not to alarm I say all this: the Lord is as faithful as ever, and the work of God is as evident as the power of evil; but it does not influence the world where it is not real. The path of the saint is simpler, only he must be decided to be anything. Those who do not believe in the Lord's coming say the church is going through a crisis, and will come out brighter: those who do, but are not faithful, are mournful, and embittered against those who see what is going on. We have only to pursue our way, doing good, and I find the doors more open than ever. My journey to America has done me good. I am, I trust, more loose to the world than ever, and feel I belong only to another world, and I bless God for it.

There is one characteristic of the time in many who are getting loose from evil systems, the wish to belong to nothing. It is really want of faith to be decided in what is right, but it takes the form or pretext of liberty and love. Now I delight in spiritual liberty for myself and others: I could not give it up; I would not ask another to do so; but looseness of intention is not liberty, nor carelessness of conscience. I dread narrowness, but the wish to be free from divine restraint and walk carelessly, even as regards the church, or really as regards the world, is not liberty; it is a cloak of looseness of conscience, of insubjection to Christ's authority. I have no pretension to impose my way of seeing things on any one; but there is a claim, a system of freedom from Christ's yoke which, I believe, is most hurtful to souls: I never asked a person to come among brethren in my life, nor ever would. It is a current system—I believe fundamentally bad; I know many beloved ones in it. It is a snare to them: I wait to see them clear. There is less of it in Canada; much in England and Ireland. Monstrous effects sometimes arise, things worse than purgatory taught in their common meetings; sometimes in consequence only select speakers allowed; but protestations of the sweetest communion with those who taught them, and an avowal that no common basis of truth was to be looked for.

How blessed to be peacefully delivered from all these things, and yet have the heart open to every saint; for my own part I feel daily more—and with Christ Himself—the blessedness of the position in which He has set me. I have seen weakness enough in my carrying it out, but never in the thing itself.

As regards your difficulty as to the place left you, I think it is often a proof of the weakness of saints—not their

waiting to be edified by another, not always there; I see nothing but what is very comely in that—but in not freely, though doing that, taking a simple part as the Lord leads them, in some part even if they do not speak. But it is very often a source of trouble to myself. In very country parts it is often useless to press them, as it distresses them, provided full open is left for the action of the Spirit of God. Where more exercised brethren are, all that is needed is to leave the fullest opportunity for their action, all through the service, and then act in simplicity; but I have been often troubled by it, for even in the act of giving thanks—a service I delight in—leaving it always to one is distressing. When we really seek the full action and liberty of the Spirit of God, the Lord will graciously order all. The drawing out others to activity according to God is a gift in itself.

As regards the work there is nothing very particular. In France there is considerable conversion, and some new labourers raised up; and, in general, occasion for thankfulness, though we might look for a great deal more spiritual power: still, generally, there is progress, extension of the work, and conversion: in the Free Church excessive looseness of doctrine, both here and in Switzerland. There, though I went by reason of sorrow, in one place I never had such good meetings, and hope to return. In Germany the work prospers. In Holland it is stationary. In England and in Ireland, in general, considerable progress; but, I think, some want of knitting together, partly from its extended character. In London they are both increasing and there is very much to be thankful for. Nor do I, indeed, think of any particular sorrow save at one place in Ireland and one in England, which last, however, save for the souls

concerned, I think, is rather the contrary. As to numbers, the increase is rapid enough, and I certainly think growth in seriousness and reference to the Lord increased. More strength of union is the chief lack, I think… In all cases our path is simple, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing our labour is not in Vain in the Lord; in due time we shall reap if we faint not —much internal life and intercourse with the Lord, and then devotedness, but the first gives all its power to the latter.

The word is ever richer to me: I have been lately occupied with the difference of Ephesians 3 and 1. The latter puts the Christian in his position before God, the former fills us with Christ up to all the fulness of God, setting us in the fulness of that divine centre, in the apprehension there of the whole of that in which God glorifies Himself; in the intimacy withal of Christ's love. I have not yet thoroughly examined chapter 4:in its own place at following this. I see it is the fruit of the power x and presence of the Holy Ghost in us. The prominency of infidelity and positivism has made me feel more than ever how the knowledge of God in Christ is a divine work and? gift; how we owe all to sovereign grace. But as I get on I feel it is a more natural thing to belong to God: to he out of it an unnatural state. This has made me happy, and given a peaceful character to my spiritual feelings. Sovereign grace has put us, in the second Adam, in this relationship; but to be in relationship in peace is the only normal state. And that is peace; but then it makes one so much the more feel that the world is a wholly outside thing, a sorrowful scene of minds, souls actively in confusion. Yet even we have to be athirst for God; if we have seen Him in the sanctuary,

not only we long for our Father's house, but love the ways there, though they pass through the vale of tears—but athirst for God; and in this we are satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and praise while we live, because we have His favour which is better than life. The Lord keep us both patiently and fervently near Himself, drawing from that source of blessing and truth.

My heart still looks to a visit again to America. I am somewhat old to undertake the United States, but I do trust dear ——is raised up for blessing. I have been, however, happy in it, and that I surely have been almost surprised at the way I have got attached to Canada—not, indeed, from what I met with there, for 1 met with every possible kindness, but when reflecting because of my age; but the Lord orders things after all, not man, nor even his time of life. I feel my spirit as thoroughly in the country as if I had been always of it, and more happily. However, our work is where the Lord sends us. Faith, I believe, brought me there, and so I was happy. The need is great here; still, I hope, if the Lord allow me, to see you all again. I know not where you may be. The Lord's grace and peace be with you, dear brother.

Yours affectionately in Him.

Pau, March, 1864.

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Dearest ——,—We have had our conference, and though some points exercised me, yet, I think, with more blessing in result than in others where there was none such; the brethren serious, disposed to own declension of life where there had been such and to accept the humiliation, sound in faith, and some important points as to setting free from sin, and the sinner's state, very

distinctly wrought out into their faith. This was very useful.

France is in a peculiar state. The struggle of infidelity and orthodoxy in the national body is come to a head. In a general conference in Paris the infidels had but some half-dozen votes. But they threatened new elections for the presbytery. They had a counter-work at Nismes, but the infidel clergy—a large majority—found if the laity voted, elders, &c., they would be in a minority, and allowed them no vote, only a consultative voice; but the laity, after discussing, rose in a body and left, a protest perhaps more significant than at Paris. They talk openly of how to form a new church, but the effrontery of the infidels has acted upon many sluggish and indifferent souls, producing the feeling—if we are Christians, after all we must have something real. It is a time of importance. Were I not in America, I should think of being in winter somewhat in France….

I leave the South en route for Switzerland in a few days, but have a conference at Valence on the way. I have been too much taken up with large meetings lately: I like work. Kind love to all.

Affectionately yours.

June, 1864.

My dear Brother,—I have just received your letter in the south of France, in the midst of a conference, but am anxious to reply a few words. I have not Mr. S——'s book, so that I cannot examine it closely; I looked it over when our brother ——sent it to me; I thought the passage he referred to to be regretted. Other things in the tract seemed to me to be almost of more importance, though not apparent. But I am a little jealous of making

every mistake a matter of public discipline by a kind of judgment of a council; sometimes we give importance to what would have none. It is a different matter when evil teaching or doctrine is introduced into a meeting of which I am a part. My impression was that the tract would have died a natural death. I make a difference between a person not rightly dividing the word of truth, and positively teaching on the part of the enemy what dishonours the Person of Christ, or saps any fundamental truth. Few are capable of not overstepping the bounds of sound doctrine, even in opposing positive error. Our beloved brother exposed himself to attacks by expressions. He was sound in his positive truth, but in attacking error wrote so as to commit himself, and the enemy, of course, profited by it. I never for a moment would give him up, though the first to warn him, because I was satisfied he was sound in doctrine, though he had stumbled into regrettable mistakes. I declared, did he hold what he was accused of, I could not for a moment be in communion with him; but he did not… This is for me the question with——. I am perfectly satisfied he is wrong in his views—his letter proves it; his tract I have not here (I will try and have it sent me). But I remember the time when the believing Christ to have been a priest upon earth was considered the test of orthodoxy against the Socinians…

If it was answered that bearing sin imparted defilement, the words would have to be explained, or it would be slippery ground. I do not believe that “this he did once” (Heb. 7:27) refers to His offering for sins in any sense for Himself. But if a person took it only in the sense of representation for His people, I think it a mistake, but there is no thought of his dishonouring

Christ. I should examine the book before I said anything more. It seemed, as I read it, a book of very particular opinions and views, where there was confidence in a man's own thoughts. I dread this, it always leads to notions and errors. I should dread and examine very closely the notion of Christ's ear, &c, being touched with blood. If it was meant merely that the perfectness of the obedience marked by His death was realised in every act of His life, I might not agree— fear such tendencies—but no harm might be meant.

I do not think Christ was a priest on earth, save as representing Aaron on the great day of atonement on the cross—and I suspect this infects all his views. Aaron was anointed with oil, without blood, alone first. But error in interpretation is another thing from deliberately teaching a system dishonouring to Christ, and I dread excessively for brethren the dissecting of doctrine relative to Christ and His offering. The great traits are vital; pretending to accuracy destroys reverence and leads to infidelity. Mr.——, I fear, through confidence in his own studies, has run into this; the worst of consequences would be the brethren following him into it, even to oppose him… What I dread is any number of brethren committing all to what many may be incapable of entering into.

I have found the tract and read it through; absorbed by one subject, it abounds, in my judgment, in blunders. That brethren have repudiated it for themselves is all very well; I repudiate the statement myself; and his letter adds to the confusion. But I still think it calls for no public action. When needed, the blunders may be shewn. But that is better for all than a fuss about it. He makes priesthood depend on union, which is a mistake.

He confounds worship with priesthood, or rather, effaces worship by it—a very serious mistake. He talks of the Father hiding His face, which is a mischievous confusion; but all this is ignorance on points to which his attention probably has not been called. You will be surprised, perhaps, when I say that the whole is, to me, ignorance of self and unsuspected self-righteousness. He little thinks so, if I am, indeed, right. He has meddled with what was beyond his measure; but I doubt he meant to dishonour Christ, and, though I reject the interpretation in the matter accused, I do not apprehend he meant otherwise than that Christ offered for Himself once, and as bearing our sins and identified with us; I do not think this scriptural… This is connected with the grave mistake of making Christ a priest, with blood, during His life. The for ever in his letter is a curious blunder. But then I make a total difference between the blunders of a man and a work of Satan undermining Christ in Himself… He thought he saw far into the matter, and it is evident to me that he is mistaken.

* * * * *

Dearest ——, — I was. just thinking of writing to you, without any particular motive but that it was so long since I had, when I got your letter upon my arrival here in Zurich. As regards the text, Hebrews 9:12, it has occupied all interpreters, and my own mind, in reading scripture. The whole matter is that S——has trusted the English, or overlooked the commonest possible use of diav. “This is he that came by [diav] water and blood.” Whatever characterises, or is as circumstances surrounding, is expressed by diav; so Romans 2:27, where the sense is unmistakable. So chapter 4:11, pisteuovntwn di akrbustia"; so chapter 14:20, diaV

proskovmmato" ejsqivonti; 2 Corinthians 2:4, diaV pollw'n dakruvwn; so that genevsqai diav is used in the classics for the active verb. Romans 8:25, dij uJpomonh'" ajpekdecovmeqa; Hebrews 12:1, dij uJpomonh'" trevcwmen.

Further, it was not in virtue of the blood of bulls and goats that the high priest entered in; indeed, what was to hinder his dying himself was the cloud of incense. If it had been alleged that the bullock was for the church and the goat for Israel (not that I should pronounce this), my mind would have been otiose in hearing it; but when he says “both” in that sacrifice, he makes Christ distinct from the sacrifice. In the consecration, Aaron is sanctified alone, without blood; and then his sons with him, with blood, and their garments with him (not “them”), because without him they had no reality of existence. But that on which——rests all his system is wholly without foundation; it is a mistake as to the use of diav. When it is said that God brought Him from the dead, it is ejk, not diav. (Heb. 13:20.) The whole fabric of doctrine is therefore contradicted by an intelligent apprehension of the text of scripture.

The appeal to Psalm ex. is extraordinary; not only the whole psalm is based on setting Christ at God’s right hand, but the whole reasoning of the apostle on it in Hebrews 6, 7; and, indeed, the gist of the whole Epistle is to prove that it is in heaven and not on earth. “Such an high priest became us,” who is “made higher than the heavens” in “the power of an endless life.” He is consecrated eij" toVn aijw'na, and He must be a man to be so. (See chap. 6:20.) Had He even entered into the holy place during His life as priest He would have done so without blood; but He entered in ejfavpaz, “once for

all having obtained eternal redemption for us." The whole of this doctrine, therefore, is unfounded. I dread pursuing figures with an unsanctified spirit; they are most instructive when we have solid truth as the base, but the mind may run into all ideas by them.

The word "associates Himself" with sinners is in itself too vague to rest upon; where it comes in the pamphlet it is a contradiction; either it is substitution—and then it is not "both"—or Christ is distinct and presents Himself distinct as a sinner. I do not know what identity with each other means; is it substitution, or is Christ for Himself apart, as other sinners (each for himself) are, though united in the need of the sacrifice? Where was the need of Christ's offering for Himself'? Was it the sin of others? Then it is substitution, or taking their place—or some entrance of His own into the place of guilt, not for others, but with—so that the sacrifice for Him, since He was sinless, was an untruth. I find much that is vague and uncertain. In the burnt-offering (p. 15) the animal's blood was shed, and shed for atonement. Again, "here, too, the Lord Jesus associates His people with Himself"—how "too"? His being associated with sinners as such is not associating His people with Himself; it is the opposite. All this is very unsolid ground, but hardly needs to be taken up and made a crime of. I find on page 17 the same uncertain sound, but on a more serious point. "The same sacrifice serves for all, and brings them near to the same God, in the same place of acceptance." Now, that Christ is, as man, in the presence and favour of God, after being abandoned for others, is blessedly true; but if the same sacrifice serves for all, that is, Christ and His people, and brings them near, it makes Him afar off Himself, and needing to be

brought near; all this is worse than loose. So, that the incense is the prayers of the saints 1 judge not sustainable, where Christ offers it: in Revelation 5:we find the thought, but not with Christ the offerer. I do not know what “we as priests, may sprinkle the blood” means, that is, I do not believe it has any true sense, or that —— could give it any. But I do not doubt that many a poor saint enjoys the urging to priestly character in truth, and slips over the evil, without noticing anything particular; only there is danger of imbibing with it. But they are bee-like; suck the honey from every flower. He has committed himself, by self-confidence, to a series of blunders, founded on ignorance of the use of diav, or inattention to it.

The talking of Christ’s identifying Himself with Himself (for He is the victim), as if He was so associated with sinners that a victim was necessary for Him, and yet He was the victim for Himself as sinless enough to be so, is utter confusion. This is the theory of page 15. It may seem very profound, but it is far away from the simplicity of scripture. That He was made sin for us we believe; but was He made sin for Himself? (unless He be taken simply as the representative or substitute of His people, which, though it may be held innocently, is itself rather forcing expressions)… That Christ was a priest down here, I reject as fundamentally false, save as He, as High Priest, represented the people on the great day of atonement.

As regards the Notes on Leviticus, they were made by Miss T. from lectures at Plymouth, and though I do not doubt the substance in them, I must decline wholly being responsible for the expressions: even when one looks over such, if attention be not drawn to them,

particular expressions are overlooked. Nor would I, when the purport is scriptural, make a man an offender for a word.

The part that pressed our own acting as priests in close union with Christ, is the part that has probably attracted pious persons who have not noticed the evil part, taking for granted that it was what is generally held. You have no idea how few are theologians, even in their faith.

I was very glad indeed to hear of the general blessing from God's gracious goodness. We have had a meeting in Guernsey, common to French and English, and the Lord's approbation and blessing was very sensibly felt. Of England I know nothing very recent; I think the brethren have an increased feeling that they must be devoted, and expectation of the coming of the Lord.

In France we cannot complain. There is a new and interesting field in the Charente, and in the Ardèche a good many conversions; in some places a want of energy, but in general the work maintains its ground and progresses; here and there one would be glad to see more energy in the work, though this does not apply to all, and God has raised up some new labourers. I sent dear——some account I think of what has been going on in France; outside brethren, much evil, but a reaction of a very distinct character. The Lord willing, I purpose leaving in October for Canada, I suppose by Halifax and Boston.

The letter of——to G. distinctly affirms the point in which he is wrong, and I have no hesitation in saying is founded on bad Greek. The English may be pleaded, but I am satisfied the translators never entered into the doctrine. The notion of Christ's being a priest for ever,

as he states it, is I think the most absurd idea I ever heard of; contradicting the whole doctrine of scripture and of Hebrews on the subject. He could not genhqh'nai ajrciereva [chap. 5:5], was a priest without being a man without anybody to be priest for even, without blood; there is no end to the contradictions; He could not be consecrated, it was only when He was teleiwqeiv" that He was saluted of God according to Psalm ex. (See Heb. 5:6.) The insisting on the word “art” is inconceivable; it is in italics even in the English Bible, Old [Psa. 110:4] and New Testament, while in the New it is applied to the time of His being perfected, after His crying and tears. It is to be remembered that contrast is more found in Hebrews than comparison. But I close this; it is not my object to make a treatise, but you will understand why I thought that with explanation when needed it might have died de sa belle mort…

Ever affectionately yours.

Zurich, August 12th, 1864.

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Dearest——,—I was for some days back, waiting the moment to write to you (moving about from meeting to meeting in the Jura), moved by the same motive which brought me yours, for which I heartily thank you, and am so far glad that mine was delayed, as I had yours without even one from me. If your strength be spared a little, I hope to see you. I purpose on my way to Canada, instead of sailing from Liverpool, to go and see you in Dublin, and get on board at Cork. I trust the Lord may so order it, but His way I am sure is best. Oh, how truly I feel that! You can hardly think how I feel that, and myself a stranger here. I have ever found in you, dear

brother, everything that was kind; nor be assured was it lost upon me, though I am not demonstrative.

Besides the value I had for you, it was not a small thing to me that you, with dear C. and H., were one of the first four, who with me, through God's grace the fourth, began to break bread in Dublin, what I believe was God's own work: much weakness I own in carrying it out, little faith to make good the power which was and is in the testimony, but God's own testimony I am assured —in every respect, even as to the gospel to sinners, what He was doing. I knew, for one, in no wise, the bearing and importance of what I was about, though I felt in lowliness we were doing God's work. The more I go on, the more I have seen of the world, the more of Christians, the more I am assured that it was God using us for His testimony at this time. I never felt it as I do; but it is not my purpose to dwell on it now, and I fully own our weakness. It is to you, dear brother, my heart turns now, to say how much I own and value your love, and to return it; I rejoice that while I have been the object of many kindnesses on your part down here, it is one which will never cease, which has had Jesus our Master for its bond, though with many human kindnesses. But oh, what joy to know oneself united to Him! It adds a joy untold, to every sweetness: it is the source of it too. Surely He is all. For me, I work on till He call me, and though it would be a strange Dublin without you, yet I go on my way, serve others, say little and pass on. Not that I do not deeply love others, but this will all come out in its truth in heaven, perhaps on one's death-bed; but I have committed my all to Him till that day. My hope is still to see you, my beloved brother; should I not, be assured there is none who has loved you

more truly and thankfully than myself; it can hardly be unknown to you, though with me it is more within than without. Peace be with you. May you find the blessed One ever near you; that is everything. Faithful is He withal and true. In His eternal presence, how shall we feel that all our little sorrows and separations were but little drops by the way, to make us feel that we were not with Him, and when with Him, what it is to be there. Oh, how well ordered all is! I ever long more to be in heaven with Him before the Father, though I desire to finish whatever He has for me to do; and if it keeps me awhile out, it keeps me out for Him, and then it is worth while, and grace…

I am glad to have a moment to finish my letter, though in haste (I am full 500 or 600 miles from where I began it), and somewhat with a child's joy having nothing to do to-day, from those with whom I have to work here not being arrived, in the house of one most full of brotherly kindness. I have thought too of little fruit. I find that while specially happy in evangelising, my heart ever turns to the church's being fit for Christ. My heart turns there. God knew I suppose, that I was too weak and too cowardly for the other; but I reproach myself sometimes with want of love for souls, and above all, with want of courage, and love, would give that—it always does; but in the consciousness of my shortcoming I leave all with Christ. He does after all what He pleases with us, though I do not seek to escape blaming myself through this; and if He is glorified I am heartily content with anything, save not to love Him.

May His joy and peace be with you, dearest——, and again thanks to you for your letter, which was a true

delight to me. Yours affectionately in our blessed Master, whom no words can rightly praise.

September, 1864.

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* * * Our present path is a very simple one. There may be all sorts of evil here and there, and even God's people are so mixed up with it, that we may not be able to say who are His and who are not. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." But we have also a word to act upon the conscience: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." If you say, I know what I am in is unscriptural, and I am constantly involved in what is wrong, but I see nothing better; I answer that you must not go on with that: "depart from iniquity." We are told to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonour—that he who does, "shall be a vessel unto honour," sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Then, it may be urged, you will have to go alone, or lead in some new thing. But not so; I have to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." In these days, however, a great deal of patience also may be needed, as, indeed, Paul proceeds to remind Timothy in his day. Jeremiah was indignant at the state of things he saw around him; but he received the word, "If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." (Chap, 15) So, at present, one might be provoked to abstain from having anything to do with persons in the sects, &c.; but we have to remember that there are true saints of God in these associations, whose

good we are to seek for the Lord's sake, and deliverance from all that is offensive to Him. If it be argued that, in this case, we ought to go with them, the answer is, "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them."

1864.

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My dear Brother,—As regards Acts 1:18, 19, and Matthew 27:3, &c.; I take Acts 1:18, 19 for a parenthesis of Luke's. The passages have been much discussed. The field was looked at as Judas' field, being purchased with his money; as some even say, he having bargained for it, the priests completed it, and appropriated it to this purpose: he got a field as the reward of his iniquity, his money being employed for this. We have not details enough to connect the two accounts of his death. Some think, being hung he fell down, and thus the catastrophe took place. But I do not reject your thought of the association of Judas and the priests. The account in Acts supposes he went and fell headlong at first—at once—so that the passage does not.imply that he got regular possession by contract himself. It is very possible that "purchased" is too definite; he got a field—with Matthew 27—is bought, purchased. It was probably some poor waste ground, and Judas having thus gone and hung himself there, they bought it formally and appropriated it to this use. It is supposed he fell down on his face when he hung himself.

I do not take yuchv (Acts 2:31) in any other sense but soul. His soul was in hades, His body in the grave: but I do not see how it separates His soul from His Person; the divine nature has nothing to do with place. His soul was separated from His body, but both held by divine

power, so to speak, for His resurrection and glory. I do not think leaving out hJ yuchV aujtou' makes much difference, as it is in the psalm and quoted before. But I see no difficulty in the statement; for His soul was in paradise, His body in the grave; a{dou is merely the invisible place of departed spirits without more.

There are many statements as to facts we cannot explain because we have not the connecting link—as supposing the field was on a rock, an easy thing at Jerusalem, and he fell from the hanging place down it. I have no particular notion it was so, I use it as an illustration. If we knew such a fact, the statement is very plain. In doctrines many things are difficulties, because beyond sight we know so little.

Your affectionate brother.

1864.

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To the same.]

Dear Brother,—I judge the sleep of the soul to be a most wretched and unscriptural idea. The word never hints at such a thing—all live unto Him: a Christian “falls asleep” when he dies; but we have the certainty that it is used for death itself, not for the soul’s sleeping after death, by what the Lord says in the case of Lazarus. But the passages you quoted are ample to my mind and clear. It is a sorrowful thing if being with the Lord is vague; it is a main feature in final blessedness. Both the souls under the altar, and Lazarus and Dives, shew it is false. I freely admit they are figures, and the latter adapted to Jewish notions, but not figures of being asleep…

I apprehend that “the blood of the everlasting covenant” is in contrast with the covenant in and for them and the world in Sinai and for Israel—as in all the contrast in Hebrews. Here it is established in the power of the resurrection, of an endless life, as he says elsewhere. It is that which lasts for ever, is real, and for souls, and in the power of the resurrection.

Revelation 20:4 corresponds, I think, to those slain under the beast, and before, when it might have seemed too late when the saints are gone, and so are especially mentioned as having a part in it.

I am just arrived from Elberfeld.

Affectionately yours.

London, October. 1864.

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My dear Brother,—Though I am glad of every jealousy as to Christ and His work, yet we approach the subject altogether from a different point of view. You say we should be no losers if they were confined to the cross, because it would suffice to their comfort and help: I wholly reject this view of the matter. My soul rests, I trust, simply on the cross, but I think I am an immense loser if I lose anything of those sorrows and ways of love in which my Master went in grace. I understand the difficulty printing gives, as it presents points to all for which all are not prepared; hence I am not anxious to prove or explain. People will see clearer as they get on; and if they have the essentials, if they lose much, at least they are safe.

You say if the awful hour of the cross sufficed to deliver Jew and Gentile from an eternity of misery, surely it

would to supply to their comfort and help while here all such experiences. This is every way false, and to me only shews a soul—forgive my plainness—not peacefully settled on the cross. Our experience and the cross are two distinct things. Atonement gets out of the reach of experience: it only connects itself with experience when its value is not fully known as such. But it further shews, as is consequently quite natural, that you have not before you in the smallest degree the question at issue. The remnant of the Jews will not have the knowledge of that deliverance until they look on Him whom they have pierced, and hence want all that accompanied it as sorrow and distress before deliverance to sustain and hold up their souls; and this is the constant current of thought in the Psalms. “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,” and the like, in a multitude of passages. Besides your principle would make the sorrows of Christ, as suffering being tempted, entirely useless (we should lose nothing) even for us. They are not the cross. I will not enter into your own arrangement of the psalm, and the difficulties you have created to yourself by it, but meet the main points on which your mind rests as to my statements.

The New Testament is most distinct in its evidence that there was something besides anticipation; though anticipation of what closed these sufferings aggravated the passage towards what so closed it. I really cannot understand the state of several minds here except by a growing conviction that they have no real sense of what atonement is. Take the simplest things: was it no suffering to be deserted, betrayed, denied by those dear to Him, to look for compassion and find none? Was it no suffering which made Him weep over beloved

Jerusalem? no suffering to give up all He was so deeply attached to in the earthly elect people of God, and His Messiahship as then to be made good? Did Paul not suffer when he had wished himself accursed for his brethren according to the flesh, whose were the promises, the law, the covenants, and Christ according to the flesh? Did he feel this deeply, and Christ Himself not? Was it not indignation of God against Israel? It is the technical term in Psalms and prophets for it. You may see the use of the word as to Egypt in Psalm 78:49; for its use as to Israel see Isaiah 10:5, 25, 26:20: 30:27 applies to the nations, but Israel will be in it: Jeremiah 15:17 where it is exactly the Spirit of Christ entering into what was on the Jews; so Lamentations 2:6, &c, Daniel 11:36, where we have the whole scene of the latter days. The application of indignation and wrath to Israel in government is the just and clear expression of the word of God. (Head Lam. 1, 2.) Do you think, or do you not think, that the Spirit of Christ entered into all this Himself, or was it merely Jeremiah's feelings? Or did He sorrow over sufferings in Zedekiah's time, and not enter the least into the far more terrible ones depicted in Daniel and Matthew 25, where it is said as a principle, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted?" Read in Micah 7 and stop at verse 9: has Christ in Spirit had no part in that? Yet in all this there is not atonement, no shedding of blood, no expiation. Those animated with the Spirit of Christ entered in their measure into them, as Jeremiah and Micah, and indeed others shew; but they had nothing to do with expiation. I really see nothing but ignorance, and, alas! often ignorance of what expiation is, as the objections made to what I have said. That such are safe I freely admit; pious even in the confusion they make between sorrow and expiation, I

freely admit too; but that they lose nothing I cannot. They lose immensely, and lose what I have no thought, with God's help, of losing with them. The only detail that remains is the period at which Christ specially entered into this. I may tell you that some of my adversaries find the great sin of all exactly in what you insist as good and necessary. On the cross they declare there was expiation and no other suffering: elsewhere it may be. But I do say, because scripture is express and emphatic on the point, that there was a change in the position of the Lord previous to the cross; provided that it be distinguished from expiation, and that it were not by birth, but by grace when here as a Man, the moment is, comparatively speaking, indifferent, and to be learned simply from scripture. He began specifically to announce it to His disciples on His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. John declares several times that nobody touched Him, or the like, for His hour was not yet come. That hour is thus distinctly marked in scripture as in contrast with His ordinary ministry. At the last supper He refuses to drink with His disciples as He usually did. In Luke 22:35, 36, referring to their mission in Israel, in which He cared for them as Jehovah Messiah, He marks the difference as "when" and "now." The same difference is marked in the most emphatic way in verse 53. If that was their hour and the power of darkness, the previous ones were not; nor though they led the way to it, and Christ in that hour turned to His Father's will in it in His perfect piety, is their hour and the power of darkness expiation. It may result in that hour, in His being forsaken of His God on His appeal from that power to God; but the evil power of darkness and the forsaking are not the same (woe be to him who thinks it so), though they may go together, and one

precede the other, and He appeals from the sorrows of one to God against it, and then finds Himself forsaken as no one else who trusted Him ever was. Further, the Lord states, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here and watch with me.” Here was real sorrow, suffering (and not mere anticipation), for it was the present power of death upon His soul, and the power of darkness; yet it is clear He was not drinking the cup, for He prays He may not.

Your statement as to page 2624 is as incorrect as it can well be. I find nothing in page 26 of Christ having the exercises of a soul awakened, &c. What I find there is this: Christ has passed through all these kinds of sufferings, only the last, of course, as a perfect being to learn it for others: I need not say He was perfect in all. Now allow me to say that having the exercises of a soul —your words are as charging me, Christ “had the exercises … learning when a sinner,” &c.; my statement is, Man may be looked at, &c, as in this state, and then that Christ passed through the suffering as learning it for others: now allow me to say, when people take on themselves to accuse they should be exact. I am perfectly sure that it was the impression of your mind, but this I am satisfied flows from not entering into what expiation is, and what Christ suffered. I acquit you wholly of any wrong intention in it; be it so, say that, and I have no more to say. But it is different when we make a charge of what we do not understand. I believe Christ did enter into all the exercises of a soul in this state, and in particular of Israel, to whose state in the latter days the condition of souls under the law is very analogous. They have God’s judgment of sin before their eyes; so had Christ then, but He was not under it as drinking the

cup. They are awakened, quickened, upright in desire, yet not delivered: Christ had the life by which they are quickened, and felt all that one perfectly upright could feel; and what He was in Himself they will receive, as nature and desire, through Him. Christ was in the deepest way learning—Himself perfectly good —all that evil was experimentally, as the hatred of man against Him. The reproaches of them that reproached God fell on Him; and here this was come up to a crisis without restraint, and according to the power of Satan in it. No christian man can deny it. He had hatred for His love, and here it came out unrestrained, and all Satan's power in it; yet He was not yet drinking the cup of God's wrath, though this hatred of course went on in its effects to the time He did.

It is expressly stated in my tract that He passed through it as a perfect being, learning it for others. I pity with my whole soul those who do not see it; who, being ignorant of the true power of expiation in the drinking of the cup on the cross, do not see the reality of His suffering in Gethsemane, including anticipation, which is distinctly referred to in the passage; and who deny the power of Satan as pressing on Him, which He distinctly declares ("The prince of this world cometh"); and man's hour as the enemy of God; or suppose that Christ felt nothing about it. Was the full power of Satan let loose upon Him when He said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," which was before the cross, though in its effect continued up to it? Israel will not learn the knowledge of God's favour resting upon them, and hence dread rejection and condemnation. This Christ went through as suffering far more deeply than ever they will, because He was distinctly anticipating the cup

He had to drink, which they were in their measure dreading, but never will. You repeat, Christ's having the exercises of a soul when a sinner! which is your own imagination, not what I have said. But I think you wholly and deplorably wrong when you say, "What could intensify their sufferings equally with a knowledge of God's favour resting on them?" They are beset by enemies, treachery, betrayal, all recognised as deep sufferings of Christ. There is the subtlety and besetting of Antichrist, the deep dart power of Satan pressing upon them, using withal the fear of judgment, or the cup of God's wrath to press upon their soul and turn them aside. It is not a question of "equally," but of the pressure on them running up into the wrath they dread; and this Christ did go through—as to Antichrist, what was equivalent—before He drank the cup; but anticipating it He declares He did. It is used constantly in the Psalms to encourage the remnant of Israel, as distinct from the subsequent full knowledge of atonement. Satan departed from Him for a season: He came, therefore, back again. Was it not where it is said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness"?

I have been interrupted, and could not finish the current of my thoughts, and I have answered all that is material; and I repeat my full and deep conviction, that where it is not malice, and sometimes when it is, the difficulties or objections arise from the soul not having true rest in divine righteousness, and a just (adequate we never can) estimate of atonement; and hence incapacity to look with adoring peace and interest on the sorrows of the blessed Lord as such. The cross itself, or rather what is called by «uch, atonement on it, is mixed up with our experiences and comfort in them, and immense loss is

the result in both respects. This which I have gathered from many souls who had difficulties, and it has been a help to me as to the state of such, is entirely confirmed by your letter. I dare say passages might be made clearer in my tract; as a professed reprint I could not do that; but, as to the doctrine contained in it, all the attacks made have only convinced me that, while Christ's connection with the remnant may be beyond the habits of thought, which is not always in any way a blame, of many, the want of receiving the testimony of scripture, or ignorance of its statements, is the real and only ground of objections made; and the search into scripture it has occasioned to myself has only confirmed me in the truth of what is said, and the real character of the objections, itself a confirmation of the justness of my thoughts; while I admit, as I said, it may not be for all meat in due season, but what to do when it is printed at all.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

October, 1864.

* * * * *

Dear——,—Thanks for your letter just come in. I feel that things are rapidly thickening and closing in; but that is a time to look up, and makes the testimony more important, so that it gives courage. Nothing can turn aside the Lord's testimony and power, and if He gives an open door, no man can shut it, nor can anything affect His suited care and faithfulness to the church. I am very thankful for the saints' prayers, and value them much. Trust in the Lord, and be of good courage, be strong, and fie shall stablish your hearts. I am not afraid while He lives and is Jesus. Dear Bellett is gone. I cannot quite

account for the peaceful feeling I have as to it. But it is well, and he is well. There was truthfulness of heart, as well as joy in the blessed One, at the close.

Grace and mercy and peace be with you, and with all the saints.

Ever affectionately yours.

October, 1864.

* * * * *

Dearest Brother,—I sympathise with you in the loss of your beloved brother, whom though I had scarcely seen, yet knew as walking graciously and well for some years. But this is what the world is made of in its best form for us. Life in it is dreadful horrid enmity against God; death, once the painful fruit of sin, now death to it, and better still, out of it. It is ours now. I look at it as the natural issue of such a place we are in, and now in every sense the blessed issue. No doubt it will be felt as to those we love, but felt sweetly when we think of Him who has died for us and has taken its sting away. The Lord bless it all to yourself, and give it as learning that we are in a world where death is really entered, but where we can die to it.

As regards the subject you mention, it is a very large one, and I find myself always unable to take one up unless led of the Lord to it. Unless on occasions which arise, given of God, I prefer treating such things when I can meditate quietly with God. An active life is not the best for that, though I have long tried both together.

Here, thank God, there has been progress, souls added and gatherings too, and I believe healthily—nothing very

striking, but progress. My chief work as yet is seeking to build up, but the Lord is very gracious.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Montreal, December 9th, 1864.

* * * * *

[From the French.

* * * Why is it said that we are light, and not love? They are the two names that God gives Himself. I have a thought about it: what do you say to it? See how, in Ephesians 5, the two names of God are the models we are given to follow, that is to say, God, under these two names which reveal His nature; and in each of the two cases Christ is the expression of it in man. What a privilege! What a vocation in the world! Ah, how poor we are! When love leads us, men are indeed those for whom we give ourselves; but God, He to whom we offer ourselves. (Chap. 5:2.) This is what renders it perfect. Perhaps this helps one to understand why it is we are light, and not love.

January 4th, 1865.

* * * * *

* * * I do not know what else we have to do down here but to know God better and to serve, but I look especially for devotedness in brethren now. I have no doubt their place is just the testimony of God, not from any wisdom of ours, but the sovereign goodness of God, and more or less knowledge; but the testimony is not filled up or made good if there be not the devotedness. I do not deem the doctrine unimportant. The more I go on, the more I see that the evangelical body has lost itself—never has had, and resists the doctrine of Paul —

not merely the church, that has been long clear, but even as to our whole standing as Christians. I am daily more distinct, when occasion requires, in bearing testimony to it. Striving may be of no use, but I think, clearness of testimony is, and no fear in giving it; the times are too serious, only one must know what one is about, what the real point is.

But the controversy about righteousness, and so about law, has brought the matter out; are we in the first or second Adam? Save the most useful and searching Epistle of James, the writings of the New Testament do not treat of justification, save those of Paul. John takes up the principle involved in it, but not in that shape—of course, confirms it as of one Spirit; but being risen with Christ, and so presented before God, is Pauline: only one has to watch that the divine character is fully developed, if we are occupied with this (I mean in one's own mind and faith), and that is fully done in Paul in his own way—of course I mean in that channel of truth in which the Holy Ghost led him—and wonderful it is how it is out of and above law; for these legalists are in their doctrine contemptible. We are to be imitators of God—Christ being our pattern—and shew divine life in our entire offering up of self, and that to God, that the principle may be perfect. I have been occupied with this lately, and am thinking of sending a paper to the "Girdle" on it.

I think God has been somewhat helping brethren in their publications lately, which is mercy from His hands, but we have to fill up a vastly greater framework of testimony than we do. Workmen must have faith in all they have to do with. Often laments and inquiries as to the state of brethren are mainly the want of faith as to those who express them. Yet I fear the world for them—

sometimes rash statements, but that is a less evil—but devotedness, and separateness from the world, nonconformity to it—that is what I look for.

Blessing has gone on here. There has been life enough to increase everywhere in numbers without any special gift, and healthful, comfortable additions. Our meeting (conference) at Toronto was a very happy one indeed. One, who I trust may be a workman, at any rate a witness, got his soul cleared on a multitude of subjects, once connected with Adventists, before a Methodist preacher: our communion as happy as possible, and scripture much opened and enjoyed. I am here arrived at Collingwood in a heavy snowdrift (if you can find the Georgian Bay, which makes a large part of Lake Huron, but all this part is now under ice), though it has not been particularly cold, but pretty early, and steady, once ten degrees below zero: but save snow, the cold is delicious weather, and not felt, unless when there is wind—then it is no joke. A few meet here, but it is wild enough. Last summer enormous districts of forest took fire and were burnt down, and the deer this year easily taken; but I came in railroad carriages with stoves, in this country where endless forests, and the highest degree of civilization strangely meet together. But the Lord is the same everywhere—and so is man morally!

Kindest love to the brethren, whom I remember with true affection and thankful love for all their kindness.

Affectionately yours.

1865.

* * * * *

Very dear Brother,—I am glad you are working, and glad to hear you are doctoring. It is well to labour thus if we can. W.'s pamphlet came by the same post as your letter. I do not see any sign of his being taught of God in it. I see many truths he has learned from brethren, and a quantity of mixed confused stuff he has added, and no real statement of his views; with many things quite wrong, the moment he leaves what he has learned from men. But it is well brethren should learn from it. If they have left their first love, they are called to humiliation and repentance. I feel nothing more important than singleness of eye and devotedness at this moment. It is the way of light, the way of joy of heart with Him who is the only source of true joy, and the source of eternal joy. Oh, may the brethren have fast hold of this! all they have learned is of no use without it —yea, in their faith and for others, they will lose. That heart devotedness to Christ and obedience will only be thought of value in the past, when we come to meet Him.

As regards the want of moral tone in the gathering, we and you and they ought to lay it deeply to heart—pray over it— if we do with faith, we shall find the blessing; if two, a direct answer. But patience is called for in our dealings. The tone of the whole meeting has to be raised in these cases, to judge particular facts. Had we power, a letter would do it, like Paul's first to the Corinthians. That we have not always, but we have always the sure resource of the faithfulness of Christ the blessed Lord, who loves His own, and has purchased them at the price of His own blood, so that we can count upon His desire to bless them. But it is a trial of faith, because, meanwhile, the name of the Lord is dishonoured, and alas! often felt as the honour of the body dishonoured;

but if remedy may be, we must go through this for His sake and the sake thus of His, and He will make good His own cause at the end: only surely it is loss and humbling meanwhile. The Lord arouse His saints by His power, that He may give them light.

Here, on the whole, in detail we are blessed, though I cannot speak of power; the additions (and they are pretty numerous) are generally precious ones, and there are souls both converted and awakening: what is sometimes striking, and a wonderful grace of God, that if the purposes of heart are right, He will bless in conversion and gathering where there is not the most union, and thus keep up the health of a gathering. I do not say we ought to be satisfied, but He does so. I have been up the country and in the bush—pretty cold, 26 degrees below zero; but found mercy, and the Lord carrying on His work. It is spreading about more or less, and souls inquiring. In the States too, so far we can heartily bless God—when should we not? only we wait for eternity to do it well. My kindest love to the brethren: may the gracious Lord sanctify them to Himself.… The good Lord keep you near Himself.

Your affectionate brother in the Lord.

Toronto, 1865.

Dearest ——,—I had forgotten your enterprise,25 and am frightened when I see the extent of the publications. I should think some of the Notes would require some revising, but I have no objection to them if they are useful being printed as Notes. Even the sermons contain things I should not accept; they were first published with a notice that I had not revised them. Some of the earlier publications would require a note or two, where

clearer light was acquired, but had better not be altered. I ought to have somewhere a copy of my letter to the Archbishop. I forget it. But his course was ruinous —really stopped the deliverance from popery of masses, perhaps of all in Ireland; they were leaving from seven to eight hundred a week. He required the oath of supremacy and abjuration: it stopped as by a shot.

As to oJ nikw'n kaiV oJ thrw'n (Rev. 2:26), it is difficult to answer for grammar in the Apocalypse; but they have only to be viewed as separate in idea here, and this is, I apprehend, intended: oJ nikw'n is the general character in every church. Here, another special character is spoken of by itself as a distinct thing, though therein he may overcome. We have once nikw'n without oJ.

As to hJ ajlhvqeia (1 John 5:6), I have no difficulty, because it is only what the Spirit says which is truth. All He says is truth, and only what He says is truth. Just as Christ is hJ ajlhvqeia in John 14; so, as a witness, is the Spirit.

Here we are getting on pretty well: a good many have been added everywhere, and new meetings in birth. Our general meeting at Toronto was delicious… One who may be very useful, got his soul all cleared, or rather filled with truth, at our meetings. He told me he saw plainly that what brethren taught was the recovery of Paul’s doctrine. So it really is. I am daily more convinced that evangelicalism with partial truth is the abandonment of what Paul taught. I feel far more deeply the ground on which I am than ever. The Lord be praised for His goodness to you and Mrs. —— He is always good and full of goodness.

Ever affectionately yours.

Delicious weather, with a good deal of snow; 38 degrees of frost this morning, but I opened my window when getting up to enjoy it. For 16 or 20 degrees I do not put on my gloves, when there is no wind.

Toronto, 1865.

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My dear Brother,—I have no doubt as to the two questions you put to me. Clearly persons ought not to separate from the Table while they own it to be the table of the Lord. The very statement proves itself, for so far as the act goes, I am separating myself from the unity of the body of Christ and from the Lord's table. Besides, it is the individual taking upon himself the whole judgment of the church of God. If a person says I do not own it as the Lord's table, the communion of the body of Christ, of course the relationship is ipso facto broken.

As to the second question: the theory is that the flesh is allowed to act in nothing, though the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and the assembly ought to carefully maintain the truth. When it is mere imperfection of knowledge and ignorance, and the main purport is godly, there we have to forbear; but teaching contrary to the truth clearly ought not to be allowed.

The Lord in mercy still blesses us. It is a trying time, I may say, for all temporally, and our poorer brethren are thrown out of employment in more than one place, not all, of course, but it scatters them.

As to the work, we want energetic workmen more than work to do. As to C, the candlestick seems put out, or something very like it; if it be so, no human efforts will do, but it was never wholly begun, as far as I can see.

But we can cast our care on the Lord; that is one comfort, and it is mine.

Affectionately yours in Him, in haste.

Toronto, March 7th, 1865.

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24 [“Collected Writings,” vol. vii., p. 288.]

25 “Collected Writings.”

Section 12

[From the French.

* * * The word is ever more rich and precious to me. I think it has opened to my soul, to my faith, of late as it has never done before. The counsels of God, and how we belong to heaven, every day become more real; and the place of the law appears more evident to me, both in what is connected with the righteousness of God, and as regards practice. The heavenly and divine character necessary to judge of all things is clearer and more real to me. Does one love his neighbour as himself? No; and this is the normal condition of nature; but one gives oneself for others, animated by a divine devotedness, such as was shewn in Christ. Doubtless, thus we would not fail in love to a neighbour; but what blessing! what privilege! See Ephesians 4:5, where you have the new nature and the Holy Spirit—then God, light and love, and Christ the pattern in these two characters, as elements of christian life. One feels how little one is when one thinks of it, yet it rejoices the heart. The doctrine of divine righteousness has also become clearer to me. Remark also how the Epistle to the Romans is divided in two at chapter 5:11: first sins, then sin; each of the two parts being complete.

March 30th, 1865.

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* * * The cross and the crown go together: and more than this, the cross and communion go together. The cross touches my natural will, and therefore it breaks down and takes away that which hinders communion. It

was when Peter rejected the thought of the cross that Jesus said, “Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me:” it is with a rejected Saviour we have to walk. The whole system of the world is a stumbling-block to turn the heart from God—dress, vain show, flattery, even the commonest things which tend to elevate nature. All that puts us into the rich man’s place is a stumbling-block. Heaven is open to a rejected Christ. Remember this. God’s heart is set upon carrying His saints along this road to glory; He would have us walk by faith, and not by sight. Whatever tends in me to exalt the world that rejected Christ is a stumbling-block to others; in short, anything that weakens the perception of the excellency of Christ in the weakest saint.

[1865.]

Dearest -----,—I was very glad to hear of the brethren. Here I am only, in passage, for a few days with our brother ——, of whom you will have heard, to meet and also to read with a few to whom he has been blessed. I suppose we shall visit Boston… He would be more there at the centre of the work: but I dare say that the Lord sees it good he should wait for more maturity in himself, and the fuller sowing of seed, which (as I have said to others) is what is going on in America now. Gathering will come in its time.

In New York I have not hurried there, nor sought to do so, but the contrary. In general, those who get loose from systems here reject the immortality of the soul, or some such thing, so that one has to be very careful not to found on rottenness. I have been able, through mercy, to combat this with a measure of success in New York,

so that there is at any rate progress. Still, hurrying would be rejecting the choicest among the soul§ seduced into this, or admitting the allowability of the doctrine. But the Lord, I cannot doubt, is working… The Lord surely led me there: may He only carry on His own work effectually. There are some precious souls, and, thank God, several of them getting clear. ——has been the ready instrument of a great deal of evil. But the Lord is ever faithful, and comes in in goodness and does good… I want no narrowness; I dread it; but simple faithfulness of testimony is what we must seek: narrowness is not a testimony, but a hindrance to it; but with looseness as to truth one has nothing to testify to. But then we must make the difference of wisdom, and of a law, and of want of their knowledge of position, and a bad conscience. Going about to hear preachers I believe a very unprofitable and positively injurious thing, but you could not make it a term of communion unless it were subversive of Christianity; but souls never make progress who do so. They hear what is inconsistent with truths they know, or a path they are bound to by God, and they lose their hold on truth instead of going on to more. It ends in uncertainty what truth is, and more or less indifference to it.

Peace be with you. Kindest love to all the brethren. May He keep them in the narrow path, and full of divine love and grace in it.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

West Townsend, Massachusetts, June, 1865.

My dear ——,—… I have just returned from Boston and Massachusetts. In general, it is difficult to speak of an unfinished work, but I feel thankful. I have often spoken

of its being a sowing time here: it is so, but one finds so many wants, so sorrowful a state of the Church, that it astonishes, though I have believed and taught it nigh forty years, but it encourages. We never ought to be discouraged, because the Lord we trust in' never fails, nor can. It is just in 2 Timothy, when all was in ruin and declension, that Paul looks for his dear son to be strong in the faith: there never is so good a time for it, because it is needed, and the Lord meets need. I have the strongest sense that all is breaking up, but that makes one feel more strongly and clearly that we possess a kingdom which cannot be moved…

I was at Boston for some days in the midst of their destructionists and annihilationists. The work gathers up those who did not let themselves be carried away, who had got out of sects, and who looked for the Lord's coming—stops those just sinking in, and recovers some. It is rife everywhere, and spreading. One was delivered at our meeting at B.'s. They have a great deal more light than the sects on certain points and take this ground, the sects being in an awful condition about the country. In England they have not an idea of it. This helps; of course, honest-minded people are disgusted. But they apply all the Old Testament to these times; and when I have shewn that the judgments and destructions of the Old Testament were on earth, and that they had nothing to say to the matter (and they believe in these judgments), their grand array proved to be ignorance, and no more, and the foundations fell. This did every way much good: their whole relative position was altered. Their scraps of Greek and Hebrew I could meet, and their calculations of dates for the Lord's coming only baffled them, and the word of God resumed its

ascendency. But still it was only some deliverances, and an unfinished work. But a door was opened in Boston, and I was greatly begged to stay: one devoted man, I trust delivered from danger, having just now as I was leaving got a fine room, where he wants me to speak. But it is all like a garden wholly overrun with weeds, some plants set free, all half smothered, and the garden still a dreary scene, but I believe God at work… The world reigns everywhere, but that is without. The fact as to the state of things here is, great dread of leaving a church, and effort to increase the importance of a denomination, politics preached, the lowest means to get money for the churches, many hearts weary of it. The Millerites, or Second Adventists (but who fixed a year, first 1844, now I think 1868, but the world to be burnt up, and risen men on earth), picked up a large number of souls weary with the state of things, and pious. Most of these have gone into the denial of the immortality of the soul, very common everywhere, with Boston as a centre, and even the denial of all resurrection of the wicked, and pretty plain infidelity, the Lord's divinity denied, &c, but many rejecting all this—godly scattered souls not knowing which way to turn. There is much to be done.

If I return now, as I suppose is probable, perhaps from Quebec, August 5th (our conference at Guelph is July 13), I should, if health and strength permit, think of being back for the States next summer, if our God so order it, though I begin a little to crave a measure of rest sometimes. However, I am getting used to the Atlantic, if used one can…

Here at New York it has been complete confusion… It is a work of patience, and I shall soon have to leave, but I

am hopeful through the Lord. Could I work on quietly I should be full of hope; this also makes me think of returning. Doors are open, too, in Canada… It is difficult, with such a scattered, desultory work, to give anything very precise; were a positive work carried on, I believe a good deal would be done, but it would require great patience and firmness: discontented would be found, plenty; solid and founded in truth and caring for it as foundation in the fear of God, a good deal rarer. Still grace does its work, and I should be hopeful if the workman were such.

Kindest love to the brethren; it may be I may see them soon. If I do not, it is possible I may remain over winter, chiefly then, I suppose, in the States.

Ever affectionately yours in the Lord.

New York, June 23rd, 1865.

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My dear Brother,—My answer has been delayed through constant work and absence from the house for evening meetings, &c, but I should gladly help you in this to the utmost of my power, for this doctrine is a deadly and demoralising heresy, or, rather, infidelity. I ever refuted it, but I never saw so much of it as latterly, at New York and Boston. It issues in denying responsibility and conscience, enfeebling in the most deadly way the sense of sin, the value consequently of the atonement, and ultimately the divinity of Christ. All do not go this length, and are unaware of it, but it has led thousands in America there. It is its just result. Some hold simple annihilation; others, though death is ceasing to exist, yet a resurrection for judgment, and then torment. The greatest part of their proofs are from the Old Testament;

and the moment you know that the mass of their texts refer to temporal judgments on earth, all that part of the fabric comes down. Then they dodge to words in the New Testament: as if, for example, “destruction” means ceasing to exist. This is not true, as “Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.” In the original it is the same word where it is said, “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” God can say, “I create and I destroy;” but otherwise it is used constantly for ruin in a general sense, as in the boat the disciples say, “Carest thou not that we perish?” They admit there can be no annihilation in nature, and do not like the word. Next, death never means ceasing to exist. Scripture speaks of casting the soul into hell after the body is killed; so, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, they subsist after death. They say that is a Jewish figure: I admit it; but it is a figure to shew how they subsist after death. Again, it is said in Luke 20, “For all live unto him”—dead men, but always alive to God. Besides, if it be then ceasing to exist, there is nobody to raise for judgment. The second death even is casting into the lake of fire, where they are tormented; that is, it is not ceasing to exist. They say eternal life and eternal death does not mean eternal. This is not true; eternal life and eternal punishment are spoken of together, and it is the regular force of it in scripture—“The things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal.” Nothing can be plainer than that. So we have “the eternal God,” “the eternal Spirit,” “eternal redemption,” “eternal inheritance,”— all contrasted with time.

What is morally dreadful in it is the weakening of the sense of sin and atonement. For if my sin only deserved

death, Christ had only to bear this for me which hundreds have borne besides: sin becomes little and atonement nothing. Hence a vast number speak of what Christ obtained for us by His death, but drop the atonement for our sins as of no consequence. Again, if death means ceasing to exist (and this is the basis of all their statements), then Christ ceased to exist: this leads many on to deny His divinity (I do not say all, though it is far the greatest number in America). If they say, "No, He was a divine Person, He did not," still He was a true man, body and soul, and truly died; and death does not mean ceasing to exist. Further, this materialism as to the soul is entirely contrary to scripture. In Genesis the way man is created is carefully distinguished from beasts. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: this He never did to the beasts. Hence Adam is called the son of God, and Paul declares we are the offspring of God. Hence to liken our soul to the beasts is false; besides what I quoted from the Gospels as to its subsistence after death. The one text, "It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment," proves demonstratively that we subsist after death. Death dissolves our present state of existence, but that existence does not cease at all. So far from death being the full wages of sin in this sense, it is after death we get all we are adjudged to. That is, death as to the body is the result of sin here; the judgment of the man, to receive the real consequences of it before God, comes altogether after it. Hence there is a resurrection of the unjust, a resurrection to judgment. Remember, we conceive of eternity as prolonged time; that is, we do not conceive it at all. It is an eternal Now. And this is the very definition of the word given by writers of the apostles' time.

I have thus, dear brother, given you rapidly, as far as a letter allowed, the way the question has actually come before me, and my reply. The effect in destroying responsibility was fearful and, in people with grosser habits, rejection of all truth and immorality. The tree was bad, had a bad sap, and so was cut down, and there was an end of it. Where are sin and atonement there? One, the most eminent, quiet and most guarded (who had learnt much truth from brethren in England, and a very popular preacher), said, he believed that the elect were the only souls God meant to exist; the rest were the fruit of man's lust after the fall. When asked how he would reconcile the doctrine of this perishing of souls simply bad and responsibility as stated in scripture, he said he could not, but, as he found it there, he did not deny it. But he was wholly a materialist as to the truth of a soul; he would not call it material, but it is born by mere physical generation. I regret to have to refer to such things. Keep your mind simple if you can by grace, and receive what scripture says in simplicity as it stands. I think I have some tracts on it, but written when I had not tracked it out as I had to do in America, particularly New York and Boston but elsewhere too. Thank God, several were delivered and found clearly it was Satan's power, others arrested who were in danger. I will look up the tracts to send them.

Your affectionate servant and brother in Christ.

[1865.]

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Beloved Bbother,—This matter of —— is a matter of profound sorrow and of humiliation to me. If anything goes wrong I feel my own fault in it. Surely if one had

been more faithful, such would not come upon us… It is all deeply humbling… There is no good in neglecting evil, and if it is brought before us of God we should look into it, not suffer sin upon our brother, but besides, the Lord not to be grieved by it. It is not that I have any gift for it; I shrink from such things; but I know it is right. But I am so glad you have been with the brethren… We carry with us what is to produce the fruit, and must not expect to find it or anything, save the Lord's opening the door: that, indeed, we must have. If you have that, take courage. But though not often at——, I have felt it deeply, because it affects the whole fellowship of saints in Canada—us all.

Here things are going on with wonderful rapidity towards the end, though I know it is limited by the Lord's having gathered out His own, short or long as is needed for that. But it is a time not hard to discern; men's minds unsettling from what seemed established, and the question before us for faith, How far is there power to gather? I do not a moment doubt the power of Christ nor His faithfulness. He will surely gather His own for Himself. But we ought to manifest His glory. This is what we must seek. The brethren are going on well, here really very much so. Only they want a little stirring up in some places, and there is lack of labourers —their numbers greatly increased. But when one sees the immense mass afloat just now, and the rising power of evil, what is it? But there is One sufficient.

I have felt deeply our position latterly. —— wanted to publish a series of my papers, and I had to look over them. And I found tracts I had wholly forgotten, written thirty-three to thirty-eight years ago—all the truth as to the principles on which the fate of the world now hangs,

I doubt not at all, put clearly out. Things have ripened, but that is all. But it shewed God so clearly in it, it affected me from Him deeply. I felt the ground and work was of God so clearly. It made me feel a poor workman, but God's light—divine light on the path. It is a solemn thing, the rather from feeling such impotency still in carrying it out. Who can move such masses? I know God can propagate in a moment: He would not perhaps concentrate, so as not to have it His own work. We are too narrow-minded; still we ought to look for gathering power. I see a difference when I began. I was content to get the blessed position, and with two or three enjoy it in the freshness of the truth and Spirit of God. But now I would see all the Lord's gathered before He comes. I have not, I can say, a thought of self, or "he followeth not with us" in it, but that His should be gathered to Him. Oh for more devotedness, more consecration to His glory, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal bodies. But the path is simpler. Christianity is what it is, and the world, superstitious or infidel, takes its place: Christianity takes its own. The breaking up used to try me, but Christianity never breaks up. We have a kingdom which cannot be moved. May we serve Him with reverence and godly fear. I must close. I have found the Word very precious all these times.

Ever affectionately yours.

1865.

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[From the French.

* * * Have I spoken to you of the division of the Epistle to the Romans, which has taken up my thoughts much of

late? With verse 11 of chapter 5 the first part of the epistle closes, in which the apostle is occupied with sins; chapter 3, the blood; chapter 4, the resurrection for us. At verse 12 of chapter 5 it is a question of Adam and Christ, and thenceforward of sin: not only Christ has died for us, but we are dead; chapter 5:1-11, the result in joy of one of these truths; chapter 8, of the other. In chapter 8 our position is more excellent, but in chapter 5, it seems to me, God is more known in grace, or rather more known in Himself; but the great point is, sins and sin.

There is another thing, which has been of great blessing to me in thinking of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Responsibility depends on the revelation that God makes of Himself: the Creator, a God of goodness, with Adam; the Lawgiver at Sinai; now, perfectly revealed in Christ. In Ephesians 4, the new man, the Holy Spirit—subjectively. In Ephesians 5, imitators of God in love; to walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and has given Himself for us, to God—not to love as one loves oneself, but to give oneself absolutely for, but (in order that the motive be perfect) to God. We behave as “imitators of God,” as His dear children. One of the two names of that which God is, is love; only we are not love, for God is sovereign and absolute in love—He is God. The other name is bight: we “are light in the Lord.” Christ is the measure in both cases. “As Christ has loved us;” “Christ shall give thee light.” What a practical position in grace! How miserable one is if not a Christian!

All depends on the fact that we are dead and risen, and that as receiving Christ who is. In His death He met all our responsibilities as children of Adam responsible in this world; but He has gained for us a place, according

to the counsels of God before the world was. Compare 2 Timothy 1 and Titus 1, where it is no question of our responsibility, but of the purpose of God; only, inasmuch as we are a purchased people, we see that it is by the value of the act of Christ that we are so, by His sacrifice on the cross, which has fully glorified God.

October 10th, 1865.

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My dear Brother,— … I am in no hurry when a candlestick is put out: God has His own time for lighting it up again. I know I am very slow in discerning people and evil. Certainly I have the kind of charity which thinketh no evil, though it is in danger of being spoiled in a long life. But I feel more when I have got to a conclusion. They have all need of thorough breaking down there….

I entirely feel with you as to the gathering power. It is a great point now, but the Lord is sufficient and faithful—cannot fail His church. Brethren ought to be an adequate centre of communion for conscience, if it be not power to draw. I look for no rebuilding, but I do look for gathering, though there be little strength. But this must be grace, and that of the Lord.

I purpose (D.V.) coming to Ireland, but I am beset with calls, and plenty of work here. May the gracious Lord guide me in His goodness. I have some twenty unanswered letters, though I have written many daily in this fortnight's tour to the west I have made.

As to Bethesda, in spite of every effort, many have got out, and many are uneasy. The denial of the church and of the Spirit tries greatly many of them, and the low

state and evident want of principle in B. itself. They will say anything to keep people, but by patience, those that are conscientious, through grace, get clear.

Ever affectionately yours.

Ryde, October 12th, 1865.

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To the same.]

My dear Brother,—I am not ignorant altogether of the fact that there are such gatherings in the West… But I have distinctly felt that the path of faith, and so my path, is to wait on the Lord’s leading, and not to follow or give way to any restless anxiety which might arise in my own mind if I were not kept by grace in faith. I serve Him, and if Lazarus were dying, must await His sending, and the more serious I feel the case, I wait on His guidance. I cannot doubt the activity of the enemy. But in these last days for true good, sometimes quietness is our true security and strength. Many of those more or less involved in Bethesda in England are getting uneasy. I know too how some entangled here were done mischief to there. It is a solemn time, and the enemy very busy: looseness is easier to the human mind than conscience. Besides, those active in the movement here have not yet either the principles through possession of which they can judge of the evil, nor the facts either; they have made progress in the former. But in general they do not seem to know what the Church is. Some feel all so ruined that isolation may be called for, or fancied isolation, for they have seen it is so when examined. All this does not hinder my being delighted to meet them when God so orders it. As to the evil, I have no kind of doubt of that. We have now seen the fruits, as long ago I

judged the root for myself. I am quite ready to meet any one who wishes it.

Ever affectionately yours in the Lord.

Dublin, November 8th, 1865.

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To the same.]

My dear Brother,—As regards immersion, I have a little doubt from 1 Corinthians 10:whether it was strictly dipping; but I do not think it was originally sprinkling. In the English system, at first, it was only allowed on certifying weakness in the child. In the Greek it is not allowed at all. Buried and death is the idea which implies something like immersion—at least, going into the water, and then being covered with it by pouring, as was in the sea and the cloud. But I should not think of repeating a bonâ fide baptism because of the greater or smaller quantity of water, any more than I should think I had not taken the Lord’s supper if the pieces had been partially cut up before celebrating the supper. But I should follow what I believed the fullest figure of the truth when I could.

As to the formulary, the variation in the terms, eij" the name of Jesus, the Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ, are a plain proof that these words are not the formulary at all, which I think our good friends have overlooked. Next, remark that they had no direction to baptise at all, save the commission in Matthew (though at the same time that was only to the Gentiles). But as none other is given, I always use that of Matthew—yet invariably, before this question arose, bringing in the special recognition of the Lord Jesus, as the One to whom the

child was as baptised. But there is little scriptural light on the subject, our place being the gathering of the faithful into the consciousness of their place in the midst of a great baptised house. St. Paul was not sent to baptise, so that we have, as united in one Body, no commission. It is not abrogated, and we take it up as we find it, as Paul did. The attempt to set right this way fails. Peter and the others began, even with Cornelius—namely, a Gentile—with the names of the Lord. Yet the command as to the nations, of which this was the first specimen, is in Matthew 28. Samaritans, who were not Jews, were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, and it is hard to see how they went clean against Matthew 28, even if baptism of the Jews is said to be another, which I cannot admit, because “there is … one baptism.” Hence I conclude that “the Lord Jesus,” “Jesus,” gives merely the thought and bearing of the baptism—that it was in His name, under His authority and owning Him it was done—but “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” the full truth to which they were baptised. It is by Him we have the knowledge of the Trinity; the Father and the Holy Ghost through and with Himself. That which some took up, that the commission of Matthew dropped and Paul’s began afresh for the Gentiles, has no application here, because Jesus Christ, and the Lord, are used before that was the case. Acts 2:38 shews it began thus. But the name of Jesus Christ is only as owning Him and by His authority—the confession of Jesus Christ. Here it is ejpiv, not eij"; in other places eij", as chapter 8:16; ejn, chapter 10:48, shewing, I judge, that it was more the nature and purport of the baptism than the form. Hence, my habit is to immerse unless there is special hindrance, or, at any rate, standing in the bath pour water over them, using both the name of the Lord Jesus, and the

words of Matthew 28. I am not aware of any special connection of the term Lord and (the) House; Lord and servants seems to me the more scriptural correlation. The importance is that it is individual, which is not without its weight. We are a habitation of God through the Spirit. Christ is as Son over the House, but that is another idea from Lord, though of course He be Lord of all.

Of course, it should be by a Christian. I may not reject or repeat what has been done bonâ fide in christian profession nor seek individual judgment of the state of souls when it was done. But clearly it ought to be done in faith, true prayer, and on the part of the Lord in His name; and who should do that but a believer? I should most assuredly seek the baptism of my child by a believer and none else. I do not say it is not valid else when done, but it is not what I would seek, or accept when I had to seek it.

As regards Sligo, &c, I have more difficulty in answering; but my difficulty is ignorance of facts, and unwillingness to precipitate anything where God is evidently working most graciously—a great lesson to learn. I have no wish at all to enfeeble the distinct ground on which we stand—far from it. I believe God has owned it, and, while exercising our faith, is judging the course the others have pursued. I should hold steadily the ground I am upon; but I desire to have my heart as large and helpful to any of God’s children as possible. These brethren in general have avowedly broken with B——, so that, as far as I know, as to most of them at any rate, I should have no ground to refuse them. But some have not got on ground on which they could be on any solid ground in the path in which we

walk; but they have made and are making evident progress, and I wait to see the result, as they are very wisely doing to see their path… If they were ignorant and had mistaken thoughts, I should not impute it, but the earnest effort of many who walk ill is to be acknowledged on neutral ground. I should not accept being drawn into that. I would not force a decision on ignorant persons who had not the principles on which to decide. But there is also an effort to keep a lawless liberty to do what people like (I do not mean there, but around), independent of the general action of the church of God, in which I never should acquiesce. I should gladly associate with these gatherings if they are right or ignorant. But I am wholly reluctant to get on ground which admits of defilement, and when I have got clear of corrupting evil, get mixed up with it again. Of course, if I had to act myself, I should inform myself sufficiently on the subject to be able to judge, and trust the Lord to guide me. I am not at all sorry not to be called upon. All this, I am quite aware, says nothing, save principles and motives, but as I stated, I am not sufficiently informed of facts to do anything else. I should desire to be in communion with them, but I should utterly deplore any feebleness or inconsistency of walk as to faithfulness to the Lord, and, as I said, get defiled over again and loose, when we had cleared ourselves to His glory and got to walk uprightly if feebly. Such I desire still to be my walk. There is a great effort to have looseness and man instead of the Lord, but it is rapidly acquiring its true character.

I feel the question as to S——, &c, a very serious one before the Lord. The last thing I should desire would be to reject them. It would be a sin not to seek otherwise. I

only look for care that we do not slip into looseness as to the Lord's honour; for those who know the difference it is all as one as irrecoverable. You should look much to the Lord. Had I to take up the question, I should set about it with the desire to be in union, but carefully watching that I did not myself go out of the principles I hold to be those of Christ's truth. Further, I perhaps might not have to go, leaving the process of clearing others to God. Love to all the saints.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Dublin, 1865.

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Beloved Brother,—You were surely right in thinking I should be interested in your work, and our dear Indian brethren. Most rejoiced am I at the blessing: may we rejoice with trembling, yet without distrusting Him who watches over the flock I must write briefly, for I am occupied incessantly, and—but that all things are simple with the Lord—anxiously: everything is in movement here.

The first thing would surely be to have the New Testament, yet it is difficult without being master of the language, a word makes such a difference sometimes; but, if you can do it, certainly I would try bit by bit the most important parts that could bring them on, as Romans, Ephesians, Luke and John; then Hebrews and 1 John. Hymns are more important than we often suppose, because the affections get engaged religiously with what is incorrect; so that if you could, I would translate the ones we have; if not possible, I would correct the others, which at any rate would hinder a part of their associations of heart with false doctrine. Such very often

are the expression of, and stop the heart at, an inferior state of soul…

I am in Ireland for the moment. Many have worked about, independently formed gatherings, or others after them; know little of the unity of the body, though some have now learned it. There is a great deal of looseness and good nature in Irish habits of thinking, and loose meetings, besides the Bethesda, neutrals but loose and bad enough. This most have quite escaped, but it had and has complicated matters, because many inquirers who have no principle do not know where to go. Many admit we are right, but are afraid of committing themselves: of course, those who like looseness work hard at these. I prefer keeping quiet, assured I am on right ground, and waiting on the Lord to teach them; but one day I was from half-past eight in the morning to nine at night talking, with only an hour's intermission, glad the last hour and a half to lecture, for I was simply bringing out Christ. But we have very nice reading meetings, crammed with inquirers: the movement and stir is remarkable, and of course opposition bitter enough sometimes. The reproach is on our meeting, of course, but that is well: anything loose or evil, says the world, but that. The brethren, thank God, are going on nicely; the meetings happy; the sense of the Lord's presence there. I should be glad to abide longer, but I suppose I must run to Edinburgh for a while, where the doors are open, and numbers, as well as at Glasgow, much increased. Systems are breaking up—that every one sees. I think more zeal and devotedness in the brethren here would not have left the field open for everything as it is. In Dublin there is a large gathering; still all was, save just there, for a long time a good deal

asleep on every side, and when the awakening came, all had to be formed as it were, and the church little known; even with Bellett it was the family. The dead state of neutrals is owned on all hands, and where there is life they leave, or are very uneasy, which sometimes shews itself in anger against me, but several of those amongst them have learnt what the church is, and are very unhappy at seeing it held among us, and denied among them. One looks up to the Lord and trusts Him.

The brethren in Canada must forgive me if I have not written to them as much as I would; I always long to hear from them. Your own letter interested many; they are interested naturally at the thought of Indians making head among themselves. I have not yet been able to read all the letters I have: this fortnight I have answered sixty. The last volume of Synopsis is finished. John is out and Acts partly with the printer. I have gone through the whole of Church History, Popes and councils —what a history! How good the Lord is, but how it throws the church of God outside, in one sense, all that is called so. But things are riper than you are aware of, I think, in Canada. Grace and peace be with you, dear brother…

Affectionately yours in our blessed Lord.

Dear Trotter is gone to the Lord. As to mere numbers, they are very largely increased. I write with scarce a moment.

Dublin, 1865.

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To the same.]

My beloved Brother,—Our letters have about crossed, but I take up my pen by reason of the question you raise as to the bride: more than one has been raised on it, some applying it wholly to the earthly Jerusalem. It may not be our highest position, and may be connected with a help-meet in the kingdom when all was subject; its distinction, however, from the earthly Jerusalem is clear. On the other hand, the main point is the distinction of the body: that is our own proper place connected with and founded on the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God. I have therefore no conscious a priori objection, if it be not the habits of thought which always exercise some influence, and particularly when one is an old man,, more fixed than recipient, and I am not young. But I have not yet been able to make the bride the Lamb's wife other than the church. The Book of Revelation decides nothing absolutely. It says, "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and, "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." If the nations of those who are saved, who walk in the light of it [are] contrasted with the kings of the earth, that indeed would decide the matter, and shews Abraham's place, which has made a difficulty to some minds; but this I could not affirm. Still, up to the present, I am not able to see anything else but the church. The contrast with Babylon, and His wife having made herself ready, seems to point out the present period in contrast with church corruption.

The espousing to Christ, to which you refer, points to the same thing, but I hardly see how Ephesians 5 can be taken otherwise, for surely it points to the present relationship of Christ as Christ, which can hardly apply to the Old Testament saints when He was not Christ at

all—the nourishing and cherishing it, as a man his own flesh, for we are members of His body, we are of His flesh and of His bones. This in every way connects itself with Christ become man, and though, as you urge, the church is not termed wife, because in fact that marriage is not come, yet surely it goes from the thought of this relationship, and refers to the relationship of Eve, and connects the thought of membership of the body with being of His flesh and of His bones; that is, the body and the wife. The body is not de facto more complete than the wife, though no doubt present union of members exists with the Head. The marriage is clearly future. Still Ephesians 5:seems to me to identify the body and the wife. Bride is not a leading Pauline thought, but Old Testament and figurative. Union and membership is actual and real. Hence we do not find the bride so much in Paul, but in Revelation, which goes on prophetic ground, but transfers to heaven the images of prophecy. But I do not think the twelve tribes shew Israel—no more than the angels, angelic beings—making part of the city: both I esteem characteristic. The providential power administered by angels, and direct government of Jehovah, as well as apostolic foundation, characterise the church, not so much Paul as the twelve, even so. Abraham's looking for the city does not exactly make him to be the city: it is another line of thought…

The agitation is very great in these countries, even in England. There is recrudescence on the Bethesda question, though but little as yet, but in Ireland and Scotland plenty; many being in movement, and leaving the Establishment, and in Ireland many meetings being formed without much knowing what they are about, through the labours of young men very hot against the

Establishment, rather revivalist, and hitherto knowing nothing of the unity of the body; but there is progress—pretty decided as to breaking with evil, but not yet aware of its craft, so as to assure one they will keep it out; but the Lord is faithful. The brethren are going on happily enough, both in England and Ireland, and there is general growth and peace, though infirmity here and there.

Ever affectionately yours in the blessed Lord.

Glasgow, 1865.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,— … The better I understand your position, the more clearly I see that you have nothing to do but to remain quietly where you are just now. Sowing is not reaping; it is not the season for reaping, the plants would be plucked up without any fruit, but to have the harvest we must sow. This is what I felt in Ireland: they wanted to see those who. were separating themselves from nationalism come amongst brethren all at once; for my part, I tried to enlighten them; they had neither the principles nor the facts—for Bethesda, which was opening its arms to them, was in question—nor had they faith to bear the reproach of Christ. I waited; already there is much progress… Some are quite clear, others in the way of getting on. I am thinking of going back there; but, while following duty we can leave God to act.

…You have only to keep up your relations with those brethren by presenting the truth to them in a clearer way, and allowing it to work in their hearts, committing the result to God; you cannot, I believe, do a more useful

work for your country at present. In the disputes in which —— and —— have involved Christians, you have only to go on with your work, while keeping yourself entirely outside everything; it is sad, but our place is an outside one: “the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace.” This may leave us, for the time being, very few; but it leaves us with God: only pray much for the poor sheep. Your position is the best possible one, but that it may be so, you need to love these poor souls much, without giving up the sure ground of Christ; if one did that, what good would it be to be interested in them? I bless God you are there.

May your work be positive and not controversial, as far as possible, so that those who have heart for the Lord may get on. Devotedness and faith are the chief things nowadays: there is movement enough, what is wanting is what answers needs; supply this as far as you can according to the requirements that come before you, and be content to sow, happy if you reap; the Lord says, “One soweth and another reapeth;” if we are doing His work we shall reap in His time, if we do not grow weary… I am overwhelmed with work, but it is all right. Keep near the Lord, He will give you strength; He renews our strength: we go from strength to strength, His strength is made perfect in our weakness. He is ever good, ever faithful: “He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous.” …

Yours affectionately in Christ.

London, January 23rd, 1866.

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Dearest ——,— … All is still movement here, meetings sometimes twice a day. But I am going to the south of

France for a meeting of labouring brethren. [Vergèze, March 17.] There has certainly been latterly a strong desire for the word of God. The loose principle is in conflict everywhere with upright submission to the Lord, still it seems to me that the Lord is working in consciences as to it.

All, I believe, of the evangelists here have entirely broken with B. and its representative here; but there is uncertainty in several what to do. In some, a kind of helplessness as to any discipline; but in all such, I think, non-recognition of the church of God and its action; and in some, more evident lawlessness or self-will (I speak as a principle), often arising from a desire to win A. or B., but never godly submission of mind. But there is progress in all, and one has to keep one's heart large, and look for their good: they began apart, and I seek their progress, that their work may be sound in itself, so that they may not be open to the evils of want of principle— union, as far as possible, and consistency is our own walk as a body—and look to the Lord to carry all this out. I speak of what I keep before my mind, while following the word in my own path, for with their sphere of work I have had nothing to do; but the progress of the active ones is very decided. Still, it is a narrow path, but a narrow path is a simple one if you are ready to serve others, and to do only what you have to do.

… The Lord's goodness is ever near and true.

Ever affectionately yours.

Dublin, February 23rd, 1866.

* * * The point I take to be fatally dangerous is confounding private judgment and conscience. We see the full-blown fruit of it in the present state of

Protestantism, where private judgment is used to authorise the rejection of everything the individual does not agree with.

The difference is plain in the case put. A father's authority is admitted. Now if it be a matter of conscience, Christ's authority or the confession of His name, of course this cannot stand in the way. I am bound to love Christ more than father or mother. But suppose I reject my father's authority for everything my private judgment differs in as to what is right, there is an end of all authority. There may be cases of anxious inquiry as to what my duty is, where spiritual judgment alone can come to a right judgment. This is the case in the whole christian life. We must have our senses exercised to discern good and evil—to be riot unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is; and such exercises are useful. But the confounding a judgment I form simply as to right with conscience is, in result, confounding will with obedience. True conscience is always obedience to God; but if I take what I see as sufficient, confusion of a deadly character soon comes in. Does one not submit to a father's authority unless he can bring, even in an important matter, a text of scripture for everything he desires? Is there no setting up of self and self-will in such a principle?

But I go farther; and it is the case in question. Suppose in an assembly a person has been put out for evil. All admit that such, if truly humbled, should be restored. The assembly think he is humbled truly; I am satisfied, suppose, that he is not. They receive him. Am I to break with the assembly or to refuse subjection to their act, because I think them mistaken? Supposing (which is a more trying case to the heart) I believe he is humbled

and they are satisfied he is not, I may bow to a judgment I think erroneous and look to the Lord to set it right. There is such a thing as lowliness as to self, which does not set up its own opinion against others, though one may have no doubt of being right.

There is another question connected with it—one assembly's act binding another. I do not admit, because scripture does not admit, independent assemblies. There is the body of Christ, and all Christians are members of it; and the church of God in one place represents the whole and acts in its name. Hence, in 1 Corinthians, where the subject is treated of, all Christians are taken in with the assembly at Corinth as such; yet this last is. treated as the body as such, and made locally responsible for maintaining the purity of the assembly; and the Lord Christ is looked at as there; and what was done was done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is wholly ignored when one speaks of six or seven clever, intelligent Christians, and a number of ignorant ones. The Lord in the midst of the assembly is set aside. The flesh, it is said, often acts in the assembly. Why assume it does, and forget it may in an individual?

Again, why speak of obeying the Lord first, then the church? But supposing the Lord is in the church? It is merely setting up private judgment against the judgment of an assembly meeting in Christ's name with His promise (if they are not, I have nothing to say to them); it is simply saying, I count myself wiser than those who are. I reject entirely as unscriptural the saying, "First Christ, then the Church." If Christ be not in the church, I do not own it at all. I assume that the church has not Christy making them two parties. I may reason with an assembly, because I am a member of

Christ, and hence of it—if it is one, help it. But if I own to it as an assembly of God, I cannot assume Christ is not there. It is simply denying it is an assembly of God. The thought is wanting of what an assembly of God is. This is not surprising; but it necessarily falsifies judgment on the point, which is not “if the word”— but if I see not the word for it. It is just trusting one’s own judgment as against others and the assembly of God.

I could not for a moment put a question of blasphemies against Christ on such a ground. It is really wickedness. The attempt to cover them by church questions, or by pleas of individual conscience, I abhor with a perfect abhorrence.

Allow me to put the question as to minor questions in another shape. Suppose I am of another assembly, and I think they judge something in a mistaken way, am I to impose my individual way of thinking on them ? If not, what am I to do? Leave the assembly of God if it be such (if not I do not go there)? You cannot help yourself. If I do not continue in an assembly, because it does not agree with me in everything, I can be of no assembly of God in the world. All this is simply a denial of the presence and help of God’s Spirit and of the faithfulness of Christ to His own people. I cannot see godly lowliness in it.

But if an assembly have judged as such in a case of discipline, admitting all brotherly communications and remonstrances, I distinctly say another assembly should, on the face of it, receive their act. If the wicked man is put out at Corinth, is Ephesus to receive him? Where then is unity? where the Lord in the midst of the church? What led me out of the Establishment was the unity of1

the body: where it is not owned and acted on, I should not go. And of independent churches I think quite as ill, or worse, than of the Establishment. But if each assembly acts independently of another and receives independently of it, then it has rejected that unity—they are independent churches. There is no practical unity of the body.

But I shall never be brought to such wickedness as to treat acceptance of blasphemers as an ecclesiastical question. If people like to walk with them or help and support the bearing with them at the Lord's table, they will not have me. I distinctly judge, that the principles defended shew want of lowliness as to self and a setting aside of the very idea of the church of God. I am not going to mix the two questions. I do not accept the setting aside my spiritual liberty: we are a flock, not an enclosure. But in questions of discipline, where no principle is denied, I do not set up my judgment against that of the assembly of God in that which God has committed to its care. It is just setting myself up as wiser, and neglecting God's word which has assigned certain duty to an assembly, which He will honour in its place.

Let me add, there is such a thing as obedience in what we do know, which goes before speculating on possible claims in obedience, where we should like to be free to go our own way. "To him that hath shall more be given." Doing what we know in obedience is a great way of knowing further.

Again, "the bond of unity between the churches is said to be the lordship of Christ." But there is not a word about churches [when we speak of unity], nor bond of

churches; nor does unity consist of union of churches. Lordship is distinctly individual. Nor is Lord of the body a scriptural idea. Christ is Lord to individuals, Head to the body, over all things. Unity is not by lordship. Of course, individual obedience will help to maintain it, as all godliness will; but unity is unity of the Spirit, and in the body, not in bodies. Both Ephesians and Corinthians teach us distinctly that unity is in and by the Spirit, and that Christ has in this respect the place of Head, not of Lord, which referred to individual Christians. This error, if acted on, would falsify the whole position of gatherings, and make mere dissenters of them, and in no way meet the mind of Christ.

[1866.]

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Dear Miss ——,—I think the person who answered the question was frightened by the word infallibility, which I am not. It is simply the poor and transparent piece of sophistry of confounding authority with infallibility. In a hundred instances obedience may be obligatory where there is no infallibility. Were it not so, as y«u can easily see, there could be no order in the world at al^ There is no infallibility in it, but a great deal of self-will; and if there be no obedience where there is not infallibility, no acquiescence in what has been decided, there is no end to self-will and no existence of common order. The question is of competence, not of infallibility. A father is not infallible, but he has divinely given authority, and acquiescence is a duty. A police magistrate is not infallible, but he has competent authority in the cases submitted to his jurisdiction. There may be resources against abuse of authority, or, in certain cases, a refusal

of it, when a higher obliges us, as a conscience directed by God's word: "We ought to obey God rather than man." But there is never in scripture liberty given to the human will as such: we are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. And this principle, our doing God's will in simple obedience without solving every abstract question which may be raised, is a path of peace, which many heads miss who think themselves wise, because it is the path of God's wisdom.

The question therefore is a mere and poor sophistry which betrays the desire to have the will free, and a confidence that the person's judgment is superior to all that has been already judged. There is judicial authority in the church of God, and if there were not, it would be the most horrible iniquity on earth; because it would put the sanction of Christ's name on every iniquity. And that is what was sought and pleaded for by those with whom these questions originated: that whatever iniquity or leaven was allowed, it could not leaven an assembly. Such views have done good. They have the cordial abhorrence and rejection of every honest mind, and of every one who does not seek to justify evil. It is possible you may think or say, that is not the question I am asking. Forgive me for saying, I know that it is and that only; though you do not, I am well assured. But the judicial authority of the church of God is in obedience to the word. "Do not ye judge them that are within? but them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." And I repeat, if it be not done, the church of God becomes the accrediting of every vileness of sin: and I affirm distinctly, that when this is done, other Christians are bound to respect it. There are remedies for fleshly

action in it, in the presence of the Spirit of God amongst the saints, and in the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ; but that remedy is not the totally unscriptural and miserable one proposed by the question—the pretension of competency in every one who takes it into his head to judge for themselves independent of what God has instituted. It is, taken in its most favourable aspect, not as individual pretension which is its real character, the well-known and unscriptural system which has been known since Cromwell's time—that is, Independency: one body of Christians being independent of every other as a voluntary association. This is a simple denial of the unity of the body, and the presence and action of the Holy Ghost in it.

Supposing we were a body of Freemasons, and a person was excluded from one lodge by the rules of the order, and if instead of looking to the lodge to review the case, it was thought to be unjust, and each other lodge was to receive them or not on its own independent authority, it is clear the unity of the Freemason system is gone: each lodge is an independent body acting for itself. It is in vain to allege a wrong done, and the lodge not being infallible; the competent authority of lodges and the unity of the whole is at an end: the system is dissolved. There may be provisions for such difficulties—all right if it be needed. But the proposed remedy is the mere pretension of the superiority of the recusant lodge and a dissolution of Freemasonry. Now I openly reject, in the most absolute way, the pretended competency of one church or assembly to judge the other as the question proposes; but what is more important, it is an unscriptural denial of the whole structure of the church

of God. It is Independency, a system I knew forty years ago and would never join. If people like that system, let them go to it. It is in vain to say it is not that. Independency merely means that each church judges for itself independently of another. And that is all that is claimed here. I have no quarrel with those who, liking to judge for themselves, prefer this system; only I am perfectly satisfied that in every respect it is wholly unscriptural. The church is not a voluntary system. It is not formed (or rather unformed) of a number of independent bodies each acting for itself. It was never dreamed, whatever the remedy, that Antioch could let in Gentiles and Jerusalem not, and all go on according to the order of the church of God. There is not a trace of such independency and disorder in the word. There is every possible evidence, in fact and doctrine insisted on, of there being a body on earth whose unity was the foundation of blessing in fact, and its maintenance the duty of every Christian. Self-will may wish it otherwise, but certainly not grace and obedience to the word.

Difficulties may arise; we have not an apostolic centre, as there was at Jerusalem. Quite true; but we have a resource in the action of the Spirit in the unity of the body, the action of healing grace and helpful gift, and the faithfulness of a gracious Lord who has promised never to leave us nor forsake us. But the case of Jerusalem in Acts 15:is a proof that the scriptural church never thought of, and did not accept, the independent action insisted upon. The action of the Holy Ghost was in the unity of the body, and is always so. The action directed by the apostle at Corinth (and which binds us as the word of God) was operative in respect of the whole church of God, and all are contemplated in the

opening of the epistle. Does any one mean to pretend, that if he was to be put out at Corinth judicially, each church was to judge for itself whether he was to be received—that judicial act pass for nothing, or operative only at Corinth, and Ephesus or Cenchrea do as it liked afterwards? Where, then, was the solemn act and direction of the apostle? Well, that authority and that direction are the word of God for us now.

I am quite aware it will be said, Yes: but you may not follow it rightly, as the flesh may act. It is possible. There is possibility that the flesh may act. But I am quite certain that what denies the unity of the church, sets up for itself, and dissolves it into independent bodies, is the dissolution of the church of God, unscriptural, and nothing but flesh. It is therefore judged for me before I go any further. There is a remedy, a blessed, precious remedy of humble minds, in the help of God's Spirit in the unity of the body, and the Lord's faithful love and care, as I have said; but not in the pretentious will which sets up for itself and denies the church of God. My answer to the question is, then, that the plea is a miserable sophistry, confounding infallibility and divinely-ordained authority met by lowly grace; and the system sought by the question, the pretentious spirit of independency, a rejection of the whole authority of scripture in its teaching on the subject of the church—a setting up of man instead of God.

I am not very careful or anxious to answer the second question. It is clear that if two or three are gathered together it is an assembly, and if scripturally assembled, an assembly of God; and if not, what else? If the only one in the place, it is the assembly of God in the place, yet I do object practically to taking the title, because the

assembly of God in any place properly embraces all the saints in the place; and there is practical danger for souls in assuming the name, as losing sight of the ruin, and setting up to be something: but it is not false in the supposed case. But if there be one such, and another is set up by man's will independent of it, the first only is morally in God's sight the assembly of God, and the other is not at all so, because it is set up in independency of the unity of the body. I reject in the most entire and unhesitating manner the whole independent system, which is the only real object of the question, as unscriptural, and a positive, unmitigated evil. Now that the unity of the body has been brought out, and the scriptural truth of it known, it is simply a work of Satan. Ignorance of the truth is one thing, our common lot in many ways; opposition to it another. The miserable use, made by unprincipled persons, trying to make capital out of it, of an expression used with a perfectly right intention in London, I pass under the silence it deserves. The truth of God is the same, whether an expression used by Mr. ——be right or wrong.

Yours very truly in the Lord.

I may add, that I know it is alleged that the church is now so in ruins that scriptural order according to the unity of the body cannot be maintained. Then let the objectors avow, as honest men, that they seek unscriptural order, or rather disorder. But in truth it is impossible to meet at all in that case to break bread, except in defiance of God's word; for scripture says, "We being many are one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf." We profess to be one body whenever we break bread; scripture knows nothing else. And they will

find scripture too strong and perfect a bond for man's reasoning to break it.

* * * * *

To the same.]

* * * As regards what I said as to a higher claim of obedience, it is the safeguard against the exercise of authority where there is not infallibility. Thus Christ tells His disciples to obey the scribes sitting in Moses' seat; but when they tell them not to preach Christ, they cannot obey them, because God had told them to do otherwise. A parent's authority is sacred: he tells me (say I was a Jew) not to become a Christian: I disobey him because there is a higher obligation. It is important morally, because no departure or rejection of legitimate authority can be based on our own will or self in any way, but on the direct authority of God. Never have I a right, but I ought to obey. And it is simple that, if it be the authority God has given to a parent or magistrate, or whoever it may be, which leads me to obey them, as it is, it cannot be real when it calls me to disobey God's direct command. But obedience is always our path.

Ever truly yours in the Lord.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—Your letter has been by me some time, because I have been excessively occupied in Scotland, seeking to finish things off in London to be ready to go to America— having first visited Ireland, where there is a great deal of inquiry, and, thank God, progress. I was very glad indeed to get accounts of the beloved brethren, as I always am…

I turn now to the heavenly Jerusalem. The subject is not new to me, and I have had to deal with it with some of the free evangelists and their pupils here, so I have looked at it again. All such researches, carried on lowlily and with reverence for the word, only bring out fuller truth. But all the consideration I have been able to give it has only confirmed me in the conviction that it is the church, but in Revelation not in its highest character. As to the word "Lamb," I think its use in Revelation is to shew that the suffering and rejected One on earth is the mighty and reigning One, and not redemption, in our sense of it. "Salvation to our God … and unto the Lamb" is a proof, where used, that it is not the church. Those who appeared on mount Zion were the first-fruits to God and the Lamb: they were on earth. (Chap, 14) So the immense multitude of chapter 7:ascribe salvation to God and the Lamb: they are millennial names. Only the heavenly Jerusalem has the nearest relationship to the Lamb at that time; it is His wife. It is not therefore a name of general redemption, but of the millennial position of the suffering and rejected One: hence they dread "the wrath of the Lamb."

The question therefore is, what is it which is in this closest relationship? What is it that is His bride? I do not deny that there is only comparison or figure in Ephesians 5, but figure of what? Surely of being made "one flesh." I cannot here separate the bride or wife and the one body. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church: "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." Surely here the line of thought is the perfect analogy of wife and church. This He is going to present to Himself. Then, "Men ought to love their wives as their bodies;" "he that

loves his wife, loves himself:" she is one with him; "no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones": but this is union with the wife—"and they twain shall be one flesh." You will say, But this is of the man and his wife. No; it is a "mystery; I speak concerning Christ and the church." I do not see how the wife, body and church can be separated here. The object is to shew that the wife is one flesh, cared for by Christ as a man does his own flesh, and that this as "a great mystery" refers to the church. I see two distinct parts in this: first, the general view; Christ gives Himself for the church, sanctifies it, and presents it to Himself—here we have the whole referring evidently to Genesis 2:21, 22; only redemption and sanctification, not creation liable to failure. The second part, the present case, when the church is in infirmity; Ephesians 5:29-31, referring to the verses which follow in Genesis. I am quite unable to see how the church, body and wife, are not by union made the same here, though treated abstractedly in relationship, and not historically. We must remember that "head over all things" is not simply the kingdom. I quote 2 Corinthians 11:2 only to shew that the thought and image was familiar to the apostle, as the relationship in which the church stood, only the marriage here not yet come.

I get then in Revelation the bride, the Lamb's wife, described in contrast with the corrupt Rome, Babylon, the idolatrous harlot. Now I can understand the earthly Jerusalem, the King's wife, being opposed to this on earth, but I find no scripture recognising anything in this relationship but the church: no husband known

before Christ (save Jehovah and Israel). Where the wife is not in question, I find them still characteristically contrasted in heaven, as in- Hebrews 12:23 and 11:40. I admit that the heavenly Jerusalem is a comparatively vague term, contrasted with the earthly Jerusalem as the capital of heavenly power; but I find no use of bride and wife in the New Testament in any sense but the church. When I come to the end of Revelation, and the present relationship of the church is in question, as at the beginning; I find (chap. 22:17) “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” It is not the revealing prophetic part—the book itself; and I know not what expects Him thus but the church. Verse 16 shews it is a present thing. I remember Bellett’s having an idea that the marriage was put off to let in the saints of the beast’s time to have a place in this, but he gave it up: this would not reach the ground you take. And though the Lamb is the Redeemer of all, it is as the actually rejected One He is here seen, as I am persuaded; and the separation of the body and the bride, though the relationship be twofold, seems to dissolve the force of Ephesians 5, which teaches me He reckons the wife as a man does his own flesh. The contrast with Babylon makes Kevelation 19:confirmatory to me, otherwise it is the thing to be inquired into, not the proof of what it is. The other view is at best a deduction and conclusion. There is no evidence of anything being called bride or wife but the church; but I am glad to hear anything. I think the sense of relationship important, and hence should search carefully into the proof of this one when in question. Omitting “of them that are saved” (Rev. 21:24) only makes it clearer. I always applied it to those that were spared in the judgments, but it is much simpler without it.

As regards 1 John 1:7, like all his writings, it is abstract; not “has cleansed,” or “will cleanse,” but “cleanses”: it is its value and nature. So verse 9: when a man confesses his sins truly before God on his first conversion, he is forgiven. If I do so (in another way no doubt) as to a Father, when I am a Christian, I am forgiven—as regards the ways and government of God, I am forgiven. To “say that we have no sin” (ver. 8) is ignorance of myself: “If we say that we have not sinned” (ver. 10) is plain denial of God’s testimony; but “have not” is past, we are not supposed to be sinning. “We have no sin” is present, because it is a nature in me which the truth makes me know.

I have written in a number of times, being excessively occupied; much movement, constant inquiry, of course great opposition, but progress, and several added, some having had to give up at present everything: great effort to keep up loose principles, but the conscientious and zealous delivered, a very great many; and now they have settled tighter ones on dissenting principles, to try and keep them—not Bethesda, but a place,set up, a kind of fruit of reservation on purpose to leave a kind of free preaching, and then broke bread there. It is the last place whose influence I should think healthful, but brought many out of the Establishment, because they are bound to nothing; but those who felt for the Lord’s glory at His table are out: of course, they are very angry, but there has been distinct blessing and progress. But I have been incessantly occupied; the work very fatiguing, wearing by adverse subtle questions sometimes, but interesting, and, thank God, the Lord with me. I have been very peaceful through it, and feel His hand and approbation, but am as to my body worn, from six to

past twelve never ceasing. It is all moving, so that I could hardly tell you what is going on in detail, but great truths are making way, and many consciences have.

Ever, beloved brother, affectionately yours

In our blessed Master.

Dublin, 1866.

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My dear ——, — I thank you for your letter. I have no objection to your statements that I am aware of. One phrase I was not quite sure of, but as to the purport of the whole I accept it. I said, as you remark, that I was quite ready to judge and correct expressions. I have repeated it over and over again; I waited only my return to England to take it up, which, with the Lord's help, I shall do. I could not do it before; I have not even materials. But your letter leads me further. Allow me to state some facts. This question was first raised by the most deliberate and unprincipled fraud as regards my statements, and continued by enemies to myself and the truth in the same spirit everywhere. Others took it up from whom I should perhaps have expected other things. All this leads me to see a work of the enemy behind the alleged difficulties of conscience which I am bound to respect, only the question goes further for me.

Had I not received your letter, I should have waited till I came to England to ascertain how far the consciences of saints were troubled, that is, to see how far the work of the enemy had gone; your statement I take as correct, and act before I return. It is no sudden resolution, but one in my mind a good while, only I waited for evidence of its being necessary before acting on it, or definitely

concluding. I shall not break bread in England until the question is settled: I say in England, and I must explain this for other reasons. Had I been judged by any assembly, or had I been found to judge any assembly, as I did at Plymouth, recognising as I do the unity of the body, I should have broken bread nowhere till I were restored, or other assemblies had judged as I did the one I had left. But I do neither: I have nothing to judge the gatherings for, and they have never judged me. As to what is called leaving brethren, I have not the most distant thought of it. I see the unity of the body, in these questions the first of truths, owned there, and in fact there only. I am convinced as I never was, that the testimony of God, and the possession of His will, and of divinely given intelligence of His ways, His own testimony however feebly carried out, is in the testimony and position of brethren. I have not shade upon my mind as to it, and I believe this assurance is given of God. I need not say leaving it would be for me out of the question. I abstain from communion to relieve the consciences of others. Where the difficulty has not existed, I am not forced to do it. If an assembly said to me, You cannot here if you do not there, I should submit at once. I do not separate; if I did they would be bound to do so. I refrain in grace for others' sake. But it is a defiance to the enemy.

Further, in doing this I maintain as I desire the vital importance of holding fast the confession of the glory and perfectness of the Lord's Person, and relations with God. If I have touched that, I am alike unfit for teaching or communion. Captain H.'s conviction of my loyalty to Christ has nothing to do with it; it is a person's judgment of a person. Where Christ is in question in

teaching, this is beside the mark; His glory must be maintained. Next, no handle can be given if I act thus for looseness as to Mr. N.'s doctrine through sufferance of mine. That must be judged on its own merits, and, if received, received because it is allowable. No personal attachment of brethren for me, for which I am profoundly thankful, can come, ought to come in the way here. They will not have to defend my statements, because I am amongst them, and they are, the subject being vital, responsible for them. They can judge them freely. I should of course give every explanation to clear up my meaning. I bind them to no acceptance of my statements in any case; many may not enter into them; but that their own consciences may not be troubled by them, as believing they are dishonouring to the Lord…

If the enemy has succeeded in raising this question, my part is to relieve the consciences of all, to cake care that the question of Christ's glory be maintained at its true elevation, and give every explanation or correction of expressions which the want of clearness may demand. At the same time, I do not conceal from myself that the truth of Christ's sufferings is lacking in some. Nothing can be more ruinous than the statement, that Christ's entering into such and such sufferings means that He was in the state that brought them. Yet that, by your own letter, is the question which perplexes men's minds. Impossible, if the reality of Christ's sufferings had not been lost or enfeebled with some. If Christ bore our sicknesses and carried our infirmities, was He by this sick Himself? Be assured the enemy has been at work here.

But my object is not to enter.into explanations here. The smiting was on the cross, but there was that which was

besides atonement in it. And He did enter into that. All this has, I believe, been already explained. But my object is to say that, on my return to England, with the explanation I have given, it is not my intention to teach or come into communion till brethren are at ease on the subject, but as I have said, as relieving their consciences, and maintaining, as not to be touched, the glory of the blessed Lord, not as in heart or act separating myself from them. I feel it is the best reply too, to those who without would either feel a difficulty, or desire to tamper with evil on that question. I must come to London, and brethren are so necessarily mixed up there with every place and all that passes, that I do not intend to go to any meetings there. You can communicate to any persons whom you know to be concerned about it, my intention.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Paris, May, 1866

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My dear——,—I hope to be early next week in London. It is not my mention to come to communion or exercise any ministry. You need not fear, nor any, that I have “left the brethren.” It would be leaving my own deep convictions, formed I do not doubt by God in my soul, of His path before Him. But others have succeeded, as—— informs me, in raising difficulties and uneasiness in the minds of brethren as to my papers on the sufferings of Christ. I feel that His glory must be maintained unquestioned, and no enfeebling of the consciences of the brethren allowed. I have nothing against any gathering, nor has any judged me, so that I should go on as usual where the question has never exercised any, or

they were satisfied; but London is too closely connected with every place to make it practicable to separate it from them, and I must for other objects come there.

I mention it that it may not surprise any of you, and that you may understand it is deliberate. Quite ready to correct or explain any expression which may be unguarded, but not to accept the ground on which the accusations are made, which I believe to be unsound and untenable as regards the Lord's sufferings. I do not expect or ask brethren to agree with me, many may not understand the question, but I respect their consciences, and would not have them forced on the question, but the contrary, nor act where they were uneasy. I hold it of first rate moment before all church questions, that Christ's personal glory be intact and maintained. The estimate of it must not be enfeebled on my account. I hold the ground of the accusations to be a mischievous mistake, but I repeat I ought to consider the consciences of those who have been made uneasy by it.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

Paris, May 13th, 1866.

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My dear Brother,—I trust I should retract at once if 1 thought I was in error, especially in what concerns the blessed Lord Himself. I am quite ready to admit, and have admitted over and over again, that doubtless expressions may be made clearer. My principal difficulty to bring my mind to bear on it is the character of the objections. I admit the objectors have succeeded in troubling some; but I find daily many of these the moment they have read what I have written perfectly

tranquil… I should be ready to explain to the humblest and most ignorant. But the attacks have not commanded gay respect. I am aware the enemy has succeeded in troubling some, and leading others to profit by it, to hinder souls whose consciences were making progress; but the Lord has a long look out. Our faith has to wait for Him, and such I seek for myself. I only fear that it may leave some, for whom I had hoped better, in the mud they have sought to create. I only ask to be enabled to do at each moment what is right in. the matter, believing, though it be the enemy's work, it will do good. I proposed to the brethren to go out of communion, and leave off ministering (not for any difficulty I had), but to leave them perfectly, free; but they would not hear of it in these parts, and in many others.

I am not the least uneasy myself. I feel distinctly it is an effort of the enemy, and that he will be baffled; but I do not want to involve others in it, nor will I make it a matter of self-defence, mingling that up with the Lord's glory, and raising discussions, when it ought with such a subject to be edification. As regards connecting it, or comparing it, with Mr. N.'s doctrine, were it not for the pure wickedness of what set it a-going, it would be beneath contempt. To say that being born in a state, and seeking to extricate oneself, and not being able till death, is the same as being born in the very opposite, and always walking in that state, and entering into the sufferings of another in grace, does not deserve to be reasoned on. The same thing! One makes the other impossible. I cannot condescend to take notice of these attacks: those who get entangled in them must count the cost for themselves. Explain my own views, or unfold the truth as far as I can, this I am ready to do; but I am in no

hurry: I do not want to get defending myself, but prefer trusting the Lord, who will make things clear. Some parts of it are a new kind of trial, but there is grace enough in Christ for it, and I leave all that without great difficulty to God. We shall find out where He is leading. May the Lord save as many as possible from Satan's power in it. I am ready to do all I can towards it, where it is really sought. I have no doubt many expressions may be made clearer; but, if honestly examined in the context, they cannot have the sense attached to them. In substance, instead of having to retract, I believe my enemies to be in very mischievous and evil error, going far to deny the reality of Christ's sufferings, and thus depriving Him of a blessed part of His glory, and us of the deepest comfort and vital truth.

I can easily understand that what relates to the remnant of Israel may not be understood, and hence that part is difficult to enter into. That does not trouble me. But the denial of Christ's sufferings, where these are real, is another matter; and, allow me to say, though I shall reply to your questions out of the New Testament, you cannot understand that subject without referring to the Old. Nor can I consent to give up that which was able to make men "wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus." I am aware that Mr. N. said his doctrine was not in the New Testament, but in the Psalms; but one of the devices of Satan is to deprive us of truth by connecting it with deadly error. This is one source of trouble to honest minds now; but it is a reason for going peacefully on in the truth itself, and having patience with people's minds. His doctrine was in neither. Nor do I admit such a principle. For the Old Testament throws infinite light on what we have often only the fact of in

the New. There is sufficient in the New to connect it with the Old, as in the case of Christ's sacrifice, but far more detail in the Old. If you expect to find the details as to the remnant of Israel in the New, you will be disappointed. Mr. N. connected the blessed Lord with sinful, guilty Israel, and hence had necessarily a false Christ. I say He entered into the sorrows and sufferings of the godly remnant. It is never stated in my papers that He is in the place that brought them on. The attacks on me are founded on a deadly error: that entering into the sufferings, or suffering with them in heart and grace, supposes Himself to be in the state or place which brought them on. Christ was baptised with the baptism of repentance. Was He in the case, or state, or position to need it? Every Christian knows that He was not, yet He submitted to that, or went through it.

There cannot be a more dangerous principle than that on which the charges against my statements are founded. They are really unawares founded on Mr. N.'s principle, not on what they are attacking. I have no thought on the personal or relative positions of Christ which is not that of the whole church of God. The only thing new, and which is not so for multitudes of saints, is there being a Jewish remnant, and His entering into their sorrows. The rest is merely calling souls to, I believe, a most profitable and faith-deepening contemplation of the blessed Lord's sufferings; and that, for friends or foes, I am not going to give up. Statements may be cleared up, but not truth given up. Thank God, many studious souls have already drawn, and the hubbub raised had led many others since to draw, great profit from it.

I will now turn directly to your questions26 and to the New Testament. But you must feel that before God no divinely-taught and God-fearing mind will leave out Psalms 22, 69, 102, or Isaiah 51 or 53 in learning God's mind on the sufferings of the Lord.

It is admitted that in Gethsemane Christ was not yet drinking the cup. We know that He could then pray that He might not. Was He suffering simply from man for righteousness' sake? I merely state this as a general principle, that there is suffering which is not from man for righteousness, nor accomplishing atonement. You ask the question, "if smiting were necessitated on the blessed Lord, except as the sin-bearer?" You have just fallen into the dangerous error I adverted to. Where have I said it was necessitated? I have just stated the contrary. And this makes all the difference. Atonement is wrought in the forsaking of God when Christ was made sin for us. No doubt death was there consequently, but much more than death, and to confine it to the act of death is fatal error—just what one form of infidelity is now doing. And it is just because minds have lost, or never had, the true sense of what atonement is, its unfathomable depth, that they have confounded other true sufferings with it. When the Lord, with strong crying and tears, made His supplication to Him that was able to save Him from death, was it only from wrath and the work of atonement? Where He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me," were they watching with Him undergoing atonement? The Son of man was to suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation, and be put to death, and rise again: is this a statement of atonement?

You will say, perhaps, these were His sufferings from man simply for righteousness' sake. No doubt man's hand was in it, as it was in the cross, where atonement was wrought. But scripture teaches me that it is not simply that. The disciples had seen His sufferings from men all through. This He only began to tell them of on His last journey to Jerusalem. Not only so, the Lord's position and theirs was changed—His hour till then was not come. He was acting with Emmanuel power, and sending them forth, and disposing of every heart, so that they lacked nothing. But Messiah was to be cut off, and He tells them in Luke that all was changed in this respect. (Luke 22:35-37.) "But now, let him that hath a purse take it. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors; for the things concerning me have an end." No doubt this was fulfilled in that in which atonement was wrought; but it is not atonement which is spoken of, but the rejection of Messiah, and the total change which accompanied it. When the Lord spoke of smiting, quoting from Zechariah, no doubt it was in death, or unto death, He was smitten; but He is not speaking of atonement. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock, shall be scattered abroad." Does this mean, I will make atonement, and gather into one flock Jews and Gentiles, being lifted up on the cross? Or was it smiting the Shepherd as then having gathered the Jewish sheep around Him, so that they were scattered? If I am to believe the Lord, it was this latter. It was not the gathering power of atonement, but the scattering power pf smiting; not the lifting up, though in the same work, but the smiting the Man on the earth, the earthly Shepherd.

You will say this went much farther. To be sure it did, blessed be God; but this does not alter the fact that there was this. Man's hand was in it, Satan's hand was in it. He had departed from Him for a season; now the prince of this world came. It was man's hour, and the power of darkness. The blessed Lord's soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death (and note, before drinking the cup). You will say this was only from man and Satan. It was (though His power never changed) a declared change from His spoiling his goods. And scripture shews me that, while tried by this to the uttermost, and suffering, He looked up to His Father through it, and would only take it as a cup from Him—that His perfection was shewn in bowing to it all as His will and way. And not only was atonement made, but Messiah was cut off; all the promises connected with His presence in Israel in the flesh set aside, the beloved nation and city, over which He wept as that which He would have gathered often, cast off and judged. This was not from man's hand merely, though through it. It was God's divorce of His people, wrought out alike because of and in the death of Messiah. It was not atonement but judicial, and, while it was because of their rejection of Christ, His heart, who wept over them, entered into it, suffered in it and by it, and in His piety did not take it from secondary causes but from God's hand. No doubt He at the same time wrought atonement, was wounded for His people's transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities; as by His stripes they will be healed, but all this on the far deeper ground of atonement: but this does not set aside the truth of the setting aside all blessings in the living person of Messiah, all promises connected with it, nor that the Lord felt all this, and suffered. Was it not in His cutting off the people were

rejected (not saved by atonement, true as that is)? Was it God cut them off, or man (not finally, as we know, but as connected with a living Messiah)? Do you think Christ was indifferent, to all this, or not? Was He not true in heart when as yet it was only in prospect that He wept over Jerusalem? I shall be told this was only sympathy. I abhor the statement. Scripture teaches me that He suffered that He might sympathise. I believe it fully, deeply.

Persons hostile to the truth have taken the statements I have made as to the different states of heart of a tried soul, to which, consequently, this interest and sympathy of Christ might apply, and given them as the state in which Christ was. I might, no doubt, have guarded by a positive disclaimer against such an application. To an honest mind it was needless—to a dishonest one useless. When in the general statement I had carefully put it in, to guard against any misapprehension on the very point you take up, it was deliberately and purposely left out, and unsuspecting minds sought to be puzzled by it. With this before me, what do you feel I can think of the clamour that has been raised?

I have answered your question from the New Testament. If you with these facts of the New Testament take the Psalms, you will soon find your mind guided into further truth and apprehension of what passed when “this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him.” I have no desire to give up what I have learned there. I believe both the atonement and the personal sufferings of Christ are lost by doing so, and true sufferings, in order to sympathise, turned into sympathy. I cannot enter here into more detail. The fact that Christ’s sorrows ran up into atonement, the positive drinking of the cup of wrath,

and putting the sin away—that His sufferings merged in this, which hinders the wrath coming on them who have a part in its efficacy—has made it more difficult to estimate those dealings of God which are judicial, but have not in accepted ones ever the final character of wrath. In Christ, one passed on, so to speak, into the other; in us, and spared Israel, it does not, because Christ has taken that for us; but in a legal state we dread it, and so will Israel at the end. We, if at peace, separate them easily; it is not so, if we are not. Judgment begins at the house of God. They are difficultly saved. This has nothing to do with atonement. Jerusalem has received at the hand of the Lord double of all her sins. This excludes the idea of atonement. Does all this pass without any interest of the blessed Lord in it; or did He so suffer as to be able (besides atonement, which alone renders the other possible as a distinct thing) to enter into their sorrows? Read the Psalms, and see. Bead the New Testament, and see if you cannot find facts which are the fulfilment of them.

I am willing and bound to do anything I can to help any, the feeblest soul. I am willing to stand aloof from brethren (I do not mean to separate from them in heart or will), if they have not the courage, or are not in a condition to face the adversaries of the truth, or are so perplexed by them that the connection with it is a burden; but I am not willing to give up the faith I have in the sufferings of the blessed Lord, nor the link of heart with Him which the apprehension of them gives me. But I believe souls are getting great blessing by the consideration of them, and Satan doing a work, as is often said, in which he deceives himself. I dare say many could not explain it theologically; many may make crude

statements; but the true of heart will be blessed in learning the sorrows of the blessed Lord. It is not the first time, alas! some have been driven back by the truth.

Your affectionate brother and servant in Christ.

June 9th, 1866.

* * * * *

26 ‘The question is, Is there such a class of sufferings in the New Testament. If I mistake not, I learned through your teaching many years ago, in the Newtonian controversy, that the New Testament shewed us, first, the Lord suffering as man for righteousness’ sake; secondly, suffering from God as the substitute for sinners on the cross; and that a third class was then excluded, I forget the exact words. Could the blessed Lord be smitten by God otherwise than as an offering for sin upon the cross? If smiting were necessitated on the blessed Lord, except as the sin-bearer, does it not obscure the glory of the cross?’

Section 13

To the same.]

My dear Brother,—As to your question as to page 36 [“Collected Writings,” vol. vii. p. 305], “This is not atonement, but there is sorrow and smiting”—they had better read what the scripture does say, and see if they believe it, and seek to be taught of God, and whether they understand what is there, than pervert expressions to make them obnoxious. When it is said, “Those whom thou hast wounded” (Psa. 69:26, 27), it cannot mean atonement. The effect of atonement is not to say, “Add iniquity unto their iniquity, and let them not come into thy righteousness.” I say that atonement is not considered here, but the contrary. I believe the smiting was on the cross, and that there the atonement was wrought, but by the forsaking of God as to His soul; He was wounded there for Israel’s transgressions; and scripture thus brings all into one point. But the smiting, or fact of His death, is not solely applied to atonement; it is referred to as cutting Messiah off instead of His taking the kingdom, or the sorrow of death itself; and it is looked at here certainly not as atoning in its effect, though the fact of His being smitten (when atonement was wrought) is spoken of. I believe the cutting off of Messiah is looked at fully in the Psalms as well as atonement. “He weakened my strength in my journey; he shortened my days. I said, O my God, cut me not off in the midst of my days” (Psa. 102:23, 24): this was not the aspect of atonement, though in that in which it was done atonement also was wrought. The thought is separated in scripture. “Smite the shepherd, and the

sheep shall be scattered," is not, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It is mischievous to confound anything with the true work of atonement in the forsaking of God on the cross; and the fact of the removal of Messiah so as to scatter Israel, even the just, is contemplated in scripture, and spoken of distinctly. I have not said there were blows which were not atonement, but this—sufferings in which others are associated, is not atonement, though there is smiting and wounded ones spoken of.

As regards the second point. People have taken the description of the state which they were in for whom Christ suffered, as if it was a statement of the state He was in; but ibr this there is no kind of ground. He entered into the sorrow and endured in His spirit what flowed from it, but He was not in it; and this I have frequently stated and went through it twenty years ago, in which I mid this question was fully gone into as an answer to Newton. It is stated there,27 "Christ, then, does enter in spirit into this sorrow of the remnant fully; but it is not His relation to God as due to Him as associated with the people." This is the tract which has been quoted to say I then thought such sufferings must be excluded. Christ went through what enabled Him to feel for people not reconciled to God. He was not in an unreconciled state; to say that would be blasphemy. But was not He dreading wrath? He had to go through really that which they are comparatively feebly dreading, and never will go through, because He has—He did go through the dread of death, and cried to be delivered from it. He went through it (as I have stated in the tracts) in a different way, because in communion with His Father (not speaking of atonement, but fearing). Was

it not Satan's hour and the power of darkness, He perfect in going through it with God, as I have expressly said? People may call it experience, or anything they like, but if they make it His experience as flowing from the state He was in, it is what I have expressly denied. But the same reasoning would apply to the atonement, though it be—I admit it is—a very different case; but if the suffering a thing proved that one was in the state that caused the suffering, then He was in it then before God.

It is all a delusion applying the state He suffered for, and into the sorrow of which He entered, with being in the state which brings the sorrow. This last was Mr. N.'s doctrine— born in it, extricating Himself out of it. Supposing, as I have said, a mother had her son hanged for thieving, and she was in agony at one so dear to her coming to such an end, would that prove she was a thief, though he was in agony at coming to such an end too; or, that she had a thief's experience? Yet she is in an agony because of one she loves being in it: it is not mere sympathy—that she may shew too—yea, conceal her distress to do so. There is the difference, that Christ really went on to take Himself the consequences. But it is the most extraordinary delusion to suppose that the description of the state a person is in spirit entering into, is a statement that he is in the state or relationship in respect of which he suffers.

I have never, dear brother, stood up for the expressions. I attach no importance to them—would give them all up tomorrow—have said so in the preface to the tract. But the question has now been raised as to the doctrine: it has been said to be pretty much the same as Mr. N.'s.

It is fully stated in my answer to him twenty years ago, as setting aside his doctrine, and shewing the true force of what he used. When the substance of the doctrine is cleared up, I shall have no difficulty in changing the expressions. The material thing at present is, is the doctrine dishonouring to Christ and false? Explain to any one that is stumbled, of course I am bound to do, but I do not hold to any expressions of it; only, I am not going to yield up the truth.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

June 10th, 1866.

* * * * *

My dear Brother,—I am glad to have got your note,28 for with the sincere affection I have for you, I was uneasy about you. I do not believe in general, nor in any, that but for N.'s errors, there would have been the least uneasiness as to my statements as regards the blessed Lord. But there has been a diligent effort to bring the character of Mr. N.'s doctrine, and a wrong to the Lord, upon them, from what source and in what spirit, God will judge. I will endeavour to answer you as plainly as I can. I was told only a day or two ago, what I had quite forgotten, of this saying there are two kinds of suffering to the exclusion of a third. Of course, there is an apparent contradiction. But the third class I excluded, as your own note states, was "the subjection of Christ to the wrath of God previous to the cross, as Christ being under wrath would be found in the epistles," &c. All this I fully hold still. I reject, as I always rejected, the doctrine of Christ being born, as man, or as Israel, subject to wrath from the state or position He was in, or His ever getting into a state or position in which He was

subject to it Himself, or suffered for it as being Himself in that position or state—that is, as liable to it. Even in atonement He was not liable to it, but made sin for others. And there is where the essential contradiction and opposition between my doctrine—scriptural doctrine—and Mr. N.'s is. It is not a question of time, as enemies of the truth have said, it is a difference of what Christ and Christ's place was. I hold to this more strongly, at any rate more intelligently, than ever.

But when I referred to the tract "Observations," while this expression, "exclusion of a third kind," is there, in view of this, I found what I have called a third kind, stated in nearly the same terms, only under the head of the second kind, and thus less defined. Have the kindness to read the pages 64, 65 ["Collected Writings," vol. xv. pp. 144-146] of my "Observations," which I have now looked at in consequence of your note (I had wholly forgotten the contents of the tract). You will find all this very doctrine diligently used against Mr. N.'s and far more fully explained than I had the least idea of. You will find a series of explanations of Psalms, where they are more applied to Christ than even I should now, following still the influence of much current theology. I light on page 40 ["Collected Writings," vol. xv. p. 109], "Christ then does enter in spirit into this sorrow of the remnant fully; but it is not His relation to God as due to Him as associated with the people." Now I still reject in the same way, not only any sin in Christ, but any relationship to God save of, perfect delight, excepting the forsaking for atonement, of course, though there perfectly acceptable in Himself—never as to His work more so.

I will state how people have been misled in a moment as to my last tract. See again the note on page 52. ["Collected Writings," vol. 15:p. 127.] Now whether this be called a third kind of suffering, or classed under the second head, rejecting another and blasphemous kind attributed to Him, is really very little matter; it is a question of accuracy of form and analysis; but these kinds of sufferings are quite as fully gone into in the tract brought up against me, taken, as a reader of scripture must take them, for granted; and then it is elaborately shewn that they afford no handle for Mr. N.'s doctrine, but the contrary. That by which the minds of some have been misled is that in the tract on the sufferings, I have described the state of the remnant, and shewn the analogy of an upright soul under law, to shew what in them Christ had to help and succour them in, and how the circumstances He passed through enabled Him to do it; and this has been used to say, Christ was in the place Himself. He did suffer it, "in all their afflictions he was afflicted;" He did enter into their sorrows, but that, which is perfectly scriptural, does not put Him into the state which brought in the suffering; and that was Mr. N.'s doctrine, and made a false Christ.

When Christ healed, it is said, "He bore our sorrows and carried our sicknesses;" was He therefore sick? or is scripture wrong? He who puts Christ in that state has a false Christ. He who denies Christ's entering into our sorrows and sufferings, in order to succour—not to atone—loses half the blessing of what He is, and takes away a large part of His glory. There is the special entering into the sorrows of the remnant. But I have fully stated how He could. He was actually going forward towards wrath, which He did actually undergo;

they are dreading it as having deserved it, though because He did, they will never undergo it: they were under the oppression of the Gentiles; so was He—the wickedness of apostate Israel; so was He—the betrayal or denial of friends; so was He. But these were of course circumstances. I do see in scripture that there was the cutting off of Messiah, and the rejection—for the time wholly—as to their former condition of God's beloved people, which His soul deeply entered into. That which was on Israel was governmental wrath; He did fully enter into it, but not because He was in the state that government applied to. This is expressly guarded in the tract on the sufferings, where the third kind is spoken of, in the passage T. Ryan purposely left out.

I am satisfied that a dead set is made against.the truth of Christ's real sufferings, by the attempt to confound what I have said with Mr. N.'s blasphemy, to which it is the direct opposite. People have laid hold of His meeting wrath and indignation, and changed it to under indignation and wrath, and even said personally under it, where in the same sentence it is said, "Nor is it His expiatory work" (namely, the particular view of Psalm 102, which I believe to be quite just), "though that which wrought it is here—the indignation and wrath. It is Himself, His own being cut off as man." Now I ask, in the smiting—where the indignation and wrath which wrought atonement were — is there no sorrow in this Psalm, besides indignation and wrath in atonement? His strength had been weakened in His journey, His days shortened. He had prayed not to be cut off in the midst of His days—and this connected with God's arising and having mercy on Zion: was this real? The thought of atonement, of that one dreadful cup, is weakened, if we

confound it with all these other sufferings, though they led to it, as in Psalm 22, but are there contrasted, with it. If you identify them with atonement, you play into the hands of those who deny its real character and efficacy, and (I judge) blaspheme Christ's name. If you deny them, you pull down the truth, the most blessed truth of Christ's true sorrows, of His learning obedience by the things that He suffered, of that sorrow which above all touches the heart and makes us know His perfectness, who could say beyond any Jeremiah, "Was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow?" I have no wish to lose this. I have no intention to mix it up with the one solemn act of atonement which it led to. I think all this an effort of the enemy to injure souls. I am sure the upright and humble will escape, and many have already got blessing by weighing these sufferings more.

As regards the New Testament, I say distinctly that a special time of entering into these sorrows (personally, if my enemies like the word) is marked out. "His hour was not yet come": Luke 22:35, &c, clearly shews this change; and it is said at the beginning of that gospel, Satan departed from Him for a season. So Luke 22:52, 53. I may (though I do not believe it) be forced to give up my brethren, whatever sorrow it may be, but I will not (with God's help) give up the sorrows and the sufferings of my most gracious Lord. I will not falsify them by mixing them up with atonement, though that may be comparatively a less evil. The only difficulty that I know of for our minds, is the mixture of that which is distinguished in Psalm 22, between the expectation of the cross—His meeting, as I have said, indignation and wrath—and the wickedness of Jews and Gentiles, and Satan's power of darkness pressed on Him in

circumstances, and the power of death. All was converging to the cross; there was the actual smiting, but it culminated in that which is yet clearly distinguished in Psalm 22—the forsaking of God, when sought as an answer to it. Now I cannot confound these; I cannot deny either.

I believe if souls had been seeking edification, and not listening to those who as instruments of evil were seeking mischief, they would have found edification and real blessing, even in my poor writings, with, I dare say, many a thing immaturely expressed, and where immaturely conceived, would have been corrected by grace and mature christian minds.

I find in “The Sufferings”: “All this exercise Christ entered into, so as to be able to help them. ‘This poor man cried,’ &c, when He was upon this earth, the power of Gentile evil was there; the apostate wickedness of the priestly rulers of Israel” and so on,… “pressed upon the spirit of any intelligent saint, if such there were, as in the last days. It was not now in these last scenes of Christ’s life, the manifestation of the Lord in grace to Israel, the revelation of the Father’s name to the few given to Jesus out of the world, but the endurance of Israel’s own case under the government of Jehovah, when guilty and rejecting their own mercies, yet with the sense a holy soul wrapped up in Israel’s blessings would have of such a state before the judgment of God; not made a curse and drinking the cup, but the sense of it under God’s government and Satan’s power.” Now this concentrates, I suppose, the doctrine. But would any fair mind think I meant, when Christ was enduring this in His soul (and which was not merely suffering reproach when declaring righteousness in the congregation) —

when I speak of it as “pressing upon the spirit”—that He was guilty, and rejecting His own mercies? for that is what I say He was entering into—Israel’s case. It is said to be the sense a holy soul would have of such a state. Is that saying He was in it—or saying He was not, but entered into it, with death and judgment withal as the consequence of it before His soul, meeting (as it is said elsewhere) indignation and wrath? But this being atonement it is a different thing from merely suffering reproach from men, though there was plenty of that too: His hour was come, and while the cup loomed on His blessed soul and spirit, all the causes of it (even as to Israel) pressed upon Him, and Satan’s power (the prince of this world) was there.

Could Paul wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, and Moses to be blotted out of Jehovah’s book, and did the blessed Lord feel nothing for the beloved people of God, whose children He would have so often gathered? Was He not tried by all.this? Did He not pass through the trial? Ask your own heart in reading scripture. I have said He passed through it with God—the opposite to being in the state which brought it, or Himself being under indignation and wrath as to His state before He drank the cup. If once people saw that entering into it was the very opposite of being in it, all would be clear. Mr. N. may use the words “entering into it” for aught I know, but he makes Him to enter into it by birth, namely, to take the place and state to which it applied. What I have taught in the “Observations” and “Sufferings” is exactly the opposite.

You have not given the pages of your passages: I can only take them up as best I can. I have, page 26 [“Collected Writings,” vol. vii. p. 289], “Christ passed

through all these kinds of suffering, only the last of course as Himself a perfect being, to learn it for others," so that the difference of state is carefully guarded. I find "all this exercise Christ entered into, so as to be able to help them"—this I have already explained. I do not find, "passing through these exercises," as you say. Where the last phrase I have quoted occurs, I have spoken of its being the sense a holy soul would have of it. The most equivocal expression you have not noticed, but then it is accompanied by "into which Christ is entered for them," so that it is fully explained in the passage. The root of your whole mistake is, taking what I have said was the state of those to help whom Christ suffered, as Christ's state. This I do not in the tract do. If you read page 54 ["Collected Writings," vol. vii. p. 332], you will see this fully entered on. The passage which you say pains you, is that I find which I have quoted as concentrating the doctrine. But it is expressly there said, "the sense a holy soul wrapped up in Israel's blessing would have of such a state before the judgment of God." Was not Christ there with the judgment of God before Him? Was not Satan using death as darkness, sorrow, and terror? What else was Gethsemane? Did not God's judgment sanction the pressure of it on the soul? It was just His constant and unfailing perfectness never to take it otherwise. It was not the time of the manifestation of the Lord in grace to Israel: His hour was come. The gospel expressly, as I have said, contrasts that time and His life. It is stated to be the sense of the cup already on His soul. Did He not endure it in the sense a holy soul would have of the state? I believe He did enter as a holy soul into the full distress of it. The denial of the truth of Christ's suffering being tempted, I think a fatal evil. I believe there is a great deal of it going. It was a holy

soul—no temptation, I need not say, from within—but as led by everything in which God's glory and our blessing was concerned.

I believe He died for the nation as a distinct purpose. I believe Israel is the scene of God's government as contrasted with the absolute gift of eternal life in redemption. Into the sorrows connected with that I believe He did enter, and (though doubtless often anticipating it) especially when His hour came. I believe that He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. I believe His holy soul when thus rejected, when He was reckoned with the transgressors, did enter in profound sorrow into the state of God's beloved people which had caused it. I believe Satan used it in Gethsemane to hinder His going through with it, and thus the full extent of the cup itself came before Him: that, blessed be His name, He preferred going through it all to turning aside and having twelve legions of angels, and not fulfil scripture; and the scriptures He fulfilled then were those of the Old Testament, not of the New. These give me the blessed points of the full work, and the history of the facts in which He did accomplish them. I believe He suffered in all this, endured it in His soul. I believe all was before Him that was between God and man, and God and Israel too; the former our special part, but the latter profitable to know. His holy soul was with God in it, save as forsaken in atonement, but His spirit fully entering into it. So I have stated.

I think if people would give themselves the trouble of reading my tracts through, and waiting to be taught of God, they would find, perhaps what was not always clear till it was explained, yet edification, and not a stumbling-block. I dread greatly the setting aside Christ's real

sufferings. The only point remains which has been objected to, and in which scripture is clearly with me, not with my enemies—the whole scene from the pass-over to His death being one, while there are two distinct parts of it. On the cross He was actually smitten and drank the cup; but the shadow and effect of this was cast upon all the preceding hours—as to Him, in holy trial, but in communion, yet bringing all before Him, and all to a test in others, in triumph on one side and desertion on the other. The coming cup gave its shadow and character to all that was passing, though it was not the cup. “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered”—they were scattered in fact before the cross. “Now is the Son of man glorified.” “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” “Let this cup pass from me,” &c. Yet clearly He was not then drinking it, but in spirit He was entering into it with God.

No: I do not seek to pry into what is beyond me, but no soul shall deprive me of blessed and fruitful meditations on my Lord’s sufferings. I may be obliged, as I said, to give up brethren, but I prefer following Him even in thought. I did offer, or more, stated I should not go to communion, to leave them free from the pressure, and to take away wholly the wretched using of letting me in, to loosen judgment as to Mr. N.’s being shut out. They would not hear of it, so I left it there. I am quite ready, if they cannot stand the pressure of what I consider to be pure wickedness (though honest goals have been troubled by it), to do so still; but if they are prepared, I shall not give up the truth—even if they are not, I do not separate from them.

Yours affectionately.

The one point on which there might be difficulty is the bringing in the smiting, which in act took place on the cross, over the whole period from the supper. This might have been explained (it is at the end of my tract), but for fair minds is no ground of difficulty or objection. Scripture does so fully, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, Smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” They were scattered before the time of smiting was there. “But now,” He said unto them, “he that hath a purse let him take it.” And the Lord’s discourse in John, “Now is the Son of man glorified.” The whole tenor of the gospel is thus to take the smiting as come—the scene, as the scene of smiting.

June 18th, 1866.

* * * * *

Dear, ——,—Many have by patiently inquiring found the solution to the difficulties which others have raised in their minds, and got rid of what (partly I believe from human infirmity was the result of flying from Mr. N.’s blasphemies, partly from want of entering in heart into the sorrows of the blessed Lord) I believe was a fatal practical denial of the true sufferings of the blessed Lord. Where there has not been malice, the judgment pronounced on my doctrine has been the effect of a denial of what is essential to the true sufferings of Christ, and indeed (I quite admit without their being aware of it) a denial of the true humanity of Christ. And they are, after all, obliged to admit a third kind of sufferings.

His suffering as a righteous witness for God in the congregation was not the same thing as His being

sorrowful unto death, nor His sense of the cutting off of all the present promises of beloved Israel through their sins, in His own cutting off. Nor was this sorrow atonement. The sorrowing at the rejection of the beloved people through their sins, and the scattering even of the sheep, which made Him withal weep over Jerusalem, and which was accomplished in the smiting and cutting off of Messiah in shortening His days, cutting Him off in the midst of His days, was real sorrow, as the sense of death was real sorrow—"sorrowful even unto death." As to Israel, it was occasioned by their sins, the judgment of God on them as a nation. But this, though the cross was the central point of it, was not in itself atonement. The cup of God's wrath, the infinite going out of a holy nature, of eternal judgment against sin itself, was behind all this, so to speak—a thing of infinite depth. From the cutting off of Israel, though for their sins, and having received at the hand of the Lord double for all their sins (a thing impossible to be said of sin as an object of atonement), they, by atonement, can and will be restored. From the true final judgment of sin we cannot be restored. Now Christ suffered in this cutting off, in this depth of Israel's woes; He suffered in having His soul sorrowful even unto death itself, when confessedly He was not drinking the cup, but praying that He might not. He suffered Himself, not atoningly for others, though, as I have said, it led on to atonement. The dark shadow of this cutting off was on all that hour, and the sheep were scattered before the blow was outwardly struck: was their scattering the effect of atonement? or their scattering as the Jewish gathered sheep by the fact of the Shepherd being cut off? Was it the same thing as, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"?

Now quite admitting that expressions may be obscure in the first statements of these subjects (but which were explained in the latter part), all this is stated in the tract. And I am satisfied that the loss of the sense of these sufferings of Christ is irreparable loss for those who suffer themselves to be deprived of them. If through their confidence in themselves, or listening to others, they suffer themselves to be left behind in going on towards Christ and learning what He is, the sorrow may be ours, the loss will be theirs. The difficulty was plain—p. 35 ["Collected Writings," vol. vii. p. 304]. It arose through Mr. N.'s doctrine bringing forward questions as to Christ's position, and the study of the Psalms consequent upon it. In my answer to him (the answer referred to as my excluding a third kind of sufferings), the whole subject is largely gone into—nearly half the tract—and in some passages with language more open to remark than in "The Sufferings," though not called a third kind. But it is totally impossible that those who have cited this expression could have read the tract. Certainly, when it said, "Messiah shall be cut off and have nothing," it was more than man's persecutions. When His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, it was more than man's persecution; yet it was not the drinking the cup of atonement, though, as I have largely insisted, He was meeting this also in spirit.

I have felt the difficulty in Psalm 69, and deeply, but submitting to it at any rate as the word of God, and not reasoning against it to save an atonement not fully received in its true character. I had sufficient sense of that atonement as forsaking of God for sin, this dreadful cup of wrath standing wholly and absolutely alone in its nature, not to have it touched or shaken by any other

sorrows I might learn of the blessed Lord, and in my feeble measure enter into. These were the two main points which helped to bring me into light as regards the difficulty: such a sense of sin as gave atonement its reality —that I believe to be the grand secret; and such a submission to the word as received its authority and accepted it implicitly, waiting for God to teach.

I think the sense of atonement (not the believing it made peace for themselves, though that may be weak) fails in its measure in those who object; and consequently they are afraid to look at true sorrows as a man, and as a Messiah, which are not that, though they led up to it. The only thing I dread sometimes is, not the separating these sorrows, but the mixing them too much. They were mixed, because as looking to be cut off He was looking to the cup of wrath too. Refer to pages 64-67 [“Collected Writings,” vol. vii. pp. 347-353], where this point is gone into. Compare pages 46, 47 [“Collected Writings,” vol. vii. pp. 321-323], though there is another point also there. Were all Christ’s sufferings bearing iniquity, His soul being made an offering for sin? Was all beside this the simple fruit of suffering for a testimony to His Father (Jehovah) such as He passed through during His whole ministry, or was there a different kind of sorrow (often anticipated) when His hour was come? If so, what was it? Answer this, and feel sufficiently (though indeed who can do that?), and you will get out of the difficulty. Only, if you cannot explain it, hold fast the truth of the atonement on the cross; be assured that scripture is right, and wait for God’s teaching.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

June 21st, 1866.

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[From the French

Beloved Brother,— … I received the tracts all right, and was surprised to find them so quickly printed, but it is impossible for me to read them at present. All the corrections in detail of the new edition of the French New Testament have come upon me since I came here; English work too, and an incessant correspondence, so that I am rather knocked up with fatigue. But it is always so… I start, God willing, on the 23rd, so there is some hurry.

Dr. Capadose, a man long eminent in the Dutch Reformed Church, a converted Jew, opposed to the brethren, has just published a tract in Dutch—a weighty and urgent one—saying that he separates from every church, whatever it may be, after a year of misery; that such progress in apostasy has been made that any recovery is impossible, and that it is no longer a question of choice between one church and another, but between Christ and Antichrist. I think this will cause some sensation; it will be a testimony. I do not think he sees clearly as to the church, but I have read only half of it. My idea is that he is aiming at Christians gathering together without knowing where God will lead them—just as I did thirty-nine years ago, only I had got the idea of the church, one by its union with Christ. Besides, he openly declares that he no longer belongs to any church whatever, so called; then he insists upon these truths with all Christians.

Here, the brethren get on very well, and there is in general a movement for good.

Your very affectionate brother.

London, June, 1866.

* * * * *

Dear——,—We have had our meeting at Guelph. The heat was excessive, which I mention because on the one hand it was a little depressing to all, and on the other hand proved the interest, for there was no sleepiness. It was not a meeting of so much intimate communion, and so far not so much enjoyment, but this was caused by a great many fresh brethren from all parts of the United States, and some not in communion from Canada, so that it was more communication of truth, and, I believe, more useful, if not more enjoyment. We had, however, great liberty and happiness together, and it shewed the progress of truth, and will, with the Lord's blessing, be the means of spreading it. We had from eastern States and from western, and even one from Georgia…

We had a good many Indians, and there there is decided progress both in numbers and in spiritual apprehension. We were very numerous. I passed two nights in a tent on the lawn, to leave room in the house for some unexpected Americans.

My present direction is West, to Milwaukee, and so Michigan gatherings or settlements—for one of our difficulties here is the scattering of brethren going out to take farms or places. If earnest, they gather; but sometimes, as you may think, die down in their habits, and sometimes rest faithful alone.

—— has been over here trying to do mischief … there cannot yet be activity of good without activity of evil. The time of rest will come when evil will not be.

I write on another point. I had read carefully over the tract on “The Sufferings,” and papers on the Psalms. But the meeting at Guelph, turning my mind off to general truth, left it more free and fresh to look at what I had published—for one reads till one is half unable to judge by dint of reading sometimes. I have felt all this deeply. I was not a stone to be insensible to how it was done, and who did it. But the main thing that exercised me was, however that might be, no matter—if there was the slightest word or thought to the dishonour of Christ, it was intolerable. I was quite sure I had none such, but I might have followed out a train of thought insufficiently checked by scripture, so as to produce such in my writing. I was quite willing to distrust myself and to search and research, lest there should be. I felt the enemy was in the attack, but no matter, if it helped to remove anything wrong as to Christ I should be glad of it. I feared withdrawing the papers might be giving up truth as to the sufferings of the blessed Lord. The shape it came to me on the contrary did not commend itself to me at all. But further, knowledge puffs up, and charity edifies; I had to consider whether love, and the desire to save these brethren, would not lead me to suppress these papers, even if they were not wrong at all. On the other hand, if it were an effort of the enemy to enfeeble the sense of the sufferings of Christ which the saints should have this would be only playing into his hands.

All this exercised me in prayer, examination of my statements, and examination of the scriptures. As far as I can trust myself, I examined it thoroughly, without the smallest desire or thought of saving myself: Christ’s glory, which was professedly in question, made that quite immaterial. One of my accusers was too dark as to

the whole question to let his statements have much result, as such, in my mind; the effect in another was such as to destroy its weight, but this did not hinder my examining it, because Christ was in question. But my mind having been directed to other subjects, as I said, at Guelph, on my return here I again looked over my papers on “The Sufferings,” and on the Psalms. The result is complete relief to my mind. I find one or two phrases to which I might add a clearing word, which are, however, fully cleared up in other passages destined to that. But I am satisfied that there is nothing wrong, but, on the contrary, edification in the statements, where souls are able to enter into it. I have no wish to bring souls, weak in the faith, to doubtful disputations. But it is clear to me that those who have objected are either ignorant or mischievously defective as to the sufferings of the blessed Lord; that it is the darkness of error on this point in their minds—not the light of God, and error in me.

I have no thought of attacking them—God forbid—nor making the blessed Lord a field of battle on which to defend myself. But I shall not shrink from the conflict if they force me to it, nor from making matters plain. Mere attacks on myself I should not answer, but if they do not sufficiently expose themselves (as I believe they would if they come forward), and the truth of God is in question, then I will stand up, and God will judge between us, and clear His own truth. But I have no wish to drag brethren into the controversy, nor make them, and the testimony of God by them, answerable for the standing I take. I am not afraid to be alone. I feel I did right in proposing not to come, nor to teach. It is because I believe brethren are the testimony of God in quiet, peaceful unity, that I

would not engage them in my battles, if I am forced into them. It is not their conflict. They are not answerable for what I have stated; some may not be convinced I am right, and they have a common path without this question, though I am sure those who do not receive the substance of what I have written will lose by it. I am going on and shall go on quietly with my work, doing nothing as to it. So I intend to do—having answered all those who honestly inquired —unless the truth is brought into question. Were I not satisfied that it would compromise the truth of Christ's sufferings, and that the enemy was driving at this, I would withdraw the papers for the sake of those who have been using them against me, without thinking about myself; but I am. This is not what they want. The truth is in question at bottom, and more than that: there is in Christ for us more than the truth. I am perfectly quiet till some occasion to act may arise. I trust the Lord for the rest. I hope I have learned a painful but a needed lesson, but with that I will not trouble others. God is gracious in everything, blessed be His name.

True love to the brethren.

Ever affectionately yours.

[Received] August 8th, 1866.

* * * * *

Dearest Brother,—I cannot at the moment go through the whole structure of Mark, which with time I may do. He seems, too, to have rather collected the facts as to the sabbath in this place. (Chaps, 2, 3) If so, absolute historical order would be too strong. But I do not judge that the case of Jairus is immediate on the feast. (Compare Mark 2:15, 22; 5:22; with Matthew 9:10-17

and ver. 18.) Two facts not at the feast seem to come in with ijdovnte" (Matt. 9:11)—not “when” as in English—the Pharisees’ remarks on His going there, and John’s disciples who were fasting asking as to it. With this last Jairus comes in, tau'ta aujtou' lalounto" (Matt. 9:18.) The tovte (ver. 14) cannot be taken, if it be so, as an immediate note of time. There is another apparent difficulty in Matthew 9:1. But from the other Gospels, that connection is not immediate. The distance in Mark is mainly filled up with the mission of disciples and parables, not events. But the difference is important because the Gadarene events come after the parabolic break in His history. It is this which would be thus mainly out of its place in Matthew. Here, Mark 4:35—uncertain as Luke’s expression is—shews the visit to Gadara was after the parables, and the same day. With time I may review the subject.

As regards the title [of collection of papers], I should like some such thing as this, Collection of Early Tracts and Papers (as far as they could be recovered—some never published before) by J. N. D., with those published in French (several now first translated), together with a new edition of subsequent publications. The cover title would be simply Tracts and Papers, at top; J. N. Darby, at bottom.

It. was my own feeling led me to write to you, not H. and D. I am not the least uneasy as to myself or as to doctrine. I mourn over these two brethren—that is all. But I am anxious that the brethren’s testimony should rest on its own bottom— the unity of the church of God—and not involve weak ones in disputations that would trouble them, but leave them all united on a common divine ground, not at all on my teaching. Satan would

seek to give a character in this way. Hence it was I proposed leaving them out, not as not owning their position, but discharging them from my conflicts. I am not the least afraid as to my doctrine, or the conflict, if there is to be any; but I do not want to burthen others. I go on with my work here just as before. If I am thrown into conflict when arriving in England, in waiting quietly on God, He will not fail to help me. Mere attacks I should take no notice of whatever. I have a much better place in doing work than in decrying others. I think of the brethren, not of myself, that they may be kept in unity on true divine ground as the testimony of God, as I believe they are. I should deplore as ruinous, slipping into the place of followers of a system of doctrine. D. and H. have not produced that effect. God has been gracious in this. It is an attack on me. Be it so. I am sorry for, but used to, it. On the other hand, their giving up sound doctrine and getting on such ground as H.'s mind was on, or giving doctrine formally up for peace, would be their ruin. They would go much farther back. All I seek is that they should be on their own quiet, solid ground. If battle there must be, I can take up the cudgels without involving them; if none, so much the better; if only decrying my doctrine, &c, there need not be any. I am happily uninformed of all that passes. The brethren, I believe, intentionally and very kindly leave me to my work.

As to the question (Luke 22:53): I think the Lord speaks generally; the actual accomplishment was when delivered. But it was seen, so to speak, in the Lord's mind from the supper; and He contemplates it as a present thing from Judas' going out. No doubt Gethsemane must have been gone through before it

actually came, but the “devil had put it in Judas’s heart, and had entered into him—the counsel was taken. And the Lord held it all practically to be then come. “Your hour” is the time in which the priests and scribes were allowed to have their way under the influence of Satan.

Affectionately yours in the Lord

Detroit, September 18th, 1866.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—I received your second letter the day before your first, so that the news of your loss came before the expression of your hope. What a world it is! Surely yours is a great loss. In the same parcel of letters I have received news of four deaths, each one a sad blow to the family. What lessons we get in this world! I understand, beloved brother, how sorrowful this event must be for you in every way. But be of good cheer; our God is never baffled in His ways: not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him—how much more does He care for His children whom He loves and cherishes, His dear children, as He calls us. I doubt not, dear brother, that you will be still more sensible of your loss; it is well to look all these things in the face, that faith in God may be in exercise, and that we may carry to Him all our sorrows as well as ?dl our perplexities. Trust in His love, dear brother; He will not fail you. It is a great trial of faith, but the One in whom you trust is greater than all your difficulties, and an ever faithful love can never fail. He makes all things work together to the good of those who love Him. He weans us in every way from this world, that He may attach.us to that one for which He has created us anew. This is only a place we are passing

through, where Christ was cast out. We pass through it, and, bereft of all here, we have only to work for Him and to glorify Him. God's hand is always better than man's; His seeming harshness even is better than the world's favour: the spring which guides it is always love, and love directed by perfect wisdom, which we shall understand by-and-by. Meanwhile, He has given His Son, that we may be able to be certain that all is love. It is a world of sorrow, but where. Christ has left His footsteps, indelible proofs for faith that love has entered this world of sorrow to take its part there in grace.

Look, then, to Jesus, dear brother; He bears a part in all our afflictions; and be sure that the love of God will not forsake you. Do not be anxious about anything, and may God Himself guide you. I shall be glad to hear from you. I do not know how it is that your letters have been so delayed in reaching me, but I was on the other side of the Mississippi…

May God bless you, and keep your heart in full confidence in Him. As for Him, He will surely be faithful, His ways are always perfect. Look to Him constantly, and may these trying exercises of heart be a means of deeper communion to you, and of more entire separation from the world.

Your affectionate brother in Jesus.

Hamilton; en passage.

* * * * *

Beloved Brother,—Thank you for your letter. I have heard nothing. I thought the brethren had kept silence on purpose, as I received no letters; but it may be otherwise, as some forwarded to me in Illinois have

never reached me. I am sure, as you say, all is appointed by the hand of a good and gracious God. I felt this attack because of those engaged in it. I suppose it was good to learn that we are not to rely on any human tie or affection. It was painful that whilst I was labouring and toiling, humanly speaking, at all cost to myself, those I should, naturally speaking, have relied on, are labouring to destroy my labour and ministry, without saying a word to me about it. The case soon became plain to me; but I am quite peaceful about it now. I never doubted it was the work of the enemy, and cast it entirely on the Lord, and prayed earnestly the brethren might be kept in peace, and He has thus far answered my prayer. I have never been the least anxious as to myself or my doctrine. I have kept quiet as the best path, save answering inquiries from those exercised about it; but I have known none but such as were stirred up by others. The Lord will judge the matter and the motives of all, and in His hand I leave it. Had I defended myself, it would have tended to make it a party matter, to make the brethren stand on a system of doctrine, not quietly (independently of individuals) on the unity of the body: and a great body of brethren were too little versed in and informed on the subject not to have suffered by a discussion; and the holiest subjects would have been desecrated in their minds. They needed to weigh quietly and learn what divine teaching on the subject was. I therefore answered inquiries and kept quietly at my ordinary work, having thoroughly re-examined the statements to see if false doctrine was really there. Probably I shall never read D.'s book. My statements have been out these four or five years (query, eight years?), so that controversy will add nothing probably to edification. I may correct expressions if I publish a new

edition. I can heartily give God thanks for it all, and we have always something to learn and judge in making a return on ourselves before God.

I had a violent attack at St. Louis, which weakened me much, and a laborious journey after; got through safely and well.

Affectionately yours.

Toronto, September 26th, 1866.

* * * * *

My dear Brother,—It is a long time since you wrote, but I have been in journeys on wagons and cars through south Illinois, besides some 1,800 miles of rail, and labour in the word wherever I went, nor was I disposed to answer anything on the subject of your quotation from ——'s letter. I have preferred going on with my work and leaving these attacks to God, and such is pretty much my purpose… Since I returned I read the papers through, not in respect of passages objected to, but to see the doctrine of the papers as a whole; the result has been even to myself deep edification, and such, I am persuaded, they may be to those who seek it. There are three passages (I think) where I should change a word, to take away the opportunity from those who seek it, of troubling simple souls; and there are parts into which those who are not spiritually minded will not (I dare say) enter, but the instruction I believe to be most true and profitable. I am, of course, sorry if any who cannot estimate it should be cast aside, but I must leave that to the Lord, humbling and searching myself as to how far I may have given occasion, but persuaded that for those who seek the truth, the papers, as they at once or gradually enter into them, are most timely and

profitable. I am content if the heart rightly receive the sufferings of Christ, and the atonement be clearly held; but for those who can occupy themselves with the ways of God and the perfect love of Christ, the view of these papers will much deepen the sense of the Lord's sorrows, and intelligence of what those sorrows were, and I know not what greater gain there can be. Strange to say, though a page or two may require spiritual apprehension to see its bearing, there is nothing I have looked over of my own which has interested me so much, nor, I think, from which I have received so much edification. Nor indeed do I see any difficulty for those for whom it has not been sought or made. But of this I will not speak…

I have written to others of the work, so I do not add much. The doors are opening in the west, and gatherings forming and a measure of conversion. Had I time, I should return there. I am now going east. It sometimes has a dreary look to begging but if we wait on the Lord's leading there is always blessings, goes forth. We have to meet here with all sorts of things, particularly the denial of the immortality of the soul, wherever people pass out of the ordinary routine of the churches as they call them; and all the neutral party if they do not hold it, accept those who do, and join them freely. This which is defining itself pretty clearly, will so far be a mercy that it will free us from them, for they seek in many places to be amongst us. Hitherto we have been kept. At a distance it will seem impossible to you, but people get used to evil when mixed up with people that hold it. I had not heard from England since I was out, till I came here, save, I believe, your letter, till I

found some here, but I believe some are somewhere or other in Illinois.

Tracts and books we cannot get enough of for the States.

Your affectionate brother.

Toronto, October, 1866.

Dearest Brother,—I was very glad to hear from you, and I reply, though as to mere news I have not much to communicate. While in the west I had no letters, and I have replied to those I found here on arriving, and let brethren know as to the work. I am here only in passing, going east after a pretty hard campaign beat with the weather, roads, and being unwell, but the Lord helped me through. If there were any one who could undertake it through the gifts God has given, a younger man would be better. You may ask, Have you them then? I answer, I have the desire to serve, and have done what I could: it requires a person able to bear as well as to do. But there is progress, thank God. Of all the evils, and in this sense difficulties, loose principles, what has got the name of neutrals.is the worst. In certain respects they are worse in this country than in England. In England many of them deny the church. Here they receive all these truths, and even exaggerate them; take the ground some did in Ireland—outré views of brethren as to grace. The leading and most influential one holds Bonar’s doctrine in the main, and accepts persons denying the immortality of the soul, the pest of this country; and those who follow him teach it in one place at least, though not wishing it to be known that they hold it. One preacher, out from among the neutrals in England, threw himself, openly avowing it to myself, among those

that hold this, though saying he did not hold it, but that there was no fixed truth to judge by, and when I said we must have the truth, quoting John, “whom I love in the truth,” he said, “What is truth?” It was in one sense then a mercy, for we were pestered with them, and it will keep them as a distinct thing apart. My horror of this loose system is daily increasing; the utmost largeness of heart when—as to which people have to be fully persuaded in their own minds—the faith is not in question. But the faith of God’s elect I must look for, and nothing inconsistent with it. The efforts to charge me with N.’s doctrine have only made me stronger and more decided, as being an effort of the enemy to try and swamp this…

The condition of the States spiritually—indeed, every way except money-making—is frightful. The common course for Christians is to go to balls, &c, and enter fiercely into politics, though there are exceptions; assassinations of daily occurrence in the large towns, so that the newspapers do not put them in, unless from some special circumstance. But that they have had enough of it, there would probably be a war again, they speak of it openly. I do not expect it; they have too recently felt what it is, but all is confusion and ill-feeling. Thank God, I pass through it a stranger and a pilgrim; meet sincere kindness and opportunities of work; for myself, have only to be thankful for what I met with—I need not say, had no more to do with such things than you in England, only testifying when the question arose that the Christian is not of the world at all. The word has little authority, but God is working.

I am (D.V.) going east—not very sanguine as to any great apparent result. Excitement with an attractive preacher

would easily be, but steadily walking as not of this world is another thing. Tracts and books of brethren go out very freely: the vast majority of what go out, go to the States, though they become just double in price. I think some steps will have to be taken to print in the States… In general, the gatherings (as is common), after the first reception of new truth which gathered them, have had a measure of sifting in one form or another and are going on more happily after it than before. We have a trial here, less known in England: moving about, going to the States to get work, &c. This, of course, tends to unsettle the gatherings, sometimes forming a new nucleus where there is energy of faith. Out of Canada, it is now in a measure planted in the west, but all is to do there. May the Lord graciously work. All through the States the truths are drawing attention. Ministers come even here to see what it is. Alas, how feeble we are as a testimony. I read, “Be careful for nothing,” and I do look to the Lord, but I am, alas, feeble at intercession; that is always for me a bad sign as to myself. I fancy often that I shall soon, if still here, settle down quietly in some place; but who, awaiting the Lord’s coming, will give himself up to the work?…

You have thus an account of the moral circumstances in which the work is; otherwise it is pretty much as elsewhere. I did not do all I hoped in the west, being kept by the work in some places, but I had some opportunities I did not expect.

Your affectionate brother.

Toronto, October, 1866.

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Dear——,—I have not seen poor D.'s book, only its title, nor have I at present any intention of reading it when I do, … I know, I suppose, fully from their letters what they object to, so that I have nothing to gain on that side, and the rest I gain nothing by. Quietness is often God's way of dealing with such cases. I trust no brother will set himself about answering any of these papers. The objections are known, they have been discussed by those anxious: all the rest is attack, and no answer is the best answer. It does not then become a matter of useless controversy; it probably tombera dans l'eau—its best issue, for the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace. At present I find I cannot occupy my mind with it before God. The adversary may use it as a hindrance when occasion is sought: it will, I am persuaded, be the loss of those who let themselves be so hindered. This may be a cause of sorrow, but it is one we must, alas! expect.

I look sometimes for antecedent causes on God's part, to see if there be anything to judge in myself, or even in brethren's ways. One may profit by sorrow thus. It is very good for me I am sure, as exercising me, and keeping all sound in its place, and so I seek to use it or receive it at God's hand; its immediate causes are not the error of what is attacked. Were there false doctrine I should not so look at it, but the more I weigh the whole teaching, the more I see profit for the brethren—expressions to be made clearer, so as to take away any handle; yet these to a willing, fair mind would have afforded none. It is a mere attack of the enemy, and thus I am not afraid. I have sometimes feared it might not have been in due season, minds not prepared for it, but then it was [not] a remedy, if it be sound, leaving them without light; and I believe for those who seek God's

face and His word it will prove a positive blessing. Those who are cast on the bank I mourn over—am satisfied it is their own previous state—but only search myself to see if I have given occasion whereby that which was lame should not be healed. I earnestly hope there may be no replying or discussing, but that the brethren may walk on peacefully in their own path, seeking God's will and wisdom. I suppose it is the will of God that there should be these attacks just now…

Boston and New York will now occupy me, the Lord willing. Labourers are wanting here as elsewhere. In general, we have to be thankful for the Lord's gracious care and guidance, but there might be more earnest labour amongst us all. Those you know by name are, I suppose, more and more useful… There axe now in Canada and the west as near seven hundred as possible whom I have visited, save two small gatherings. It is little or nothing, it is true; still the testimony is spread by this, and the progress though in its infancy has been regular. It is the day of small things.

Affectionately yours in Christ.

Toronto, October 15th, 1866.

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My dear Brother,—I thank you for your note and its enclosures. I am still going on, through mercy, with my work, helped and happy in it. I have just been to Quebec and to the eastern townships, and am soon on my way (D.V.) to New York; I suppose this week. I have seen none of the attacks on my tracts, nor have I sought to see them, as I know the objections, and I look on them simply as an evil attack on myself, which I can freely leave to the Lord. Yesterday and to-day I have heard

they are in Canada, and I leave them in Canada to their readers as I do in England, and have not sought to see them… As to the substance of the matter, I am perfectly satisfied that my adversaries and not myself are in the wrong. The case seems to me so sad a one on their part, that I am glad to be silent, and leave it to God. What may be needed to relieve brethren's minds I will do, but defend myself I am fully settled not to do. I believe that to every willing mind my statements are blessed and edifying, some parts I suppose difficult to be entered into by an unexercised mind. I believe the acceptance of their views would be partly error, partly a fatal principle (which is really N.'s), or I would have withdrawn my papers for the sake even of those two brethren and peace; but I believe it would have been the acceptance of dishonour done to Christ, once the question was raised. I have a much more decided judgment than brethren are aware oi in the matter, but waited clearness as to the Lord's judgment on how I should deal with the matter, as it might have been leading the weak to doubtful disputations… That only was what I feared might have been the evil of my original papers. When you print it is for all necessarily, but so far am I from thinking there is error in what I meant, that if I could I would have that truth with brethren, if not, without them. I may wait anxiously to see the right way of dealing with the attacks, or the anxiety of the brethren, or judge myself as to the opportuneness of the original publication; but the truth as to the Lord's sufferings I am not going to give up, nor what will edify me; in adoringly inquiring into them, I have gained immensely, and what I am not going to give up…

My question is how to deal with the case for the good of brethren and before God. It is possible we needed humbling from the blessing we had received. It may be that the going out was necessary, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us. It is sad, but God has never allowed what was contradictory to principle, or evil, to remain concealed among brethren, though He has dealt most tenderly and graciously with us. I have no doubt He will secure His own testimony, though if we have got out of a low place He may put us into it. We may have Bochim because we have not Gilgal. I am anxious at any rate not to get out of the place of meekness, and to take Abigail's advice, and in nothing to avenge myself. Patience must have its perfect work. The effort of Satan is much more to swamp godly exclusion of connivance at evil doctrine, than anything as to evil doctrine itself; but here there is a principle which will only be so much the dearer to godly brethren. The Lord watches over His church: "Rejoice not against me, oh my enemy," &c. I expect, of course, the diligent circulation of attacks by those without… But as we say in French, "L'ennemi fait une æuvre qui le trompe."

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

En route to New York, November, 1866.

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Dearest——, … I was informed M. would want a new edition of the paper on the "Sufferings." If that be so, it would be a just occasion for any remarks I have to make… I know not that I have much to add on the sufferings of the blessed Lord. I understand as I understood from the beginning, that few apprehend His interest in the remnant of Israel; still fewer, how the

question of good and evil was met and settled. But I begin to suspect that very little spiritual apprehension of Christ's true sufferings, and very little true subjective capacity for it by a work within—the exercise of the senses to discern good and evil—to be the general cause of the difficulty. Of the truth of my teaching in general, I have never had a question. That many things have been more clearly defined in my mind since all the questioning is but natural, and the ambiguity of the word 'suffering' in English, external infliction and internal pain,, used perhaps without drawing attention to it, may have been an occasion to those who did not seek profit but controversy. But what has been opposed to me I utterly reject as evil: it is the truth which is denied, not the ambiguity discovered. The gracious Lord deliver them.

If I get out this new edition, I shall freely point out, without changing them, all the passages which contain the accused statements, and clear from ambiguity. But I have no wish to take it away from its character of edification. Scripture was followed in it with that view. The whole subject is more methodised in my mind now. I have gained by it, but not so much as by the deeper apprehension of the Lord's sorrows originally acquired, and that I wish others to have. Whatever ambiguous expressions have been cleared by the attacks is all gain. I may be sorry at the way, and yet glad, and indebted for the result. People will see whenever it comes out.

Ever affectionately yours.

New York, November 22nd, 1866.

Dearest Brother,—I got your letter. ——, I think, has never been able to look at it peacefully, or I think to

trust the Lord as he ought about it, though himself all right and anxious to help others, but too anxious about it. This to me really is more trying than the attacks… I doubt that any correction of my papers would have the smallest effect in removing the hostility of those who have attacked me. I do not think, or for a moment believe, that the doctrine was their motive. I doubt that most would have found other than edification in reading the papers, even if imperfection be there. I am sorry those I have loved and walked with in charity should have fallen so much away from the path of simple faith. I do not say much about it, lest I should be ensnared into any want of charity; but the whole matter is as clear to me as the sun at noonday. It is to me very bad indeed, and therefore I say nothing about it. I certainly had rather been myself than they at present; but I greatly prefer remaining quiet. The fruits of righteousness are sown in peace. The Lord has His own wise and blessed reasons for allowing it, and I bow before it. I do not mean, if occasion occurs, I should not republish my tract on "The Sufferings," correcting, or noticing what had to be corrected, but I have no thought of entering into the strife of tongues. I have replied to those who wrote to inquire. Charity demanded that; but I have no thought of defending myself against attacks. Hence, as I knew their real objections, I had no anxiety to see the papers written against me…

Perhaps from my being older, I feel nearer heaven than such a strife would be, poor and unworthy as I may be; as I said, I have not the most distant anxiety about myself. On the brethren's faithfulness and position it is a rude attack, and, of course, a stumbling-block to those without; but there the case is, and, though grieved, I can

trust the Lord for it. I mourn that those I have loved should come to be tools in Satan's hands; but in some respects I am not surprised, nor should I, if in part it should go farther and surprise others; the gracious Lord avert it. As I said, it was because I saw it was a rude joust of Satan that I proposed to leave brethren on their own ground, discharged of the conflict. I ask myself how far in anything I have given occasion to it before the Lord; but my only anxiety is as to the testimony, and the hindrance to souls, and for that I look to the Lord. "There must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest." I shall not trouble any brethren who might be troubled by my presence. I am satisfied with the approbation of Christ if I have that. He will judge who has sought His glory, and who has not. I inquire with myself what state of the brethren, if such there was, gave occasion to the Lord to allow this trouble to come upon them; I am sure in quietness and assurance will be their strength; if it was leaning on me, it was of course so much the better. If it was Paul, it was God working in them, not Paul.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

New York, November 22nd, 1866.

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* * * Thank you much for your account of Ireland, which I was very glad to receive. I have no doubt, nor indeed ever had, that souls simply seeking edification on the sufferings would find blessing in the paper on the "Sufferings." I dread only too great dissecting and explaining them: the truth is, the added explanations clear up everything; still, it is all right to meet any minds who have difficulties. I am thankful, too, that in the main

the brethren have stood in the pressure that came. I think it will have been a certain crisis for them, and that it will be a strengthening of their conscious position. I do not think they are wholly through it, but pretty near…

I fear multiplying papers on the subject; but as many have been anxious I should, I have written a kind of introduction and notes to add when a new edition comes out. Save errors, and making a sentence or two clearer, I shall not alter the tract. I thought people would be glad to see it as it was, the dangerous dragon's head itself; they will better judge of what has occasioned such a fuss. The explanatory papers at the end made really anything more unnecessary. However, I have unfolded the debated points in the introduction, and I hope for edification…

I do not think it such a difficult time to the simple-hearted. Faith in one sense is a difficulty only solved by God's grace. It is a difficult time if we seek to mingle the world-church and the path of faith; but the path of faith itself is always the same, and the word to guide and the Lord to give strength. It may be an evil time, the days evil, but that is not a difficult time; it was an evil time when the blessed Lord was born, but I do not know that the Simeons, the Annas and Marys and Elizabeths found it a difficult time. Such will be sorrowful times, and they require the patience which separates the precious from the vile; but following the word is always simple for the simple, and humble, and always happy, because the Lord will be with us. I mourn with all my heart over poor D. and H.: I trust they may be restored, but they have committed themselves terribly, and it will cost them much; but the Lord is gracious.

I have nothing more particular to tell you of these parts. I am getting every day into contact with fresh souls desirous of truth, and I think the Lord is graciously hearing and working, but it is in a small and humble way, but as far as I can see, sound. We are clear of all the heretical movements, broken off from the worldly bodies—a difficulty we had to deal with. The neutrals throw themselves unhesitatingly into all this, and go along with it. This makes the path clearer.

I have not written much lately; indeed, nothing but my new "Notes on the Bible." Brethren must not over-write themselves: better to have what is right, good and fresh, than a quantity. I am not aware that I have written more than what God has given me for others' use when He has done so. If laid by, by old age, I might have more of this work. I am in my sixty-seventh year. Peace be with you. The Lord keep us very humble and waiting upon Him.

New York, November 29th, 1866.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—I rejoice much at the news you sent me with regard to Nice. I specially recognise God's goodness in it. When a place has been long under the power of the enemy, and thus without testimony, or worse, it is a great and precious proof of the goodness and the working of God Himself when a testimony is raised up; when, by this goodness, a candlestick, however small it may be, is placed there, and a lamp lighted there. I am glad that God has given you grace to take part in it; this is the fruit of His goodness, and an encouragement for you…

Here it is the day of small things, the beginning of an effort to have a little reality in the midst of an enormous mass of profession, where there is no lack of activity, but balls, theatres, whatever you like, are allowed, and a certain number groan, but know not what to do, and where the notion of the progress of man and of the gospel governs everything; while they feel that all goes on very badly… In the midst of that which we, all the same, contemplate in peace, God is forming a little assembly; a small thing, but I believe it is His work…

It is devotedness that I seek, that God will have: everywhere, alas! in my own case, that love for souls which seeks them out with more activity easily grows slack. It is not that I do anything else, or that my life outwardly is not occupied in this way—it is. At Ephesus, they were working; but one may lose one's first love as to the work while continuing to work. May God kindle in us again that energy of love. I know I am growing old, and I feel it; but grace does not grow old. However, He is always good; He tries our patience, for our own good, in His work. In general, I have very good news from Ireland and England: opposition is pretty strong, but there is nothing new in that. But the brethren go on well, and God has shewn His goodness on their behalf, and has caused the work to make progress. May God bless you and your dear children, beloved brother, and guide you.

Your very affectionate brother in Jesus.

New York. 1866.

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Beloved Brother,—I accept your statements quite, as far as I see. Meddling metaphysically with the Lord's Person

is beyond our power, and only does us harm. But we are right in seeing what the sense of cwpiV" aJmartiva" in Hebrews 4 is; and I have never doubted for many a long day (and have so translated it, if I remember aright) that it means “sin apart,” namely—He was not tempted by sin as we are. So long ago as Irvingism I took this ground on it against them. In taking scripture thus simply without pursuing it further metaphysically at all, the soul gets a resting-place. I know that that blessed One had no sin in His human nature as I have, and it is a comfort and a rest to me. I know there is, and know a sinless humanity, and that is a relief to my spirit. But then as a saint I am tempted, not by sin within merely, but by attractions and distress from without. In me it is often mixed up with combat with the flesh within; but then I blame myself that I let it thus be alive, and I may not in such case always draw the fine thread of God’s word between the two. In Christ the temptations were there—all the kingdoms of the world, and the distress of death. One met repulsion, as taking it from Satan; the other, perfect submission, which was what was needed. It was perfectness— not a moment’s acquiescence. In one, Satan sought to introduce lust as he did in Eve, in the other to turn away from the path of painful obedience. Blessed be God, in both it was only triumph over him, and more than the mere absence of evil, though that was there. But if we, being saints, shrink (I do not say feel it) from trial, or feel attracted in will or lust by temptation from without, we have to recognise the still practically living flesh, which we have a right to hold as dead, not because we are as Christ was alive, but because He has died: He had to be able to die sinless, and to sin—we, to hold our-selves to be dead thereby to it. Hence, we are not called upon to be what

Christ was, but “to walk even as he walked;” while we can say as before God, “as he is so are we in this world.” Though of course ripening in it (as it is our privilege to do), all that ground I had to go over in scripture in Mr. Irving’s time, some four-and-thirty years ago, and have never had any difficulty—except, alas, in making it good—since. We are, thank God, as He is, through grace, in this world. It seems paradoxical to say we are as He is in glory, and cannot say we are as He was in humiliation; but it is easy to solve for the believer: I quite agree with what you say.

I sympathise with dear——, but we must expect these trials. I would I were there to help him, unpleasant as it is; but we must never expect conscience or delicacy with heretics. Our part is to trust the Lord, and be as firm in testimony as possible. I have always found gracious patience with mistakes the way, but when with God, treating Satan as Satan, when I saw it was so, by grace, he had no power. I have seen most striking cases of this.

Here there is nothing new or flattering. The loose gathering is now in the hands of M., and openly denies the immortality of the soul. It was preached there last Sunday. We are getting united, and to know each other, and there is a little individual testimony.

I think, were I staying here, I should gradually get among a few—a very few I have. In general, money and churches satisfy them, but there are those who groan at the state of things. They are not a happy people, such is my impression, though I find them easy to live amongst.

Ever, beloved brother, affectionately yours.

New York, [1866].

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[From the Italian.29

Beloved Brother.—Our brother B. has written to me, and has told me that you are thinking, I will not say intending, to leave the society, and to labour in the Lord’s work independently, and to walk by faith in the Lord’s path, and to get for yourself a business occupation, so as to provide for the necessities of life down here. If I had had your address I would have written to you direct, but I had not it here in America. We spoke together a little on this subject at the railway station at Milan, and now I am going to speak to you again on this point by means of a letter. I do not believe that a servant of God, sent by the Lord Himself to work in» His field, ought to be the servant of men, but free from all to follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost. But if he works faithfully, being really called by the Lord, and walks humbly and blamelessly in the ways of the Lord, I believe that brethren are under an obligation to support him, an obligation of christian love, and a real privilege of Christians; thus they are helpers of the gospel itself. Thus the faith of the servant is exercised; he depends immediately on the Lord, and is entirely free to follow out the will of the Holy Ghost and to follow His guidance. On the other hand, if he walk badly, brethren are also free to keep the Lord’s money which has been entrusted to them. As to brotherly love, it is exercised without suggestion, likewise all gifts. Without doubt, for such a life, faith is needed, and that is the only difficulty. Brethren cannot promise help; it would not be faith; also money or love might fail; but the Lord, who is ever faithful, cannot fail us.

As to an occupation, it is a question of circumstances. If the gift of the Lord's servant is not sufficient to occupy his whole time, he does well to work in order to gain a livelihood. But if God has called him to labour in His work, and especially if he is an evangelist, then business is an obstacle to his service, and hinders him from following the Lord's call, and from fulfilling what the Lord has called him to do. These are my thoughts, dearest brother, as to the Lord's labourer. We need to take counsel with the Lord in order to know if He has called us: faith is needed to enable us to follow His voice; but He is faithful in enlightening our minds, and giving us the strength needed to walk according to His will. I have seen it thus after forty years, and more, that He is faithful and never fails us; He never has failed. I know that brethren are disposed to do all they can while you and other brothers labour faithfully in the Lord's field according to the truth of the gospel, and to leave you free in your work. I believe in the faithfulness of the Lord; man can neither do anything, nor promise anything, if the Lord does not give him strength for it. But I know that the path of faith is the path of peace and of joy. I hope to get news of you.

I am at present in America, in order to spread the truth —a country full of worldliness; people must have money, they must have pleasures. Christians even desire to enjoy them. Still God is working. Many have learned that Christianity is quite another thing from this world; many have found peace: several have understood and believed the Lord's.coming, and some, the unity of the church, and its present condition; and there are also conversions of worldly people to enjoy eternal life. I have not found amongst Christians any soul possessing peace— doubts,

fears, never the peace which the Lord made for us upon the cross. Good-bye, beloved brother… I do not know how to write your language well; I hope, however, that what I have written is intelligible. May God, who is always good and faithful, bless you, and give you all the strength needed to walk in the way of the Lord—He is faithful to do it.

Your affectionate brother.

[1866.]

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My dear Brother,—1 had little difficulty as to——'s letter, but on a scriptural word or phrase I never like to answer without examining it thoroughly; one often learns oneself a good deal. As regards the use of reconciling the Father to us, it is quite evident that it cannot there30 have the meaning of bringing back into favour, or it would be bringing back the Father into our favour, which is clearly not what the article means. Though in a certain sense, this is nearer the scriptural truth, absurd as it is when so stated; because God has wrought in perfect grace to win our confidence to Him, and so far to be in our good favour. The simple expression, baldly given, would of course be absurd and shocking, and I refer to it here to shew that, in the article, it is impossible to use it in the sense Mr. —— would give to the word. His argument goes to another point: that the use of it in scripture as regards us, for it is confessedly never used of God expressly, is equivalent doctrinally to the use of it in the article as regards the Father. But this is a mistake, and begging the question. Reconciled means, he says, restored to favour: supposing it were so, it does not follow therefore that restoring us to favour

was by changing God’s feeling towards us. Reconciling does suppose hostility, as we see in scripture in ejcqrov", “when we were enemies we were reconciled”—“alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.” This leaves no doubt as to the meaning of ejcqrov" or katallavssw. God is unchangeable in His nature and estimate of good and evil, and when we turn through grace, or the precious word of Christ is presented, that same righteous and perfect estimate does necessarily favour us. He is angry, and His anger is turned away: He is righteous and just to forgive. Hence “propitiate” is a true word, and God forbid it should be changed by any Socinian enfeebling of its force.

The nearest verbal justification to be had is “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;” but there it is iJlavskesqai “to make propitiation:” so Christ is an iJlasmov" and an iJlasthvrio". This is fundamental truth, and it is just because reconciling takes it off this ground, and puts it as if God was against us and Christ for us, so as to turn Him, that the expression is mischievous. And I do not think the Reformers were wholly clear of this, at any rate, in the liturgical part of their system. It is just the Popish view of the matter: only with them Christ has to be turned too, and Mary is the gracious person—’that God retained justice unto Himself and granted mercy to her’: ‘He (Christ) finds Himself in the same disposition with the Father towards sinners, namely, to reject them; so that the difficulty is to induce Him to exchange the office of a judge for that of a supplicant’: so Mary ‘appeases the wrath of her Son.’

All this gives a false idea of God, even where Mary has nothing to say to it. The sense of unchangeable holiness

cannot be too strong, so that propitiation is needed; but what weakens the sense of love in God Himself, as the source and spring of all, destroys the nature of Christianity. The Son of man must be lifted up, but God so loved that He gave His only-begotten Son. Now I must say that the article does not give this aspect to Christianity; nor am I aware of any that does, so as to correct the impression which it leaves. If I were to say you had done everything to reconcile your father to me, certainly I should not think that his love was the source of it all. Reconciling does suppose entering into good graces, where it is mutual, but that is properly diallavssw, as in Matthew 5:24. And even in 2 Corinthians 5:18, the mind thinks of the world entering into favour with God, but by the activity of God's love, not by His being reconciled; and the work wrought is wrought, or sought to be wrought, in the world's mind, not in the mind of God: God was doing it. It was not done in Him, though the effect might be His favour. Katallavssw is to change, even as money; and the change was to be wrought not in God's state but in the world's, though it might be true it is implied that His favour would thereon flow out: But reconciling Him is quite another thing. From man's nature we suppose hostility to an enemy, and favour to return on their being reconciled, particularly the last when there is authority. And so far Mr.—— is right. But to apply this to God is just the evil. Hostis in Latin originally only meant a stranger, Cicero I think tells us. There is not a trace of such a meaning of ejcqrov" as—— suggests31 in the New Testament.

Ever yours in Christ.

1886

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Dear ——,—Though I sent you a paper for the Present Testimony, I am not disposed to send any for publication in brethren's publications till all these questions on the Sufferings are over; but wait till I am, if God will, returned to England, when I can act on my own responsibility. I have to-day received for the first time the attacks against me, sent by I know not whom—not the authors. … I have not occupied myself with them. I allude to papers here, because a good deal of additional materials have been brought out in my mind in studying scripture here. … I have sent the matter for the new edition of the tract "On the Sufferings;" a thing I have no satisfaction in; but as brethren wished it, I have done it. My own present feeling is that it is a great mercy these matters came out. I am satisfied that my adversaries are thoroughly unsound as to the sufferings of Christ. I fear for them. I would not hold their views for any consideration. But I take no steps of any kind while here, nor leave my work because of it. In these last days nothing but what is material for the church will make me act; and the brethren's testimony rests on other ground: but were I alone, I should rest alone with the truth I have sought to put out there. The ground taken against me, as far as I have known it, makes me immovable in rejecting their views, and holding the substance of mine. I trouble myself little about petty objections. There is a grave question for me, but it has been raised in my mind by their statements, not by my own. I am a little surprised brethren have not seen it.

As to the work here I have not much to recount. In a large town it is a work of patience and detail, but though patience be exercised, I have felt encouraged. The

brethren whose deliverance I had sought are now with us, and getting to know those here, and confidence growing. The testimony stands wholly clear, and in contrast with prevalent heresies (annihilation) as a rejected thing, and the ground of insisting on the truth openly taken. Two who were not prepared to take it remain outside—one a great deliverance. In this country one great obstacle was that those who held the Lord's coming and other truths, were—or bore with annihilation and Newtonism. All this is now clear, and at least the foundation is laid of holding these truths apart from systems, and sound doctrine insisted on more than anywhere else. We have gathered up a few more stray souls, and with occasional testimony outside; that is the sum of-our work… An audience as yet we have none, yet the truth has been spread, and souls have found peace, and know the gospel is there as it is not elsewhere. The rest our God must open the way to. I dare say that staying here I should gradually get to know people and spread the truth, but that is hardly my place. There is more apparent open door at Boston, but I was anxious to get what was scattered, or not gathered, a little solidly together here before I left. Some I looked to take part and who would have been a comfort and help are elsewhere—one dear man in heaven; then others form a little nucleus where they are gone: some I have still to look after. People know not how many who have left England or Ireland in communion are scattered in the world here. It will be a resource to many, in such a centre as this, to have a place where they can commune in peace when they come.

Affectionately yours.

I have much time here, as few can be seen till after business hours. Besides reading, I have set myself with some zeal to grammatical Hebrew. One can profit by everything, but Hebrew points and their changes are not exactly my line of things; but constant interruptions had made me very far back in any accuracy. I used it, but with a vague and uncertain knowledge, or next to none. Courage and patience will do everything but give love; that the soul must have with and from God. That is what I want most.

New York, January 2nd, 1867.

Dearest Brother,—I am most thankful that you have resigned your place. I could never have hesitated a moment as to what I could have desired, but you cannot press another beyond his own faith. But there is a gracious and faithful Lord who cares for us, and will never leave us nor forsake us. I suppose you have little, humanly speaking, to depend on. So best—I say, so best. It is the highest place, if through grace we have faith to walk in it. And I will answer for the Lord, that though He may let your faith be tried, He will meet and bless it. I am sure there is plenty to do, and it is, as ever, labourers that are wanting.

“Nots” are dangerous things in scriptural subjects, because the Holy Ghost teaches by positive truth, and we must know every case to use an exclusive not. The object of Ephesians 1 and Romans 8 is I think clearly to shew what we are predestinated to, but when it says predestinated us, it is hard to say it does not refer to persons: “Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate.” Now this shews that in the main the object was to teach what they were predestinated to, but

then it is affirmed of the persons whom He foreknew, that is a distinct class of persons so foreknown — not, predestinated those whom He foreknew would be conformed (which was the Axminian scheme); but those whom He foreknew He predestinated to be conformed. Election suppose a large number out of whom God chooses; and if we take it as eternal, or no time with God, still a number are in view out of whom a choice is made. Predestination is the proper purpose of God as to these individuals: even supposing there were no others, God had them in His mind—surely for something, which is thus as we see connected with it; but it is a blessed idea that God had His mind thus set on us without thinking of others. “The good pleasure of his will” is connected with it, and if we ascribe it to grace that we are elect, that thought, though we stop in it, does suppose others. We are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.”

I accept then the positive part of what you say, but am afraid of “not.” I should not say a sheep is a sheep from all eternity, because the person did not exist; but I clearly hold he was a sheep before he was converted, for Christ says, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring;” and, “My sheep hear my voice,” &c.; and, “Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.” No doubt He delights to look upon and lead them as such when called, but they are called such before. The main object of the apostle in both Ephesians and Romans are those that are members of the church, but the passages do not go into church privileges as such, but children’s and brethren’s place. Election properly is more in Ephesians 1:4, and in verse 5 the peculiar place belonging to these; and in both, though

the principle go beyond, the apostle is speaking actually only of us: not that I exclude others, but these were then occupying the apostle's mind. He is always practical. Romans 8:28-30 does not say us. In verse 31 he begins with us: it is applied.

It thus involves and supposes the persons as you say —"not persons, but rather the state and conditions to which they are brought;" but then "they" are persons, and some special ones. Now in Ephesians he only actually speaks of "us": in Romans it is general…

I thank God that you are free.

Ever affectionately yours.

Boston, February 13th, 1867.

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Beloved Brother,—Thank you for——'s little account of Mrs. ——. All around her knew how she was valued and beloved by us all. But I feel as to her it was just a sheaf of corn fully ripe, so that it was natural—so to speak, time for her to pass into rest; so that in this sense it is a happy feeling, and though the loss will surely be felt, this will be the soothing feeling of those who were more immediately her own. It is a happy thought that those we love are gone home where peace and rest are. I have sometimes thought that seeing so many as I have, my turn was nearly come—fairly come, so to speak. But the present opposition to the truth makes me feel somewhat different. I am not disposed to leave the conflict in presence of this new work and dodge of the enemy, and do pity these men with my whole heart. To see them thrown into the arms of those they know were for years resisting the truth and testimony of God, and were

helping on Satan against it. Oh, it is very dismal, and those who once helped it, and with whom I was associated. I am perfectly persuaded that Satan only has, and Christ not one particle, to say to the matter. I only search, anxiously submitting myself to God, what occasion I have given. My full persuasion is that the occasion, not the cause, was the publication of my writings.

I have stated what you refer to in the introduction to the new edition. I purposely did not speak of it in writing privately… I desired that brethren should have their minds exercised on the points (answering merely what they asked in my replies to them); and they were so frightened many of them that, in the presence of bitter adversaries whose conscience I could not reckon on for a moment, I felt I must wait, going on as God led me, not throwing them into their hands. Traditional expressions had such influence that one had to let them compare them with scripture for themselves as the questions gradually arose. Now I have put out my own statement, I have stated it clearly and simply. As far as possible, I did not desire to take it out of the sphere of edification nor raise questions which half the saints just as pious as others could not solve. In no objector have I seen the smallest trace of the working of the Spirit of God. In every case it is the sign, and characterised by a state of fall and the action of self, in some deplorably so.

But then I have to judge myself as furnishing any occasion to the outbreak. It will (I doubt not) turn to blessing; God is above it all, but it was a subtle and sad effort of Satan, and so sad, that those we had so known should have fallen into his hands. It shewed too, I think,

an enfeebled state of things —a reaction from N.'s work of evil. But I think it will do the brethren good.

I cannot find that smiting in scripture is ever used for atonement, though when smitten He wrought it. But it is clear to me that the sense of Christ's sufferings was lost among brethren through the dread of Mr. N.'s blasphemies. But my desire is that they may go on quietly with the profit of their souls, and not get into questions even when right.

I rejoice to hear of the blessing; here I find many souls so thankful to get plain truth, and full truth.

Peace be with you. Best love to all the saints.

Ever, beloved brother,

Affectionately yours.

The Lord keep you near Himself.

Boston, February 13th, 1867.

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[From the French.

Beloved Brother,—I received your little note, and was glad to hear from you. As to 1 Timothy 5, verses 24, 25 relate to verse 22. Timothy was not to lay hands hastily on any. In the case where the walk of one on whom hands had been laid should turn out badly, Timothy would, although involuntarily, be concerned in the evil, through placing the man in a position which had his sanction. This exhortation gives the apostle occasion to add, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment." Manifest to every one, they proclaim beforehand, like heralds, the judgment which awaits those who commit them. The sins of other men

were more hidden, but would, nevertheless, come into open day. It is the same with good works. Now the fact that sins might be hidden, was to make Timothy prudent in laying on of hands on persons who presented themselves to him with this object.

We see Very clearly, in comparing together the two Epistles to Timothy, the difference between the order of the house of God, such as it had been established by the apostle, and the walk taught by the Spirit of God, when disorder had come in after Paul's decease. The first epistle presents to us the established order; the second, the walk requisite in the disorder, when the Lord alone knows them that are His—a state of things very different from that in which "the Lord added to tike assembly daily such as should be saved." Then, the mighty action of the Spirit of God manifested His children, and set them in their place in the church. But, in the times of which the Second Epistle to Timothy speaks, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," there may be some hidden in systems not according to His will. Then the responsibility rests upon the individual: he is to depart from iniquity, to purge himself from the vessels to dishonour, and associate himself with those who call upon the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. It is here that we find our place, only remembering the unity of the body, and seeking to realise it. We have the character of a remnant in these last days, but of a remnant which recalls the first principles on which the church was founded at the beginning; a simple and happy path, but which demands faith, and the boldness that obedient faith supplies. May God give us, in His grace, to walk in it with a firm, peaceful yet decided step. If we look to Him, all is simple; we see our way

clearly, and we have motives that do not leave the soul a prey to uncertainty. It is the double-minded man who is unstable in all his ways.

Then, that which is eternal becomes ever more real to us, and nearer. This is what gives strength, and excludes all the motives and influences which might mislead us. How happy we are to be under the guidance of the Lord, to have the heart filled with Him whose thoughts are eternal, and who is love, who has so loved us and given Himself for us; who gave Himself to God, as to His own perfection, but still to possess us —blessed be His name —and to have us with Him for ever. It is sweet to feel that He nourishes the church and cherishes it…

[Date uncertain.]

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27 [“Collected Writings,” vol. xv. p. 109.]

28 “I suppose that you would regard the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane when anticipating the cup, as being different from the two kinds of suffering spoken of in the Epistles: but still I do not see that this opens the door for the admission of a third character of sufferings which are not atoning sufferings, nor suffering for righteousness’ sake, such as Christians may have to say to, but suffering and distress under the government of God. Now that Christ in the garden passed through the deepest distress in anticipation of the cup He had to drink for Israel’s sake, as well as for ours, is blessedly true; but that He suffered thus as being in the position of the remnant, and passing through their exercises—Satan using death as darkness and sorrow and terror with God’s judgment sanctioning the pressure of it on the soul—appears to me as contrary to scripture as it is

to other parts of your tract, and to your teaching elsewhere?”

29 My first Italian letter; there has been nothing before except my tract.

30 [Second Article, Church of England.]

31 [“One who is hated,” or “under wrath.”]