

The *Achill Herald* Recollections.

Nos. I. to VIII.

W. Kelly.

(B.T. Vol. 6, p. 254.)

My attention having been drawn to these remarks, I will content myself with a very few words of comment. Can these good men, whether of the English Magazine or of the Irish Journal, be aware, first, that the writer of the tracts on "Darbyism" is thoroughly unsound, in one or more of these very tracts launching out against Brethren so-called because they refuse in fellowship with his denial of eternal punishment? He holds the notion of the annihilation of the wicked. Is it a dishonour to be the object of such men's attacks? Secondly, it is utterly false that Mr. Darby has fallen into Mr. Newton's heresy. In the January Number of the *Bible Treasury* for this year, page 205, a very recent document of Mr. N. was cited, which attacks those he too styles the Darbyites," instead of welcoming them as converts, and (what is more serious perhaps) coincides *in doctrine with the late assaults* on Mr. D. Like them, Mr. N. denies any sufferings of Christ besides atoning ones. Thirdly, the Collected Writings of Mr. D., now in course of publication, utterly disprove the statements of the *Achill Herald* as well as of the *Rainbow*; for they show that from the earliest days of the movement till now the same principles were asserted, the same object was avowed. Take the very first part as a witness, and the second article, "Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ." (Dublin, 1828.) This is as fresh and distinct as possible, and in a practical point of view. It would be impossible for any godly soul who accepted that paper as a just application of divine truth to the actual state of Christendom, to continue a churchman or a dissenter. And in fact neither the writer nor those who felt with him is to this remained at that date in the denominations of which they had previously been members or ministers. Fourthly, the statement that one of the "Brethren's" leading characteristics from the commencement was to reject an ordained ministry hardly agrees with the preceding allegation. This must of itself separate them from all the denominations. But the most singular appendix to this is that these men seem to blame Brethren because, as a consequence of rejecting what they regard as an unscriptural innovation, it becomes a question of the best qualified men taking the lead in their assemblies. Is not this God's will? Would they think it wiser or more scriptural to own as guides the worst qualified? "Hoc Ithacus velit, et magno mercentur Atridae." But we have learnt that the Lord gives gifts to His servants, to every man according to his several ability.

I must add, however, that no brother of intelligence demurs to ordination by those who are really called to ordain. We own it as of God when a Paul or a Titus appointed elders; but not having the title of either, we refuse to go beyond our measure and only do what our power from God enables us to do according to His word, pretty much as the assemblies did in early days when they had not the advantage of being visited by an apostle or an apostolic man. Is not this a humbler and truer position than national or dissenting makeshifts for proper apostolic or equivalent appointment? Our friends have neither apostles nor their delegates one whit more than we; yet they assume to ordain without that due ordaining power. Who then are most right? Who are guilty of insubordination?

The great mistake made by our friends is their oversight of the fact that in the primitive state, according scripture, there was an open door for the exercise of every gift from the Lord, both within and without the christian assembly, whether or not there happened to be elders in this or that particular assembly. Modern practice, Established or Dissenting, forbids this free action of God's Spirit, which was certainly and confessedly the order even when apostolic order reigned.

"Brethren" believe that God has revealed this for action at all times; for this, unlike ordination, does not demand the presence or mission of an apostle. That is, we in this simply act as members of Christ's body; our friends (who are equally members with us) neglect this which is open to them and their duty, while they set up to ordain, which none can do legitimately but an apostle or his deputy. Which of the two courses then is most lowly and obedient?

As to the sorrowful divisions of "Brethren," we grieve deeply over them and still more over the want of faith and spirituality which was, of course, their cause. But our brethren will agree with us, surely, that no failure on the part of individuals can justify our abandoning the will of God, supposing now that it is His will that we should meet according to His word and looking to His ever present Spirit to guide. They may be assured also that if they knew better the facts, they would judge more kindly. Is it righteous to credit every evil tale which disaffected or excommunicated individuals say of us?

The three questions at the end of No. I. seem to us questions of unbelief. The only question is, What is God's will for His children? Does He not set out in His word one body as well as one Spirit? Does He not condemn schism and denominations in principle? Is His will or word changed now? Is it a hopeless thing to obey it? None will condemn separation to follow individual teachers more strongly than "Brethren." The only right course for teachers or taught is to follow the Lord. Will our friends help us to do this more fully? Are they willing to follow Him more fully themselves? Let us pray for each other, as well as set forth the truth without fear.

No. II. need not detain us. If the writer does not think that subordination is sought, found, and valued among "Brethren," he is in error. That we fail in this as in all other excellent things is our sorrow. But is this peculiar to us?

The writer, however, is still more wrong in implying that we deny appointment of elders as well as of deacons. He has mistaken "Fundamental Principles;" but in fact (through inadvertence, I am sure) he has not borne a true witness to it. 1 Tim. 3, 4: 14,* and Titus 1: 5, 9, 10 do *not* speak of *ministry as such*, but of elders or bishops. These last required and received due external appointment. Such is the uniform teaching of the book censured. Let a single passage be produced to the contrary. But in the early Church Scripture shows a number of gifted men exercising their ministry in the word, *besides* elders whose business was local rule, though, of course they might labour in the word and doctrine if they had suited gift. It is therefore our friend (the Editor, probably, of the *Achill Herald*) who mistakes both our principles and the light of scripture. Rejection of *invalid and unauthorized appointment* is a consequence of our adhering to the word of God; but we are not so childish as to refuse the principle of outward appointment, nor the fact where it is duly carried out. Do they not know that "Brethren" have had hands laid on them according to Acts 13, which does not involve the claim of apostolic authority? The basis of what they call our system is nothing of this sort, but the recognition of the continued presence of the Holy Ghost in God's assembly on earth to give power, as working in it and the members in their several places in it, to do God's will according to His word.

* 2 Timothy 2: 2 speaks of communicating doctrine, not authority. That has nothing to do with imposition of hands, which accordingly is not hinted at there, it is in fact a principle "Brethren" carry out continually in one form or another.

The case of R. I. cannot judge of, save that, though an eloquent and pious man, according to the writer, he was certainly impulsive and unwise. This may account for his return to Anglicanism, as well as for his temporary appearance among "Brethren." Whatever may be the estimate of the good man with others, he must have been little known among us; else some tradition must have been left behind.

Will the writer in the *Achill Herald* permit me to assure him that the experience of many among

us is that there is too great backwardness to speak even among very competent men, rather than the forwardness which so offended him when he attended? If it was because they were poor and uneducated men, I do not sympathize with the feeling. such were some of the chief apostles. Nor did the power of the Spirit set aside the evidence of their lack of human polish, as we gather from Acts 4: 13. It is in vain to allege that they were inspired; for I am speaking, not of writing scriptures, but of God's sovereignty in calling whom He will to serve in His Church. It may be pleasanter for refined and even for vulgar people to hear men of education; but it is impossible to defend from scripture the plan of confining to such the ministry of the word either in or out of the congregation. Nor is any amount of knowledge in a real Christian what scripture calls gift, which may be now, as of old, given of our Lord to a poor man as well as a rich. If not, why not? Without gift the ministry of any man is a sham; while the exercise of gift by the humblest Christian is real ministry. Compare Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12, 14, 16; 2 Cor. 4, 5; Eph. 4; Col. 2; Phil. 1; 1 Peter 4.

No. III. calls for even less notice. The story of R. fills the imagination of the writer, with the added tale of some lady who, by his account, acquired a most unseemly influence in his congregation. The *Achill Herald* may be more or less exact in his statements, which are much too vague for any careful mind to conclude from. All I can say is, that though I know for a good many years those called "Brethren," abroad as well as in Great Britain and Ireland, I never heard of such persons or such doings, save as coming under discipline when the least approach to them was attempted.

Our reason for separation from the Establishment and Dissent is, not merely because of practical evils existing in these bodies, but mainly because they are not and never were (what alone we see in scripture) assemblies of those received as accredited believers, gathered unto the name of Jesus (not peculiar views, or nationalism), and looking to Him as Lord to act by His Spirit according to His word in their midst. It is a very rare thing for "unruly and vain talkers" to rise in the midst of the assemblies; but if they should there is ample provision to deal with such scripturally: their "mouths must be stopped;" and so they are. Our faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost does not weaken our hands, but the contrary; and God is faithful both in hearing prayer and in giving power to convince (in private, and, if necessary in the last resort, also in public) the gainsayers. We believe that ministry is both a divine and a permanent institution, is certainly as the Church or assembly is. We believe that a few are gifted to minister in the word to the many; we believe that some are gifted to rule or exercise oversight, who may or may not be called of God to preach or teach. But there is not the smallest abandonment of our faith either in owning that individuals may sometimes speak in the flesh, not in the Spirit, in the assembly, or in using such means of repressing this as scripture provides. Cannot the writer see that the case of the assembly as having the Holy Spirit to direct it stands on ground precisely analogous to the individual Christian? The one, like the other, is God's temple; neither is infallible, both are bound to act in the Spirit by the word. Just as the Christian may fail (as we all do individually, the Editor of the *Achill Herald*, no doubt, like ourselves) so the assembly is liable to the failure of individuals in it as well as corporately, but it is none the less under the responsibility of the Holy Ghost's presence and guidance, which in both cases is the most powerful means both of judging the wrong and of supplying power to walk aright.

The writer is totally misinformed as to the real facts both of "Brethren" and of the seceders who have recently attacked them. But I have said enough to convince fair minds, even among those opposed to us, that our censor is in collision with scripture, no less than with those who are today acting on it at all cost.

No. IV. consists chiefly of a notice which seems intended to decry "Brethren" through exposing the alleged infirmities and faults of a valued and now departed servant of Christ, who "was intimately

known to the writer, and greatly esteemed and beloved as a brother in Christ, for his many excellent and amiable qualities."

It seems that when some Roman Catholic boatmen were rowing them in Dublin bay, J-'s countenance once betrayed grief when the writer himself spoke strongly to some Roman Catholic boatmen about errors of Popery! J- may have been right or wrong; but what has this to do with "Brethren?" Are *they* morbidly shy of error in Popery or Protestantism? Again, J- refused fellowship at the Lord's table to a Christian whom he believed to be compromised by communion where Christ was deeply dishonoured, though not himself charged with holding false doctrine. Is neutrality right in such cases? Lastly, when the *Achill Herald* writer once complained of his trials in the Achill work, J- said he counted his own among "Brethren" far greater. The rest of the paper attacks "Brethren" for their want of missionary zeal, especially in the Achill mission, and somebody who censured the writer for seeking a magistrate's protection from Popish violence. What is the weight of all this? The delicacy too of the allusions to the deceased may be questioned, and the writer's measure of himself as compared with his friend. I confess I should be disposed to draw an inference unfavourable to the living rather than to the dead, and to impute part of the misleading influence to the party-spirit and self-importance so hard for a clergyman to escape.

No. V. tries to contrast apostolic labours with "Brethren's." Let me say a few words. First, the apostles in going forth to preach the gospel far and wide had not to do with such a system of corrupted Christianity as we see around us now-a-days. Secondly, if work among heathen is the one right labour, why does the *Achill Herald* press it among Roman Catholics? If right among misguided Papists, its it wrong or uncalled-for among misguided Protestants? Thirdly, it is a mistake that "Brethren" do not labour, nor contribute to the support of labourers, among both heathen and Roman Catholics. But we hold that the preacher lowers the dignity of the Lord's call by being the employee of a society or even a so-called church — that he is and should be simply the Lord's servant. In scripture "service of the Church" is quite distinct from ministry in the word. We hold too that the yoking of believers and unbelievers in the professed work of the Lord is forbidden by God's word (2 Cor. 6), contrary to the practice of the existing religious societies, which take and seek from the Gentiles all they can get. At the same time while I have no sympathy with the false expectations and the vainglorious reports of most of these societies, I am free to confess how short *we ourselves* come in living only to serve the Lord and spending all we have in helping on His work. I would that "Brethren" and all other saints were incomparably more devoted and self-denying in the fellowship of the gospel and the Lord's objects generally than they are. With those Christians who live at their case, I have no sympathy, least of all where they ought to know and do best.

Nos. VI. and VII. betray the total incompetency of the *Achill Herald* for the task it assumes. The writer talks of Mr. Newman as a "rival leader of the Brethren!" This will be as new to our readers, as that Mr. Darby was separated from "for denying the imputation of Christ's righteousness to his believing people!" People so ignorant ought to learn or be silent.

I must add that the writer's knowledge of our views is as glaringly at fault as of facts and persons: is his knowledge of scripture more accurate? Where does God's word make ordaining elders to be a standing institution? Where does it guarantee the permanence of the requisite authority? That "gifts" are secured as long as Christ's body needs them is allowed; for gifts never required ordination by man, but come direct from Christ. On these gifts depends ministry, which we fully allow to be continued by the Lord now as of old. But scripture never speaks of elders appointed without apostles or apostolic delegates. You cannot, therefore, have the one without the other: if you have no apostles, how scripturally can you have elders in due form? It is ridiculous to suppose that, because a society or even

the law of a country calls a man a bishop, he can ordain like Titus or Paul.*

* The Anglican service for "the ordering of priests" furnishes ample evidence how ill-instructed in scripture were its framers, and what a mass of confusion (to say the least) is bound on those who are thus ordained. They read as the epistle Eph, 4: 7-13 and Matthew 9: 36-38 as the gospel, with John 10: 1-16, none of which applies to the charge of a presbyter; then, after exhortation, questions and answers, prayers, etc., the Bishop and the priests present lay their hands on each candidate, and the former says, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained," etc. One might denounce the profanity of a Bishop appropriating the words of our divine Saviour in John 20: 22, 23; no apostle is ever represented as thus taking up His language. But I confine myself now to the egregious blunder of confounding the Lord's words on His resurrection-day with what they call "the office and work of a Priest." Do they not *know* that the act and words of Christ on that occasion have nothing to do with any such office? This misapplication involves singular ignorance and serious error, as every intelligent believer cannot but discern and own, if he be honest. Yet every Anglican presbyter enters on his functions by sanctioning this grievous ceremony, and subscribes an article which denies that this and the other kindred services have anything that of itself is superstitious or ungodly? Certainly the world's bondage is hard and bitter, and the Christians who submit to it are to be pitied as well as blamed. Would that they might all go forth unto Jesus without the camp, bearing His reproach!

But there is such a thing as spiritual power. An evangelist proves his gift by the conversion of souls so does a teacher by edifying exposition of scripture as an exhorter does by urging truth home. A pastor toils in love to the sheep and lambs of Christ, repressing the unruly, and encouraging the timid, and helping souls in general. There is no real difficulty, as a general rule, in discerning these gifts where they exist, any more than in forming a conviction as to converted and unconverted. Of course there may be mistakes in both respects; but God is faithful and knows how to correct where He is leaned on.

Hence "Brethren" eschew the religious radicalism of dissent, and fully own gifts differing among the members of Christ's body. They hold that *some* are called to rule and that *no one* is free to be unruly. Nothing is simpler, therefore, on their principles than the dealing with "unruly and vain talkers," should such arise among them, which is comparatively rare. Of this class, I fear, a considerable part of the clergy, national and dissenting, against whom their congregations have no godly resource. Their "orders" maintain them, spite of ignorance and worse. Scripture, as ever, shows the more excellent way. And so it is found in fact among us, unless with a morbid soul here or there who suffers "agony," instead of acting in faith and using the power the Lord has given him for common profit and blessing.

The account of D., a zealous baptist, does not call for notice. We can reprove eccentricities in good men, but must bear the reproach of the *Achill Herald* if we do *not* exclude them from christian fellowship. Would he really have us do so? These are a part of our trials, but we share them with our blessed Master.

It is difficult to suppose a man serious who contends that the English Establishment ever admitted the sovereign action of the Spirit in the Christian assembly. Nor can I acquit the writer of trifling when he argues that faith in Christ can consist with denying the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost. We hold that the right line is to do as the early Church did-to receive all who make a credible confession of living faith in Christ; and then to maintain among those received godly discipline in

doctrine and conversation. I think the allusion to "the cave of Adullam" as against us is the less happy, when one remembers that, though the outward pomp and power might be found in Saul's court, God's king, God's prophet, and God's priest were with the poor despised company in that cave.

Was it better with the Church in the days when they walked as we seek to do now, holding to all the word of God in the power of the Spirit; or when the Church began to protect herself by human creeds and confessions?

As for the account of "Brethren" the writer gives, he must forgive my saying it is wholly erroneous. It is *untrue* that there is any "section" which denies eternal punishment; nor is Mr. Newman at the head of any. So the other "section" is equally misunderstood. And why the rash speeches of zealous but unformed young evangelists (many of whom are not and never were in fellowship with us) should be thrown in, it would be hard to understand, if the writer were not often careless of his facts and statements in his zeal as accuser of the "Brethren."

It is false that "Brethren" now or at any time claimed to be "*the very body of Christ.*" What really distinguishes them is practically and in principle contemplating all the members of that one body, and receiving them frankly, while they appear to us to walk after a godly sort, to the Lord's table; in separation from the world, in a scriptural way. This is obviously impossible in the English Establishment or in dissenting societies. We do desire purity of life for ourselves and all saints, and we exercise discipline according to scripture, as far as we have light and power from God., and we believe that, our position being scriptural, this is practicable amongst us, not where the ground taken is unscriptural and human rules are the guide. But as to denying that there have been painful falls among those received, this be far from us. These have always been true of christian assemblies, whether rightly gathered or wrongly, and we never expected to escape them. Do we deal with them scripturally when they occur in our midst? This is the only just question, which does not occur to the *Achill Herald*. But it seems to me that they greatly dishonour Christ who retail such cases against us, instead of according to us their help and sympathy. Are they so blind as not to see that the early assemblies at Rome, Corinth, Colosse, etc., had just the same sources of shame and sorrow as we have now? What must we think of him who would rake such things together in order to condemn what God owned as His assemblies? It is not the entrance of evil which is incompatible with the character of a true assembly of God, but the inability or refusal to exercise discipline according to His word. Where any assembly amongst us so refuses, we disown that assembly. But it is not uncommon, first, to collect and print scandal against "Brethren," and, next, to sympathize with those who do not exercise discipline rather than with those who do. How does all this appear in the sight of God? To call "fruits of separatism" the cases of moral evil which we have judged solemnly by God's word, I believe to be iniquity which God will judge. It is also wrong to say that we think there is no danger either of sin or of self-deception.

No. VIII. objects to sect-making. So do we most earnestly; and of course to old sects, as well as new. The question is, What is a sect? Is not the English Establishment one? Must a Christian belong to a sect?

"The main body of the baptized" is, I suppose, Popery. Idolatry is not the only evil that justifies separation. No Christian is free to sanction any evil or error in what claims to be God's Church. But the grand point is that neither the Establishment nor Dissent ever took or even contemplated the original ground of God's assembly. As to the railing tracts by angry men cited in the *Achill Herald*, they are best left in silence. If such tracts as these can overthrow us, we deserve to fall; but my opinion is that the condescension to use such weapons shows the moral state of our adversaries, and can only injure

themselves. Those, within or without, who can be influenced by such reasoning, we can well spare.

APPENDIX TO THE NOTICE OF THE *ACHILL HERALD* RECOLLECTIONS.

(B.T. Vol. 7, p. 14-15.)

The author's charges differ from the Bishop of Kilmore's. There is no reason for evading either — least of all for not meeting the more violent of the two. I have replied to Dr. Verschoyle elsewhere, and now proceed to refute the rector of Skreen.

(1.) Mr. Nangle's statement is, that those he calls Darbyites "reject a ministry set apart by the laying on of hands to rule and teach the Church, as laid down in St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus, and various other parts of the New Testament. That they do reject such a ministry is notorious, and the apologist of the sect does not dare to deny it." It is evident that he does not understand the matter; nor should one be surprised at this.

All is confusion in Christendom on the point. The Roman Catholic does not allow the validity of Anglican orders, though the Anglicans own those of Rome, for a recanting Romish priest never undergoes presbyterial ordination within the English Establishment. The Presbyterian reckons episcopacy a fiction. The Independent rests the essence of his call on the choice of the congregation, as the Presbyterian does in a measure. Thus for the most part the theories and practice of Christendom, if applied and held fast, are mutually destructive; one only could be true.

"Brethren" believe that not one of these conflicting schemes is according to God's word; because even those who have a measure of right, in upholding the truth of apostolic authority as the sole adequate ordaining power, falsely pretend that the modern bishop succeeds to this authority. If "Brethren" arrogated such a claim to themselves, they would be as wrong as their neighbours; but as long as they bold to the truth in this respect, they will avoid this error of Christendom. They leave it to others, who have as little real ground as themselves, to imitate an apostle or an apostolic delegate. Instead of aspiring to an authority which "Brethren" frankly own *they* do not possess, and which they firmly believe neither Roman Catholics nor other Episcopalians possess one jot more than themselves, they thank God for the gifts which remain, being amongst themselves more or less as also among the members of Christ's body everywhere.

I flatly deny, then, that they reject a ministry set apart by the laying on of hands, as laid down in 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and elsewhere. It is notorious that they on the contrary hold so tenaciously to the due scriptural order as to reject the poor and baseless imitations of this current among modern Episcopalians, and still more the substitution of the popular voice for it, which passes among Dissenters. But they hold that the Lord (as from the first, even whilst apostles and their delegates appointed elders) gives such gifts (evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.) is are needed for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. From the beginning, there was the free exercise of gift within and without the Church, *beside* the local charges of elders, etc., which needed orderly appointment. Have gifts ceased, because apostolic authority no longer exists?

(2.) I am grieved to say that the charge of evasion under the head of confessing sins is inexcusable, not to say worse. The Bishop of Kilmore was misinformed if he thought "Brethren" held that the confession of sins is to be laid aside by those who have already received forgiveness; for they would support himself in resisting that grave error. Mr. N.'s hostility forthwith suspects evil couched underneath a straightforward denial: any candid gracious soul would be gratified by it, because he loves

to bear good of his brethren and rejoices to have a prejudice removed. What does Mr. N. say and feel? "We have here another evasion put forth as a reply to my charge. I never denied that the Darbyites, as a body, insist on the duty of a believer to confess his sins; but I did and do charge them with the grievous error that a believer needs not daily to pray for *the forgiveness of his sins*." How comes this shifting of the point before us? Why does he charge the reply to Dr. Verschoyle with "evasion" because his own different statement was not answered? Did he forget that the reply was to Dr. V. not to himself? Again, why did he "adopt" the Bishop of Kilmore's words on this head if he never believed of "Brethren" what the Bishop imputes? Was this upright? Is it lawful to use another's words against the "Brethren," which, when exposed, you deny that you ever held, and then to substitute quite a different statement, with a confident accusation that your charge (which was not in question) is evaded? This is what Mr. N. has done. I do not think any worthy members of his own party will approve of it.

No intelligent Christian objects to the Common Prayer Book on the ground here alleged, but to the *merging saints and sinners in a common petition and confession of sins*, to the exceeding detriment of the converted, to the imminent peril of the unconverted, and above all to the trampling under foot of the primary idea, the express design, and revealed character of God's Church.

To be precise, let me add, first, that "Brethren" do ask forgiveness of their sins; secondly, that confession goes *beyond* this. Who does not know, save the thoughtless, that it is far easier to ask forgiveness than to confess honestly and thoroughly? Have you never felt it? Have you not seen it in your child? For what are sins confessed, if not to seek forgiveness from our Father?

(3.) Neither is there any evasion as to the Lord's prayer. I have never hinted that it was used at meetings of "Brethren," though there is no rule expressed or understood against such a thing. It is evident that the Lord gave it for the *closet* use (Matt. 6: 6) of His disciples, who were regenerate at that very time and had not yet received the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete. I believe that it abides for such use on the part of disciples in a similar condition; but that it never was intended for souls after they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise and possessed (not merely the title, but) the Spirit of sonship. This vast change is, I am convinced, the teaching of our Lord Himself in John 16: 24-26. The disciples had been no doubt for a long time using the Lord's prayer; yet the Lord tells them "Hitherto have ye asked *nothing in my name*." "At that day ye shall ask in my Name." "That day" is now come: are we as the disciples were? or, having received the Comforter, are we asking the Father in Christ's name? To my mind this distinction is clear and certain; but Mr. N. counts it "shuffling by which your correspondent endeavours to exonerate the sect from this sanctimonious blasphemy," and then talks about the distinction already pointed out in such a style as to show himself wholly in the dark on this subject. "If any man be ignorant let him be ignorant."

From these bold and bitter, but powerless words, in the face of our Lord's declaration and the evident facts of scripture, it is refreshing to turn to the excellent and learned Dr. John Owen. None can say that Cromwell's Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Plymouthized; none can deny that for spiritual judgment he is incomparably beyond any of the adversaries of the "Brethren." His orthodoxy and his piety are unimpeachable; yet his doctrine (as far as it goes), and no doubt his practice, as to the Lord's prayer, accords with ours. "Let it therefore be taken for granted that our Saviour did command that form to be repeated by His disciples, and let us then consider what will regularly ensue thereupon. Our Saviour at that time was minister of the circumcision, and taught the doctrine of the gospel under and with the observation of all the worship of the Judaical church. He was not yet glorified, and so the Spirit was not as yet given; I mean that Spirit which He promised unto His disciples to enable them to perform all the worship of God by Him required at their hands, whereof we have before spoken. That, then, which the Lord Jesus prescribed unto His disciples for their present practice in the worship of

God, seems to have belonged unto the economy of the Old Testament. Now, to argue from the prescription of, and outward helps for, the performance of the worship of God under the Old Testament, unto a necessity of the like or the same under the New, is upon the matter to deny that Christ is ascended on high, and to have given spiritual gifts unto men eminently distinct from and above those given out by Him under the Judaical pedagogy." (Works, Vol. xv., p. 14, Goold's ed.) Of course, I attach not the smallest authority to Dr. O.; but it suffices to evince the abuse and lack of knowledge on our accuser's part.

(4.) It is in vain to appeal to 1 John 2: 3, 1 John 3: 18, 19 to prove that scripture makes the full assurance of our acceptance to depend on our works or our experiences. The apostle treats of a wholly different question and assumes, in this very epistle, that the former was already settled even for the babes of the family of God. See 1 John 2: 12; 1 John 5: 13. There were those who sought even in that early day to set up Gnostic conceits, to despise love and holiness, and to assert the necessity of their teaching for the children of God. Hence, not to raise internal questions, but to comfort the true saints, and to expose these aspiring false teachers, the apostle says, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." There is no thought of insinuating an inquiry whether their own faith was real. So in chapter 3 it is expressly a question of "assurance of heart;" not of ascertaining one's individual interest in Christ, but of keeping our confidence toward God unbroken. But I quite agree that without holiness (practically) no man shall see the Lord; and that carelessness of ways even in a real saint is always destructive of spiritual enjoyment.

(5.) So far is it from being true that individuals among "Brethren" are insensible to discipline, that one of the greatest hindrances we know is from the spirit of insubjection which prevails generally over Christendom. When the high-minded among us receive censure beyond their grace to endure, sometimes they resent it by going back to the country whence they came out, or by making a party of their own. It is commonly alleged against "Brethren" that they take "the best" from the various religious societies. Others are perhaps better judges of this. We can thankfully say that none but our worst or weakest leave us to join any denomination. The singular fact is, that our adversaries do not seem to perceive how serious for themselves are both these allegations if true. And who can deny them?

(6.) I am sorry that the most prejudiced Christian should judge it wrong, when souls established in Christ are taught any truth they need, particularly what is so near to Christ and so practically necessary to our walk and worship as the nature of God's Church. But I can well understand why some are sensitive on this head.

I had almost omitted to add that our reason for not putting forth creeds, or articles of faith, is not in the smallest degree because of diversity of opinion. Tracts and books, however, by men respected among us are abundant and accessible. Why not quote fairly from them, instead of imputing to "Brethren" sentiments which they abhor? First, it is evident to us, that symbols of faith do not secure unanimity in Mr. N.'s system, which affords to all men the spectacle of compelling men to sign what they openly deny, without an approach to the right use of ecclesiastical discipline (though the second part of the Homily for Whitsunday declares this to be one of the three notes or marks whereby the true church is known). Secondly, it is equally clear that the Church of God walked without these Egyptian reeds during its best days here below, as we are seeking to do now by the grave of the Saviour.

As to the reproach of being a conglomerate of the errors of the Quakers, the Anabaptists, and the Antinomians, with supplemental errors increasing and special, it is not worth more answer than that of our scandalous immoralities. I retort nothing; I appeal to those who have knowledge and conscience.