

Brethren and their Traducers:

A refutation of Rev. F. Whitfield's letter to Rev. O. Debrée.

W. Kelly.

Table of Contents

I. — Is "EVERY PARISHIONER" A SAINT?.....	1
II. — RECONCILIATION IN SCRIPTURE AND IN ART. 2.....	4
III. — IS MINISTRY FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?.....	4
IV. — ARTICLES 36 AND 37.....	5
V. — THE ARTICLES DEFICIENT.....	6
VI. — BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.....	7
VII. — CONFESSION OF SIN.....	9
PART II.....	9
REVIVED TRUTH.....	10
RECEPTION.....	11
NEWTONISM AND BETHESDA.....	12
LIBERTY OF MINISTRY.....	14

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." — Jer. 6: 16.

No sooner had appeared my reply to a respectable assailant, than a fresh attack follows from a Mr. Whitfield — once, it seems, with "Brethren," then after the Dublin breach, in 1850, with the Bethesda or neutral party, and now a clergyman. His letter intimates (pp. 3, 4) that, while ostensibly apart from the Anglican body, he had never abandoned it altogether; but the character of the statements is such that the secession of the author, in his present state, ought to be a real relief to any circle where Christ is named. His honesty or his judgment before that step, was not worth much by his own account: whether they are worth more now, others will judge, when they have read my examination. From none have fallen stronger expressions of disgust at his tract than from members of the English Establishment. Some of different temper may be but too eager to receive the rashest language, and the most rancorous reports, and they may even refuse to hear the disproof. But God is not mocked.

Singularly enough, the very title page, with its motto of Prov. 18: 17, bears the stamp of confusion on it. For each of my opponents has been "first in his own cause;" and *my* lot is to search *them*. They, not I, provoked or renewed the controversy. The main subjects are here arranged under separate heads.

I. — Is "EVERY PARISHIONER" A SAINT?

Mr. W. affirms this (p. 6), lowering the notion of saintship so as to embrace all the christened who are not openly gross. Not so Mr. Dobrée, who admitted that the "affecting difference between the believing and the unbelieving is to be maintained and manifested not only in individual walk, but also

in the gatherings of the saints, separate from those who know not Jesus. It is the will of God that it should be so." (Sep. p. 4.) Mr. W. maintains, on the contrary, that "saints" are "professing Christians, comprising both true and false!" and founds his conclusion on the address to the Corinthians. Strange that two officials, not only of the same system but of the same section in it, should at the very start oppose each other so diametrically (the last thing intended or perhaps even now seen by either); and this not on some small detail, but on a fundamental question, which yields in moment to few others in this discussion. If Mr. D. be right in this, as I am satisfied he is, how can it be denied that his coadjutor is totally wrong?

As to any difference in interpreting "every parishioner" (p. 4), the question does not even exist among upright men: the prayer-book, the canons, and the commentators on both are too explicit. Save the scandalous, who are expressly excepted, "every parishioner" includes the entire baptized population in each given district, i.e. practically any one that likes to take the Communion. Is this maintaining and manifesting the difference between believers and unbelievers? How does the admission of every parishioner to the Sacrament consist with gatherings of the saints, separate from those who know not Jesus? Which is God's will? and which man's? Mr. W. talks of "every professing Christian parishioner" (p. 4); but every body knows that the profession required in Anglicanism amounts to repeating the catechism and being confirmed. Is it pretended that this is what Scripture means by the confession or profession of a Christian man? He who seriously thinks so, must be a questionable Christian himself.

Further, the point is not what evils or errors broke out in the Corinthian church, but what was sought, according to Scripture, before souls were accepted anywhere and addressed as saints. Why is not this, the true enquiry, fairly met? Now no fact is more patent throughout the Apostolic history than that those baptized and received into the Church were accredited as true believers in Christ, regenerate, anointed and sealed of the Spirit. (Acts 2: 37-42, 47; Acts 4: 4, 32, 33; Acts 5: 13, 14; Acts 8: 12-17, 38, 39; Acts 10: 44-48; Acts 11: 17, 18, 19-26; Acts 13: 43, 52, and so on.) The Epistles of course confirm this. Thus, taking the first that comes, the Roman saints had their faith spoken of throughout the whole world, and Paul thanks God for them *all*. What Christian in his senses could thank God for "every parishioner" — I will not say in London, but — in any parish of England or Guernsey? As to Corinth, whatever men may exaggerate or defame, the Lord told the Apostle (Acts 18) that in this city He had much people, and not merely many professors. It is not the fact, though Mr. W. says it, that "some of them were not reconciled to God;" for 2 Cor. 5 is an address to the Corinthian saints, not about their own need of reconciliation, but about the character of the embassy, and the message to be preached to the world. Indeed, if anything of the sort were proved thereby, it would deny the saintship of not "some" but *all* there who had to be reconciled to God. Again, some, by their denial of the resurrection of the dead, betrayed their ignorance of God; as others fell into grievous and profane sins. But there is no reason to think the error was adhered to after the first Epistle; and surely David went as far astray morally as any: was he a true saint, or a false professor? These things, then, do not show that "saints" comprise false and true, like "every parishioner." The reader, taking any or all the other addresses to the churches, can estimate the worth of the assertion, "that our Church uses the term 'parishioner' in the same sense as Paul used the term 'saint.'" It is a fiction which dishonours God and ruins man.

"If Mr. Kelly had, with an unbiassed mind, taken his Hebrew Bible and Lexicon in his hand, he would have found that there is scarcely one of these terms (?) that is not used in an *ecclesiastical* as well as a *spiritual* sense." — (p. 6.) Neither in Old Testament nor in New are "parishioner" and "saint" used in the same sense; nor "parishioner" in any sense. How the *Hebrew* could decide an

ecclesiastical question is perplexing; for Mr. W. admits (p. 34), that in our Lord's time "the Church was not formed." Undoubtedly, in the Levitical economy, Israel as a nation, and Jerusalem as a city, were called holy in an external way; but even then as now, "saints," as said of individuals, implied real intrinsic separation to God by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost. The difference is that then the saints were, so to speak, units, and chiefly among the Jewish people; whereas now, since the Cross and Pentecost, saints are called out from Jews and Gentiles into separation from the world, and baptized by one Spirit into one body, the Church. This is the teaching of the New Testament, the Gospels preparing the way, the Acts showing the facts historically, and the Epistles furnishing the dogmatic exposition. Nationalism may labour to justify itself by the Jewish model in the Hebrew ritual; but indiscriminate reception is unknown to, and contradicted by, all that God reveals as His will for the Church. The uniform practice herein was receiving such as were honestly taken to be believers in Christ and possessors of the Holy Spirit. Mistakes might be made, and hypocrites or self-deceived slip in: once in, faith trusted God, if His will, to manifest them by such moral or doctrinal evil as must require their excision according to His Word For the temple of God is holy, which temple the saints are.

Another remark (pp. 4, 5) is too serious as well as characteristic to be passed by. When the Holy Sacrament, says Mr. W., "was profaned by the Corinthian Church, the apostle did not constitute the sound portion of that body a judge of the spiritual character and standing of those who so grossly sinned in regard to it. Mr. Kelly's plan would be that he or others should judge their fellow-worshippers, in order to provide against unfit communicants. The Church's design is to call on men to 'examine themselves' as the most effectual and Scriptural means of securing purity of communion. As to the issue thus raised, we are quite satisfied to be guided by him who said, 'let a man examine himself (and not his neighbour), and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' — 1 Cor. 11: 28." Now the Lord had already dealt with that sin directly (ver. 30), as an apostle had been given to act yet more promptly for Him in the different case of Ananias and Sapphira. But had not the Holy Ghost, in 1 Cor. 5, charged the body of the saints to judge evildoers hardly so vile and irreverent? Does *He* invest the saints with that which must result in "an ecclesiastical despotism?" (p. 5.) "I have written unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, [is this necessarily scandalous?] or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? *Do not ye judge them that are within?* [precisely what is called "Mr. Kelly's plan."] But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Here then, beyond controversy, is God's plan. He does constitute the assembly judge of evil apparent in their midst, commanding the refusal of any mark of fellowship, if a brother so called were guilty of drunkenness, etc. Is it not then equally blind and audacious to argue, that drunkenness at the Lord's table was not to be thus judged, because the direction of 1 Cor. 5 is not repeated in 1 Cor. 11? Is that ignorance sinless, which perverts the self-examination here called for, so as to blot out the Church's obligation to judge those within, already enjoined? In Scripture, all is perfect and perfectly arranged. Public, corporate discipline was authoritatively laid down in chap. 5. If the apostle declared this to be God's will there, and faithless men heard not: wherefore would they hear it again, in a portion which formally treats not of discipline but of the Lord's Supper? Will these mis-reasoners dare to say that the assembly ought to deal with the drunkard in general, but not with the aggravated case of Eucharistic drunkenness? Decorous men, if mistaken, from High Church and from Low Church, have hitherto crossed my path: the least logical and the most immoral argument yet offered was reserved for Mr. Whitfield.

II. — RECONCILIATION IN SCRIPTURE AND IN ART. 2.

Even Mr. W. agrees (pp. 6, 7) that it is the sinner who, in Scripture, is called on to be reconciled to God. This ought to close his mouth. For the need of an atoning sacrifice is another question and common ground, which last is confessed in p. 8, after an effort, worthy of the author, to link me with Mr. Maurice and the Socinians. What is the fact? Mr. M. and all his company still preach their abominations under sanction of Anglican "orders," without effectual hindrance, still abuse God's reconciling love to evacuate the Atonement; all the "Brethren," without a single exception, maintain both truths fully, unambiguously, and tenaciously: what a resemblance — to a man troubled with an evil eye! Unclean spirits, in presence of Jesus, we are told, cried saying, Thou art the Son of God: am I therefore to give up this truth? or any other truth, because a foul mouth may utter it for its own purposes? To a believer, the sole question should be, "what saith the Scripture?" Does the Article speak like it? Clearly not. The Article speaks of reconciliation, as well as "sacrifice." Atonement naturally and properly falls under this last, so that the objection remains in all its strength against the error that He suffered, etc., to reconcile His Father to us. — As to the etymology of the English! word, more sense might have been expected from an ordinarily intelligent person, than impressing such an element to settle doctrine. Atonement, theologically, means expiation: to run from its actual force to its verbal source, is childish or worse. Its doctrinal meaning is not at-one-ment, which last, in truth, is a favourite Socinian (as well as Irvingite) idea. Harken to one: "atonement always means in the Bible, making two or more persons at one or agreed" — a statement not so unlike some of Mr. W.'s talk, but clean contrary to the truth; for atonement, as a dogma, (the only question here,) *never* means anything but propitiation for sin. Another notable argument, (p. 8,) is that Rom. 5: 11, entirely justifies the language of the Article: — i.e. the well-known blunder, in our A.V., of substituting "atonement" for "reconciliation," eked out by the second blunder of substituting "reconciliation" for "atonement," in Heb. 2: 17! The scholarship, the reasoning, and the doctrine, are suited companions, vainly defending what is indefensible. Lastly, even were it supposed for a moment that Art. 17 etc., (p. 9,) present the right view, how could this purge Art. 2 from the taint of impurity? Does the signature of a truth clear the conscience in subscribing to an error? Let men beware how they trifle with so grave a case.

III. — IS MINISTRY FROM HEAVEN, OR OF MEN?

Ministry, in Scripture, (not in Art. 23), is the exercise of a gift, bestowed, in general, directly from above, but in exceptional cases, as Timothy's, by Apostolic imposition of hands. Hence, God's Word knows nothing of ordaining men simply for preaching, teaching, or the employment of any other gift. Does not the Article estop (preclude) within Anglican limits the liberty of ministry which Scripture asserts? To minister in the congregation there, without being called by men, is unlawful: in the Church of the Scriptures, (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, 14, 16, Eph. 4, Phil. 1, Col. 2, 4, 1 Thess. 5, 1 Peter 4, etc.) it is not legitimate only, but a responsibility in every case where the Lord causes His light to shine. Where is the judgment or the candour of denying the difference? Not even the Jews were so penned up in their synagogues, as appears from Acts 13: 15, 16, Acts 17: 1, 2. And though the inroads of corruption were rapid, deep, and wide-spread in the early Church, (in nothing more marked, than as to ministry,) yet as late as the third century, traces of Scriptural liberty still linger. Thus Origen publicly preached and taught in the churches in Palestine, though not then ordained. And when Demetrius, of Alexandria, complained of it as unheard-of disorder, Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, and Theoctistus, bishop of Caesarea, take their brother bishop roundly to task, and affirm that "wherever any are found fit to profit the brethren, the holy bishops ask them to discourse unto the

people," giving instances where it had been done under Episcopal eyes. (Euseb. H. 13. vi. 19.)

But Mr. W. retorts ("myself being a witness," p. 10) that "Brethren" "do the same." I am compelled to say that his statement is untrue — has not even the appearance of truth. In certain cases, we do commend to God's grace those who go forth for Christ's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles; but *we never send any*. Can that be what he so grossly mis-states? Nor do "Brethren" ordain elders, though they heartily allow that Apostles, or a duly-authorized deputy like Titus, quite rightly appointed these local overseers. But they do not see such Apostolic authority in others, any more than they claim it for themselves; if they knew of its existence anywhere, they would gladly seek its succour and sanction in the cases where Scripture shows it applied. Yet "Brethren" are no worse off in this respect than some of the choicest, happiest, and most blessed assemblies when Paul wrote. Is this my opinion only? Hear the excellent Bishop Hall in his Apology against Brownists (Works, vol. ix. p. 416). "He (Paul) writes to Rome, Corinth, and other Churches. Those his Divine Letters, in a sweet Christian civility, salute even ordinary Christians. And would he have utterly passed by all mention of these Church officers, amongst his so precise acknowledgment of lesser titles in others, if they had been all thus ordained? yet all these, more than true Churches, famous some of them, rich, forward, and exemplary." In Anglicanism, on the contrary, there is the pretension to ordain without the requisite authority; and Art. 23 is doubly wrong, if Scripture is indeed our standard, — as wrong in hindering the free exercise of spiritual gift in the congregation, as in appointing without competent title from God. If this be true, and needed truth for the fuller glorifying of God, it is not "lack of grace and love" to press it earnestly on His children; the real want of grace, methinks, is in such as resent it.

IV. — ARTICLES 36 AND 37.

I had pronounced these "figments," the offspring of superstition and worldliness respectively. Now for the proof. It is certain from Scripture (Acts 20: 17, 28; Phil. 1; 1 Tim. 3, 5; Titus 1; 1 Peter 5) and allowed by competent, godly Episcopalians that Bishops and Elders are not twain, but one office, and that Deacons had a proper work, for which they, (and not necessarily the Elders or Bishops), were distinctively fitted, instead of its being a kind of ecclesiastical boy-bachelorship, through which all must pass to the higher grades. Why, then, is a practice adhered to; in the face of Scriptures, which condemn it in the Ordinal itself? Because it is an ancient superstition. Custom, however, without truth, is but error with grey hairs, as Cyprian said. A more confused scheme can hardly be. For the Prayer-Book applies 1 Tim. 3 and Acts 20 to the Episcopal order in the sense of tradition, (not of Scripture), contrary to the judgment of many of their ablest doctors, who refer them both to Presbyters. This creates a gap in the form and manner of Ordering of Priests, where from want of texts treating of their duties with precision, they read Eph. 4: 7, Matt. 9: 36, and John 10: 1, not one of which is appropriate to Elders as such. But the worst of all is the abuse of our Lord's words in John 20 and the pretension to confer the Holy Ghost without the power. Our Lord, on the evening of His resurrection, breathed on those present, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins," etc. not the receivers were the *disciples*, not apostles only, still less presbyters. The Anglican mistake is palpable, and the superstition dangerous; for that is made the peculiar badge of a few (with "ecclesiastical despotism," here indeed, "the inevitable result,") which Christ gave as the blessed portion of us all. When I know how saints in the Establishment have groaned under all this, how revolting is the unscrupulous zeal of one who seems resolved to atone for past infidelity to the Church of his forefathers by an almost frenzied readiness to do battle now for its worst faults!

As to the Sovereign's supremacy in civil things, "Brethren" yield to none in willing homage and subjection, not for wrath, but conscience' sake. Are we to render to Caesar the things not of Caesar

only, but of God too? Scripture attributes the headship of the Church to Christ only. "Spiritual," as distinguished from Ecclesiastical supremacy is pure fancy: if not, where is the proof? God's Word leaves no room for human headship of the Church, Papal or Royal; while it demands allegiance to the Crown in its own external sphere. If the Church was only formed after the Saviour's death, Art. 37 must be all in the dark about the prerogative "given always to all godly princes in Holy Scripture," as far as Ecclesiastical things are concerned. Those who claim the chief rule in these estates for a King or Queen, are bound to prove it, if they can, from the Scriptures which really speak of the Church, and not of Judaism: if recourse is had to the latter only, we can see whither such men are bound. What can be more "worldly" than, without Scripture, to invent a place in the Church corresponding to the highest earthly seat? Are the world and the Church but different aspects of the same body? Alas! too true in the minds of many.

V. — THE ARTICLES DEFICIENT.

The charge was, that they do not even allude to some of the weightiest of revealed truths; such as the regeneration, indwelling and other operations of the Spirit, though upholding His deity and personality; and, in particular, that one would not gather from them the baptism of the Holy Ghost or His presence and distribution of gifts in the Church. The answer confirms the accusation, for Art. 27 treats not of regeneration, but of its *sign*. It is false that regeneration *itself* is referred to, save only as signified by baptism. It was meant clearly that there is no allusion to its own proper nature in the Articles. If Art. 27 really conveys that baptism is "an *instrument* through which the Holy Ghost operates," (p. 12), it is much worse than I ever thought it to be; because this would be a formal avowal of Baptismal regeneration here, as well as in the Services. Nor does Art. 17 allude to the indwelling, or the anointing, the seal or the earnest of the Spirit. His general working is not the matter in question, but His operations distinctively, and in particular, the nature and effects of His presence in the Christian and in the Church, as contra-distinguished from all that existed before Pentecost. Again, the reference to Articles 6 and 9 as Anglican testimony to Christ's headship, priesthood and advocacy, proves simply that Mr. W. does not understand these great truths. Besides, my argument was not *for*, but *against* such a human Confession, because of the evident imperfection of the Thirty-nine. But why the addition of some omitted and momentous truths of God should be "burdensome" (p. 13) to one who justifies errors and deficiencies alike, is not reasonable.

Next, Art. 6, while it asserts the sufficiency of Scripture for salvation, in opposition to Rome, does not imply that any Anglican, above all, a clergyman, is at liberty to dissent from the formularies, no matter how sure he may be that certain parts are unscriptural. This may possibly tax the "patience" of a zealot, but it is perfectly certain. Is this, then, duly to maintain the authority of God's Word? In the haste to contradict what no man can in fairness gainsay, Mr. W. says, (p. 14), that this Article "asserts two things, the sufficiency of Scripture for salvation, and secondly," *whatsoever* is not read therein, (about any matter) is not to be required of any man; and then refers to Art. 20. Now this is incorrect, as well as misapplied: for what is called the second thing in Art. 6 is indubitably the further explanation of its one object. And the prefatory Royal Mandate assumes that Anglicanism has nothing in doctrine or regimen but what agrees with Scripture. Whatever may be the outcry of some, (p. 14), I have produced proof enough from God's Word, which His grace will make effectual, I doubt not, in souls open to conviction.

VI. — BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

That this is the doctrine of the Services for baptism, and the remains of Popish darkness, is my charge. What is the reply? I am sent to Arts. 25 and 27! It is taken for granted that there can be no jar between these Articles and the Services: a notion quite opposed to the judgment, not merely of unbiassed men, but of many Anglicans entitled to respect. It is well known that the Tractarians rely on the Services for Baptismal regeneration, and the Evangelicals on the Articles against it, and both with too much reason. For compromise has been the policy almost always, and thus real consistency exists for neither of the opposed parties. Now I impugned the Services, not the Article on baptism; and I do not accept the latter as security for the former. The really "uncandid and disingenuous conduct" is exclusively on his part who evades the question. The one point, which I have accused of Popish darkness, remains; the three Services, the Catechism, and the Confirmation, all attest that the Anglican doctrine is, *regeneration of the Spirit in and by baptism*. I have never said or thought that the Articles affirm this: let him who will, (I do not) say, that they contradict it. If it were true that they did contradict, a further proof would be afforded of their slippery, incoherent character, but no proof at all that the Services do not repeat, and are not founded on, one of the worst errors of Rome. Is it not certain that the Services suppose the subject (infant or adult) to be unregenerate *before* the rite of baptism, and pronounce it regenerate immediately *after*? Is not this Popish enough for an evangelical clergyman's task? Or does the mischief lie, not in the pestilent falsehood which declares that the baptized are all regenerate, but in the salt, the saliva, the anointing, the exorcisms, etc.? Where does Scripture teach this doctrine? Is it in Acts 2: 38; Acts 22: 16; Titus 3: 5? Does any one of these texts, or John 3: 5; or Mark 16, quoted afterwards (pp. 17, 19), attribute spiritual life to baptism? There is no semblance of that fatal error. I acknowledge the great importance of baptism as the first formal act which accompanies the confession of Christ. I own that he who refuses in such circumstances to submit to baptism has no proper title to be recognised as a Christian. True repentance and faith are inseparable, and neither can be without the quickening of the Spirit; but baptism is due to Christ as the expression of owning the Lord who died for us and rose again. The Jews who repented in Acts 2, were told to be baptized before they received the Pentecostal gift; the Gentiles of Cornelius' household had the promise of the Father given to them before they were baptized; but in neither case, nor in any other of which Scripture speaks, is one soul said to be regenerate by baptism. Of these Scriptures, only John 3 and Titus 3 speak of regeneration, but not of baptism. Through the word of truth, says James, did God beget us; born again, says Peter, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God; in Christ Jesus, says Paul, I have begotten you through the gospel. Nay more: the same apostle writes to the same saints, thanking God that he had baptized but few of them. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:" an incredible slight, if baptism were "plainly declared to be an *instrument* through which the Holy Spirit operates," but quite simple, if life be through the gospel received in the heart by the Holy Spirit. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life," and so, even before, John writes, "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There is not a word about baptism, but all is to believe. So the application of John 3 to baptism is merely traditional, and at variance with the context: for how could Nicodemus understand Christian baptism founded on the not yet accomplished death and resurrection of the Saviour? Our Lord reproaches him, as an Israelitish teacher, for not knowing the new birth; and this, because it was not some new thing, but truth which he should have gleaned from the Psalms and Prophets especially Ezekiel 36: 25-27. All the faithful in every dispensation were and must be born of water and the Spirit, one as much as another. The passage, therefore, has no such reference, though I deny not that baptism may outwardly represent the truth there insisted on. I conclude, then, that

Scripture offers no cloak to hide the shame of the Anglican Offices for baptism, but, contrariwise, attributes to the Word of God revealing Christ, that which they assign with Rome to an ordinance.

As for assuming "a meaning for the term regeneration" (p. 18), the Services etc. speak with such clearness and emphasis as to exclude doubt. "Spiritual regeneration," "born again," "regenerated with the Holy Spirit," "my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," ought to leave no room for hesitation. And very singular it is, that the same pen which in pp. 12 and 17 ventured on the ground of sacramental grace for baptism, descends so low in page 19 as to assert that "regeneration in all these services means the open admission of candidates into the church; their visible adoption as the Lord's children, of which water is the sign and pledge." Had this been said of *baptism*, one might have little to object; but to speak thus of "regeneration," is to impose, if on himself, on very few others, I hope. The doctrine is thoroughly bad — anti-evangelical, as well as anti-Anglican. I had almost omitted to say that I doubt not for a moment God's mercy to infants who die (pp. 17, 18). Matt. 18 is a comforting warrant as to not merely the little ones which believe in Christ, but little children in general. But spiritual regeneration in and by baptism is a serious thing for man to assert, whether for young or old, without God's Word. We may speak of answers to prayer; but is it "believing prayer" which asks for what is unscriptural? If baptismal regeneration be heterodox, prayer cannot make it true or holy.

My blaming the application of the ark to the Church, instead of to Christ, is deemed "very absurd." "What little paltry things the Plymouth Brethren catch at!" (p. 20) The ark notwithstanding is allowed to be a type of Christ; but this defence for the other turn is set up, that Christ and the Church are one and the baptized person is not only in the ark, but in Christ's Church! This is certainly a piece of pleading and exegesis which "Brethren" have no reason to envy. Adam and Eve were one, and typify the great mystery of the Church's union with Christ. But were the "living souls" one with "the vessel" which carried them through the deluge? "A little learning is a dangerous thing;" and Mr. W. is a witness of it. Does a spiritual man require to be told that the ark typifies salvation in and by Christ, not oneness with Him, which is shown elsewhere? To misapply the ark to the Church, is another bit of Popery, it is to confound the saved with the Saviour.

The next paragraph (pp. 20, 21) is a melancholy sample of the lengths to which a soul can flounder, when an apology for error is undertaken. "The scheme of sponsors is clearly sanctioned in Deut. 29: 10-16." The author of the argument, unconscious of making its folly manifest to all, does not fail to print the decisive proof in italics and capitals — "*also with him that is NOT HERE, with us this day (unborn children).*" Happy people of Kirkby Ravensworth! Other poor churchmen must wait at least till the children are born, before sponsors can do their work; you, of course, are taught to do what the children of Israel did, "by the same high authority" which publishes it to the world at large. One would think that, according to this principle, the three thousand souls, added on the day of Pentecost, ought to have stood sponsors for all the Christian children not yet born; especially as Peter told them, "The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The argument that it is the *Abrahamic* covenant, because of the reference to the fathers in verse 13, is frivolous. It was, no doubt, another covenant besides that which the Lord made with them at Horeb — a special covenant, when the children of Israel were in Moab, in order to enable them to enter the promised land, and enjoy it *provisionally*. When the covenant, not with the children, but with the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) really comes into force for "that nation," they will enjoy the promises for *ever*; as we do now in Christ, and in a heavenly way, according to Galatians and Hebrews.

VII. — CONFESSION OF SIN.

Before turning to this last section, let me ask the reader of Mr. W.'s letter to compare my words, before he believes the groundless calumny that the reading of the Word of God in the [Establishment was attacked. I reasoned from the acknowledged design of the "Sentences" to show that the impenitent *are* there contemplated, and not saints only. Neither Mr. W. nor any one else ever heard those passages read, as they are there used, in any assembly of "Brethren" met to worship God. The "Absolution" was challenged as unscriptural, and chiefly for being sacerdotal, not declarative merely: else a deacon might read it, as surely as he might preach if licensed. Mr. W. infers (page 22) that I do not believe Christians have sins to confess! If he have an atom of conscience which has escaped the hot iron, how could he overlook the words in that very place? "I cordially allow the value to God's *children of confessing their sins* of omission and commission individually," etc. The disgraceful spirit which so tortures my words, would have sought to torture myself in days bygone — to return, perhaps, for a brief moment yet. As to the Litany, or the Collect which supposes worshippers not merely to have sin in them, but to be "tied and bound with the chain of their sins," (pp. 23, 24,) if people cannot discern the contrast between such misery and bondage, and the living liberty in the Spirit which Rom. 8 depicts as the normal condition of the Christian, they are assuredly for the present beyond the ordinary means of Scriptural conviction. They have lost the power of the gospel of God's grace in their souls; or, still more probably, they never knew it in deed and in truth. Christians I do not doubt they are, whom I love as truly as the "Brethren," for the bond is one, but the state in which they are is not Christian. "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"

PART II.

The attack on "Brethren," especially at the beginning and close (pp. 25, 43) is written in the worst style of controversy. A vague hue and cry is raised against a body of Christians, as if that existed in their midst which was too bad to name — "the flagrant *immoralities* among the Plymouth Brethren." Along with a charge which demands the utmost care, and the fullest proof, lest a thoroughly false impression might be conveyed to the ignorant and the prejudiced, credit is more than once and most strangely, assumed for "the mantle of charity!" Do professions of love, loudly and easily made, render ill-will less odious? It is idle to say that there are "many of God's dear people, and many of my own highly-valued and beloved friends" found there. If the accusations were true, if "Brethren" did not clear themselves habitually from trifling with evil, I, for one, confess that they would be to my mind more guilty than their neighbours. For if others are fettered, we are not; so that any corporate indisposition to justify God, when sin is discovered, would argue a liking for iniquity, not a love of holiness. That among us, as even in the brightest days of God's church, isolated cases of a distressing kind have occasionally occurred here and there, nobody denies; as indeed any serious pretence of immunity from such things would be evident self-deceit. That the outbreak of scandals in those bearing Christ's name, whether among or outside "Brethren," calls for our tears and self-abasement, we feel — not on account of our reputation, but for His sake who is thus afresh wounded in the house of His friends. Let none expect here the praise of "Brethren" as a counter-blast to the foulest detraction, let none fear lest when reviled we should revile again: rather would we commit all to Him who judges righteously. It was probably owing to the Scriptural discipline carried out amongst us, that most cases of this afflicting character became known. What can be less worthy than to turn that grave and holy dealing into a means of blackening "Brethren," who were at least as free from blame as their accusers? If we had hushed all up, if for any consideration we had renounced our liberty and responsibility to put evil away, it would have been justly censurable; as it is, we court enquiry and

have no fears for the result.

The charge that we go about, "not to bring sinners to Christ, but to draw away God's people," proves that there is no regard made to the appearance of truth. The sole foundation for it is the large place given everywhere in our midst to the progress of Christians in the truth. If God's children come, attracted by what they do not find elsewhere, is this our fault? But wherever there are evangelists among "Brethren," there is an active work among the unconverted. I remember a town in England where the same senseless cry was repeated, though the absurdity was peculiarly plain there; for *every brother* in communion happened to be a preacher of Christ to perishing sinners, and each used to set out on his labours all around, when the Lord's Supper was over.

REVIVED TRUTH.

Leaving the divisions till we examine into the cause, let me say that I adhere to the statement respecting the late revival of forgotten truth as to Christ's union with the Church, our proper hope, and the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Burgh, (now called de B.) far from recovering these treasures, does not see one of them clearly to this day. The books for which he was noted, and the earliest known to me, were his Lectures on the Second Advent, and his Exposition of the Apocalypse the first editions of which, I believe, did not appear before 1833-4. Before that date, not a few had quitted the Establishment, and "Brethren" in Ireland had been walking in the joyful knowledge of truth far beyond these very elementary and not very sound works for years previously. That people in Dublin might feel a local interest in Mr. B.'s publications, is probable. But he was distrusted by intelligent men; among other reasons for this, — that having seceded, he rejoined the Establishment, on the same ground of tradition which is the basis of Tractarianism. Some may have hailed any glimpses of truth in the writings of one severed from themselves by so great a gulf. Even as to prophecy, he differs in most of his main principles from those which prevail among "Brethren." His view of the Seals, e.g., was ridiculous in the extreme. Thus the first he construed as Christ's Second Coming to judge! and the *sixth* as the literal signs at that epoch!! Any one who has the smallest insight into the Apocalypse will perceive not merely the double mistake, but the absence it betrays of real light to comprehend the structure of the book. Again, with him, the trumpets were to be taken literally, and not as symbols; the witnesses Moses and Elias, slain literally and rising, etc. I do not think I have looked into either of these books for more than twenty years, or ever saw those published since, nor am I aware of a copy in the possession of any brother. But I remember enough to say the affinity is not with "Brethren," but with Mr. Newton, who used to recommend Mr. B.'s writings. Both were ultra-futurist, both pseudo-literal, both rejected the older Protestant school, and both judaized greatly. Very different ground was taken, and is kept by leading "Brethren." I spoke, however, of our proper heavenly hope, as distinguished from the earthly events of prophecy; and of that, as far as I am aware, Mr. B. knows nothing, any more than of the true doctrine of the Church's oneness with Christ, or of the special presence and operations of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Grosser ignorance as to facts, doctrines, persons, and dates, can hardly be, than in Mr. W.'s account.*

* Since the above was written, I have procured Mr. B.'s "Lectures," (ed. 3, 1845), as my remarks referred mainly to his "Exposition." Now, in Lect. vii. the doctrine is that the first resurrection is special to such Christians as are martyrs or at least sufferers. "Yes, there are Christians, and Christian ministers, who act thus [i.e., oppose pre-millennialism] in our day: and what shall we say of them? That, because believers, they shall reign? No, — we dare not" (p. 277). This he rests on a misapprehension of 2 Tim. 2: 12, and also on a passably false criticism respecting 1 Thess. 4: 14, as if "in" (literally *through*) Jesus were the same as *on account*, or *behalf*, of Him, which would demand a

quite different construction Need it be added that "Brethren" unanimously reject such strange doctrine as this?

RECEPTION.

As to our receiving or rather rejecting some, the challenge is coarse enough. Every saint who walks as such is received unconditionally in the Lord's name. This, and no other, is our basis. I am told that it is not so, and that I know it right well! What is the reason for the unbecoming speeches in pp. 27, 28? "If 3 child of God comes to you from Mr. Newton's congregation, would you receive him at your table?" I answer, certainly not, because we are satisfied that such an one, if a child of God, is *not* walking as such, and is, therefore, inadmissible at the Lord's table. How could one be suffered to break bread whom we believe to be a partaker of the evil deeds of a blasphemer against the Lord? The general principle of welcoming every Christian, without imposing conditions of ours, is in no way contradicted by the most resolute refusal of those who dishonour Christ's name morally, or of others who bring not the doctrine of Christ — a still more terrible and fatal form of sin. 1 Cor. 5 is no plainer for parting from an immoral man that is called a brother, than 2 John is for rejecting such as do not hold a true Christ.* It matters not what may seem to be their personal qualities: Christ himself ought to be infinitely more precious; and true love is proved by abhorring that which is evil, as really as by cleaving to what is good. Scripture is too explicit to allow a loop-hole of escape from the positive obligation of the Christian as to this vital matter.

* The remarks in page 29, do not deserve notice. What I censured was the error of making love, in contra-distinction to holiness, either the centre or the principle of unity: whereas love is rather its energetic motive. The truth is, that Christ is the centre, love the active spring, and holiness the principle of unity according to God and His Word. To call these certain and elementary truths "hair-splitting," is only to expose one's ignorance to spiritual men.

Further, 2 John is decisive that it is not enough to be personally sound in the faith. Even a woman, the elect lady, is instructed by the apostle as to her own direct responsibility, if any one sought her house or fellowship who brought false doctrine about Christ. "If there come any to you, and bring not this doctrine [of Christ], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." That is to say, the principle is distinctly laid down, that the person who religiously countenances those who confess not the Christ of God, becomes a partaker of the *evil deeds* of the deceiver, even without necessarily imbibing the *evil doctrine*. Indeed, a spiritual mind would feel that dreadful as it is to be misled for a time into such heresy, he is incomparably more guilty who, professing to hold the true doctrine of Christ, consents to fellowship with the man who denies it. "Now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

Now this is the attitude of "Brethren" towards the alleged blasphemer and his partizans. *If we suppose for a moment that the blasphemy is a fact*, 2 John not only vindicates the course complained of, but shows that it is an imperative duty, which admits of neither hesitation nor compromise. Had the elect lady, spite of the apostolic warning, deliberately received one who brought not the doctrine of Christ, she would have at once become identified with the guilt of the deceiver, and its consequences. In vain the plea that she was herself a godly christian, and sound in faith: still the Word pronounces — a "partaker of his evil deeds." She would, knowingly in this case, for her own ease have committed herself to an act of high treason against the Lord; she would have yielded to overt communion with that which to the last degree dishonoured His person: and thus, till she had cleared herself from the sin, in the sight of God and man, she would have sunk morally to the level of an accomplice. If she

had better light, so much the worse to behave as if she had none. To receive her, under such circumstances, would be to participate in similar wickedness; it would be receiving her not to the glory of God, but to His shame, because it would be barefaced indifference to the affront put upon His Son. And "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." "Brethren" have given pretty strong proof that they do not make light of ecclesiastical evil, by separating from all associations which involve departure from God's Word; but they refuse to put such questions on the same platform with deep, damnable, fundamental denial of Christ. The Word of God, not any theory or rule of ours, is the warrant for both. Did we follow our thoughts or our natural wishes, it is folly to suppose that we should pursue a course which separates us from hundreds and thousands, who would desire to be with us on condition of our letting them tamper with this treason against the Lord. Does such a course look much like anxiety for numbers?

NEWTONISM AND BETHESDA.

Mr. Newton's doctrine, to which I have alluded thus strongly, is, that apart from vicarious sufferings, ("Remarks on the Sufferings of the Lord Jesus," pp. 2, 3, note, pp. 9, 11), Christ came by birth as a man and an Israelite, into a condition of distance and inflictions from God, in which "He was made experimentally to prove the reality of that condition into which others, but more especially Israel, had sunk themselves, by their disobedience to God's holy Law, a condition out of which He was able to extricate himself, and from which He could extricate Himself by His own perfect obedience." (p. 12.) "God pressed these things on the apprehensions of His soul, according to His own power and holiness, and caused Him to feel a part of that which was exposed to the judgments of His heavy hand" (p. 14.) "And Jesus as man, was associated with this place of distance in which man in the flesh was, and He had through obedience to find His way to that point where God could meet Him, as having finished His appointed work — glorify Him, and set Him at His own right hand, in the heavenly places; and that point was death — death on the cross — death under the wrath of God" (pp. 31, 32).

Again take the following proofs from the "Observations" etc., by B. W. N. "We should regard him not only as one of the banished, but as one suffering also under the penalties which the law of his Father had imposed on the banished ones, with whom he had thus placed himself in association" (p. 8). "He was exposed, for example, because of His relation to Adam to that sentence of death, that had been pronounced on the whole family of man" (p. 9). "The mission of John must be regarded as an all-important era, not only in the life of the Lord Jesus, but in the dispensational arrangements of God. 'The Law and the Prophets were until John: from that time the kingdom of heaven is preached,' is a text sufficiently distinct. Indeed, unless grace be the same as law, and destruction the same as salvation, the infinite importance of that era cannot be denied" (pp. 10, 11). "The fire of Sinai began instantly to burn against them [Israel under curse], and therefore, even if every deserved infliction had been withheld from that moment to the time when Jesus was born, yet still He would have been-one of a nation that was exposed to all the terrors of Sinai" (p. 15). "And if the sorrow and inflictions which had fallen on Israel are said in Scripture to have been the result of 'curse' and of 'wrath,' then Jesus would have drunk of a cup of sorrow which was the result of such wrath and such curse." . . . "He would then see that there is a peculiar class of sufferings, added to those which flowed from drinking of the general cup of human sorrow — sufferings which resulted from special inflictions on a peculiar people, and which yet were not the vicarious sufferings of the Cross" (p. 21). "Moreover, the exercises of soul which His elect in their unconverted state ought to have, and which they would have, if it were

possible for them to know and feel everything rightly, according to God — such exercises, yet without sin, Jesus had" (p. 26). "The anointing of the Spirit would never have come on Him at Jordan, unless He had been fore-ordained and certainly known as the victim to be slain on Calvary" (p. 32). "And when thus exercised, though personally holy and beloved, He was made to feel that His association with those thus standing in the fearfulness of their distance from God was a real thing, and that it was so regarded by God. His was no mere pretended, imaginary association." (p. 36.)

If comment were needed on this evidence of strange and poisonous doctrine about our Lord, I would point (not to those who wrote exposures of it, but) to the printed confessions of at least three well-known men (Messrs. B., D., and S., ministerially associated in the closest way with Mr. N.), who owned publicly, and in the most solemn manner, that the doctrine was an elaborate system, permeating their view of a very large part of Scripture, and quite as deadly, if not more so, than had been charged. One of them warned people affectingly, that those who rested on what they had taught for years could not be saved. For briefly the heresy is, that Christ was by birth, relatively in man's distance as a sinner, and in Israel's special ruin under a broken law; that He was therefore obnoxious to the penalties of this double relationship, not imputatively, nor vicariously, but by association as one of them; that He extricated Himself by obedience, faith, and prayer, out of some of those inflictions by which He was threatened, passing notably by baptism out of law into grace — from Sinai to Zion; that He had the exercises of soul which the elect in their unconverted state ought to have; and that He had, spite of this, to find His way to a point where God could meet Him, — death under God's wrath; the anointing of the Spirit having come on Him at Jordan only in virtue of His own foreseen sacrifice. If all this be not an audacious contempt of God's testimony to our adorable Lord; if it be not a systematic overthrow of all that is really taught of His relation to God as made of a woman, made under the law, if it do not inevitably destroy the atonement and Christianity itself, words have lost their meaning. No heretic that I know ever set himself to debase Christ, — neither Arius nor Socinus, neither Mr. Irving nor Mr. Newton. None of them insinuated personal sin in Christ — Mr. N. perhaps the nearest to it, in that awful illustration, "If I were to send a faithful servant heavily burthened to scale the sides of an icy mountain, and were to see his foot slide, should I marvel?" (Remarks, p. 17, note.) Most heretics have said excellent things — Mr. Irving, perhaps, the most. The true question is: Did the peculiar doctrine of each supplant and destroy God's truth as to His Son? Who doubts that Irvingism did? Who can pretend that Newtonism is less anti-christian? The only right experience, under man's distance and a broken law, such as an elect man would feel if he felt as he ought in that condition, is that of a lost man; and if Christ, not vicariously, had to find His way to death under wrath as a meeting-place with God, all foundations are gone, and He must die for Himself, and therefore not for us. The partner in a bankrupt firm is necessarily liable: for such an one there can be no suretyship by grace. If it be contended that Christ is supposed to have extricated Himself from liability to die for Himself by good works and a sort of baptismal regeneration under John Baptist's hand, the truth is equally lost in another way; for this assumes deliverance from the wrath due to association with sinful man and transgressing Israel by works and ordinances without death. If again, it be said, Not so, but by His own foreseen sacrifice, we are brought round once more to the former abomination, according to which His death was needed to save Himself, and therefore could avail in no wise for others. The substitutory work of the Saviour thus vanishes, and what is of yet deeper consequence, the dignity of His person which clothes that work with its infinite value. If it be pretended that Mr. N. made an acknowledgement of doctrinal errors, dated Nov. 27th, 1847, I allow that he did withdraw the application of Rom. 5: 19 (first clause) to Christ, and the involving Him in the imputation of Adam's sin. But I have made a point of rehearsing as above what has never, so far as I know, been retracted: doctrine more degrading to the Saviour, more calculated to undermine His work, who can show? Let

the intelligent and godly judge. Plainly, truthfully put, I have never known a child of God among Churchmen or Dissenters, any more than "Brethren," to hesitate as to its real source and character, as of the enemy, save only where souls had been themselves corrupted. "No man speaking by the Holy Ghost calleth Jesus accursed;" which is the precise issue here, more fully than in any other system of kindred blasphemy.

When the meeting at Bethesda, (Bristol), admitted several partisans of Mr. N., and thus occasioned a separation far and wide among "Brethren," it had been for years fully owned as enjoying intercommunion. Hence, there is no honesty in comparing that meeting with individuals coming from the national body or dissenters. How far Bethesda really coalesced, it may be hard to say: still, it was an accomplished fact, and no question was raised, till the crisis of 1848 came, when reasons were sought to palliate the fatal deed of receiving the known followers of a convicted heretic. Now we have always excepted cases of real ignorance. But what could justify receiving persons of intelligence who came straight from his party, eulogising and circulating the very tracts which contained the anti-christian doctrine already described? Bethesda received them in the most determined manner, driving out not a few souls, some of them among the most spiritual, enlightened, and devoted there, who refused to sanction indifference to a blasphemy at Bristol, from which they were at all cost apart at Plymouth and elsewhere. Not satisfied with letting these people in, ten of the leaders at Bethesda put forth a too famous document, in which they laboured to defend their refusal of investigation before receiving the incriminated. The first thing insisted on was that the Bethesda meeting should clear those who signed it: else they would labour no more in their midst! Was it surprising that the mass fell into the snare, and consented to vote the leaders right, before the tracts were read, or comments allowed in presence of the meeting? After the breach was consummated, they held meetings in which Mr. N.'s doctrine was condemned, especially by Mr. M. as strongly almost as by any outside Bethesda. Partly by this, and partly by other means, Mr. N.'s partisans retired from Bethesda, expressly not waiving their claim to be there, but desiring to release the leaders of some of their difficulties. Could this yield a moment's satisfaction to a sober Christian? Bethesda was bound to clear itself openly of a sin of the gravest kind openly done: mere words would not avail, nor getting rid of souls in an underhand way. Subsequently a party was formed, a public building was taken, Mr. N. was had there, and two of "the ten" (Messrs. A. and W.) were found in their midst. The movement failed; and these two leading men, to speak of no others, after Bethesda's loud denunciation of the Newtonian blasphemy, after their own public association with Mr. N., were permitted to return to Bethesda, without the smallest confession of their notorious and flagrant sin. All they owned was the wrong of leaving Bethesda; but they were not asked, nor did they give, an expression of sorrow for the wickedness of fraternising with one who still retained the main part of his heresy as to Christ. And because we renounce all fellowship with such ways and persons, we are covered with the bitterest reproaches which combined folly and malice can heap up! We are taxed with "new tests," and I know not what. Whereas, on the face of the matter, it was the beloved Apostle, not we, who wrote 2 John. And if he introduced no new test when he insisted on uncompromising rigour wherever a false Christ was in question, how charge us with it who are very simply carrying out the Word of God given through him? Those who plead for laxity in such a case, would be more consistent if they denied the authority of this Scripture altogether.

LIBERTY OF MINISTRY.

How any man who has ever known the assemblies of "Brethren," can deny that this is the simple, honest practice in their midst, is mysterious. The only explanation of a statement to the

contrary, is that an enemy may be so heated as to say anything. The fact is patent and certain. Along with meetings where the faithful come together, as such, according to 1 Cor. 14 there are other occasions when an Evangelist preaches the gospel, or a teacher discourses on a given subject or expounds a portion of the Scriptures. Ignorant persons sometimes confound these two very distinct things, and charge us with inconsistency, because they expect nothing but the assembly always. Wherever men so gifted are found amongst us, there is an active ministry towards both the world and the Church: for those who have from the Master talents to these ends, there are abundant opportunities for trading with them, as well as for souls to seek help and profit by their means. Thus, we have the assemblies of saints, and the exercise of ministry by gifted individuals, wherever such exist, each on its own ground, and both needed for God's glory, and the well-being of His children. If we denied the place and value of chief men, guides, rulers, etc., it would be the grossest infatuation, forsaking our own mercies, fighting against the Word and Spirit of God, and setting up that lowest of all low things — a religious democracy. As to the evil tale, which our adversary takes up (p. 32,) to show that liberty is in name only and not a reality, I never heard of anything in the least degree resembling it, save what occurred in the meeting at Plymouth *from which "Brethren" separated*. Liberty does not mean license for the flesh, nor carelessness as to the truth or holiness. But that there is the fullest real liberty, as the rule among us, is a fact which the reader can ascertain for himself by going to any meeting save those which are convened avowedly for individual ministry.

THE CHARACTER OF COMMUNION.

The first objection is to the remark that it is a sin to walk and worship with those who are evidently of the world and have not a pure heart wherewith to call on the Lord. This is imagined to be judging others improperly, and a presumptuous interference with God's prerogative (pp. 33, 34). Can anything be more deplorable? Are those who thus think, aware that the remark was grounded on the plain Word of God in 2 Tim. 2: 22? There the apostle first enjoins the duty of purging oneself from vessels to dishonour, (i.e., ungodly professors of Christ in the "great house,") and then, with the exhortation to flee also youthful lusts, urges on the man of God to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace *with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*. If Timothy was right in pursuing this path, are we wrong? If it was no presumption on his part, how can it be on ours? The ignorance of Scriptural principles and practice is truly astounding.

Next, the statements as to the tares are at least as hardy. "Passages which have reference only to *individual* conduct are applied to the Church in its *corporate* capacity. I shall only now refer to one — the parable of the tares and wheat" (p. 34). Why it is they who apply it thus, not I! Had I made this observation, there would have been some reason for it: but what can people mean, when the truth is that I complain of *their* misapplying the parable to the Church? And how do they get rid of our Lord's explanation, that the field means not the Church but the world? "The Church was not formed. It was in deed and in truth, the world *then*. What else could it be?" Can it be that this trash has been read and passed muster among Anglicans! If so, assuredly they are to be pitied deeply. The Dean of Westminster, it has been shown elsewhere, falls back on an error exactly opposite; for he will have it to be an anticipation of the future, when the Church shall embrace the whole world: a flat contradiction of the Church's essentially eclectic character. Nevertheless, no idea yet broached exceeds in childishness the view so confidently put forth by Mr. W. Is it not obvious that the Lord anticipates the kingdom of heaven, and that the verb "is" or "are," in Matt. 13: 37-40, has no reference to the question of the time then present, but is purely explanatory? Thus, He says, in the same conversation, "the harvest is the end of the world (or *age*); and the reapers are the angels." What would be thought of one who interpreted these clauses of the time *then* present? Equally groundless is

it to speak of the field being "the world *then*."

The meaning of the parable is plain. Being the kingdom of heaven, it cannot be dated earlier than the Ascension. The good seed of the Word is sown of the Lord in the world, not merely in the land of Israel; and among the children of the kingdom, Satan afterwards sows spurious professors. But both are viewed as growing together in the field or world; not a word is here intimated about either being in the Church or assembly. Both wheat and tares are new objects here below; they are not mere good and bad men, but righteous and ungodly professors of Christ in the world. Only at first the tares were not obvious; but they appeared when fruit was brought forth, and the servants had no difficulty then in detecting them. It is false that the openly wicked are not tares (compare verses 38 and 41), and it contradicts the text itself, that wheat and tares can scarcely be distinguished till harvest (v. 27, 28). On the contrary, the Lord forbids the judgment of the children of the wicked one — not of some, but all — till the end of the age. If this applied really to the Church, it would bind together the godly and the ungodly, yea, the most notoriously reprobate as well as the rest, so as to forbid absolutely every act of discipline; it would contradict the Rubrics of the Establishment, and the rules of every religious society; and still more decidedly the Word of God would be broken thereby.

The truth is, that Christendom is meant; but who guided by Scripture, would call that the Church? All baptized persons, Romanists, Churchmen, Dissenters, "Brethren," are wheat or tares in the field or world of profession. There is no such thing as chaff (p. 35) in this chapter distinct from the wheat and tares. Elsewhere we hear of wheat and chaff, here only of wheat and tares. And the structure of the Greek in verse 38 makes plain to any scholar that as the good seed are co-extensive with the children of the kingdom or the righteous, so are the tares with the children of the wicked one. In other words, the notion that the openly wicked are not included in the tares is *positively contradicted* by the form of our Lord's interpretation; and if they are included, the argument for unholy communion, as the Lord's will (may they be forgiven the vile thought!), is destroyed. His instruction here has an aim quite apart from ecclesiastical fellowship. The servants are forbidden to execute judgment on wicked professors, lest misguided zeal might destroy true disciples; for who can say what prodigals or self-righteous men may not yet be brought to God? To spread the gospel, to walk in grace, is the proper business of His servants now: by and by, to angels will fall the work of exterminating vengeance, Our task is to sow the good, not to uproot or destroy the evil. Babylon is in the field, and the voice from heaven says, "Come out of her, my people." No, says the common perversion, "let both grow together till the harvest." If, on the other hand, we can renounce Babylon, and yet both continued to grow together in the field, we can with equal consistency leave every other error and evil condemned by God's Word: Matt. 13 raises no obstacle whatever.

Again, neither does the assembly, or Church appear in the remaining parables. All here is assumption without grounds. The Epistles in general show us corporate responsibility; but there, unquestionably, the wicked are to be put out: which could not be if the field ever became the Church. The Asiatic churches (Rev. 2, 3) are not intended to teach us discipline; but 1 Cor. 5 expressly deals with this point — for some alas! in vain. And, here, the old defamation of the Corinthian church reappears; and excessively dark it is. I have already shown that the application of "Be ye reconciled to God" is mistaken, and that the denial of the resurrection and consequent ignorance of God are exaggerated. Had these men denied the truth, after the Epistle was written, the case would have been far worse; but this none can say, and 2 Cor. rather leads one to the opposite conclusion. — Again, 2 Cor. 13: 2 as it threatens with apostolic discipline, so it in no way implies that they were not believers; and verse 5 argues on the thought that they *were* in the faith, instead of the common absurdity which Mr. W. shares. For the Corinthians sought a proof of Christ speaking in the apostle (verse 3.) Well

then, says he, "examine *yourselves*, whether ye be in the faith; *prove your own selves*. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ *is in you*, except ye be reprobates?" — the very last thing these men would allow. Thus, the strength of the reasoning turns on the certainty that they were in the faith. If they wished a proof of Paul's apostleship, they, as being converted through his preaching, were the proof of it themselves. If they were not in the faith, so far the proof of Christ speaking in Paul was gone. The argument, therefore, supposes that they were in the faith, not that they were not, as Mr. W. assumes. — It is needless to say that the divisions and heresies (or sects) in 2 Cor. 11 do not imply that the disorderly were not real Christians, any more than those who, too confident in their knowledge, made light of idolatrous evil. The rest has been already noticed. I utterly deny that any or all these things make out a parallel between Anglicanism and the church of God in Corinth. The Corinthian church contemplated not the population of the land, but only the sanctified in Christ, only such as were saints by calling, with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord. The Establishment not merely baptizes anybody, but teaches every one so baptized to say — what is notoriously a falsehood — that in baptism, "I was made a member of Christ, a child of God," etc. Multitudes of saints in the national body feel the sin of this, if Mr. W. does not; and very many do not suffer the Catechism to be learnt in their families, nor teach it in their schools. They are ashamed of it, and own that it is unscriptural.*

* Let the reader weigh the following testimony from an able and candid Anglican, whose work I have only seen since writing this tract. "From first to last whether it be for Infant or Adult whether in public or in private; whether the act be the initiatory of Baptism itself, or whether it be, as we have seen, the later process of Confirmation — in all cases alike, the phraseology is unmistakeable. In every instance, without exception, Regeneration — that is, *Spiritual* Regeneration, including in the ease last mentioned the absolute forgiveness of *all sin*, is asserted *after* Baptism, whilst, by the very terms of the Office, it was wanting before it. Why, Rome herself has hardly been more explicit; and we are utterly at a loss to conceive how any one, unbiassed by prejudice, and unwarped in his power of judging by still baser considerations, can possibly attach any other than a Romanizing meaning to words, borrowed, it would appear almost *verbatim*, from the very Ritual of Rome itself. It is an undoubted fact, that men who, in the common business of life, act with unswerving consistency upon a totally different rule, hesitate not, in their more solemn capacity as the religious instructors of the people, to assert as true, in every instance, that which they hold to be false in many, and admit, to be doubtful in all." (Fisher's Liturg. Purity, V. pp. 104, 105.) "Both religion and good morals — nay, the very credit of the Gospel itself — are endangered, and that most seriously, by the use, and still more by the open vindication on the part of confessedly Christian men, of such questionable expedients, as these which have just been noticed.....Certain it is, that the great popular historian of the present day has not thought it beside the purpose of his great and elaborate undertaking to allude in pointed terms to the subject; and emphatically to denounce, as '*sophisticated*,' that peculiar form of mental aberration which refuses to recognise, in the plain wording of the Baptismal Service, the 'regenerating virtue' of the Sacrament" (pp. 116, 117). "The *Catechism* of the Church of England, remains, to this hour, an essentially Sacramentarian Formulary — admirably adapted, in these days of extended and popular education, to impress the minds of the rising generation with the paramount of the Sacramental system; and thus to depreciate, in their estimation, the value of the more prominent and essential doctrines of the Gospel" (p. 223). "We must not, however, bring this chapter to a close without observing, that the vicarious undertaking of Godfathers and Godmothers which forms so essential a part of the baptismal theory of the Catechism possesses in itself not the smallest sanction from any authority, either human or divine. It is, in all respects, as irrational as it is unscriptural" (p. 239).

But the next paragraph (page 38) is perhaps the most extraordinary specimen in the tract. Mr. Dobrée was himself my authority for saying that he had gathered from Mr. Darby the thought of a continuous bearing of the Apocalyptic churches (Sep. pp. 16, 17). To Mr. W. any debt of the sort is an affront. "They coolly tell us that we are indebted to *them* for these truths." Is not this strange in the face of Mr. Dobrée's plain words? Does he not know his own source better than his friend? But Mr. W. is still more unfortunate; for he proceeds to tell us that Mr. James Kelly put forward the same view long before Mr. Darby wrote his book or ever went among "Brethren." Now the truth is that the only works I know of Mr. J. K's on this subject (which he kindly sent me) strongly controvert any such view, and are apparently the development of a widely different theory thrown out by Dr. S. R. Maitland: namely, *future* assemblies of believing Jews in Asia Minor. So much for Mr. W.'s knowledge, either of "Brethren" and their writings, or of his own friends, whose wholly opposed schemes he actually imagines to be the parents of our's!

A very few words will suffice for the rest. One of our worst features is said to be "the notion of sinful impeccability;" but it is simply Mr. W.'s invention. There is hardly a meeting for prayer amongst us, where there is not distinct confession of sins; and so of course yet more in private day by day. Nay, more, I solemnly assure the reader, that we have from time to time assemblies expressly for confessing our sins and the sins of the church at large with fasting and prayer throughout the day. And something similar has been done on a large scale, where hundreds of brethren who labour in the word and doctrine met for conference and prayer: I have known the first day devoted to united fasting and confession.

Next, some of the wisest brethren notoriously baptize infants: the great majority of the foreign labourers do, if in England most baptize believers. But Mr. W.'s statement, that "they have, by far the greater portion of them, never been baptized," is utterly false. Nobody understood to be unbaptized, would be permitted to break bread. I know "Brethren" well, and I am not aware of an unbaptized person in their midst. How can men commit themselves to language so hasty as to assert what is contrary to the plainest facts? Perhaps Mr. W. may have spoken of the party he last knew in his transit from "Brethren" to the Establishment; but I must say that I exceedingly doubt it of them any more than of ourselves.

Again: all "Brethren" hold that not merely the New Testament, but the entire Word of God is for the Church. I am perfectly convinced that Mr. W. grossly mistook what he heard. What he confounds is the very different proposition that only certain parts of the Word are *about* the Church. Surely he does not gainsay this who holds that the Church was not formed when our Lord was on earth. It, however, is the simple truth. All Scripture is for our use and guidance; but only the great bulk of the New Testament actually describes and addresses the Church as such. No person who knows what the Church is can gainsay it.

We do believe that, though the Holy Spirit be equally God with the Father and the Son, yet that His personal presence in the Church, as sent down from heaven, accounts for the fact that there is in the New Testament no personal address to His person. We do believe that the true doctrine is "the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ." But it is a wicked as well as unfounded calumny, that we do not keep the first day of the week holy, though we believe it is the Lord's-day of grace and resurrection, not the Sabbath-day of creation and the law. We believe, of course, that our Lord fulfilled the law, and we doubt not that all He did end was is part of our acceptance. But this is not the righteousness of God which we are made in Christ. Still less does 2 Peter 1: 1 teach righteousness by the law. The meaning unequivocally is, that the saints obtained like precious faith with the apostle through God's righteousness, or faithful keeping of the promises. It is a question of context whether

God and Christ are here classed together, or whether Jesus is not meant to be described as our God and Saviour. But there is no allusion, in either case, to Christ's keeping the law, but to the righteousness which secured faith to the saints. Even Dr. J. Owen admits that the meaning here is that "it is a righteous thing with God to give faith to them for whom Christ died" (On the Death of Christ, chap. 11, p. 37, ed. 1721).

Finally, so far are we from desiring to destroy or weaken the authority of God's law, that many "Brethren" (and I among them) strongly object to the Authorized Version of Rom, 7: 6, unqualifiedly preferring the marginal rendering to the text. For it is a dangerous error to say that the *law* is dead. Not so: the believer is dead to the law, and we are not under the law but under grace; and this, as a question of holy walk (as in Rom. 6), not justification only. Christ, and the entire Bible, are the pattern and rule for the Christian, so that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Hence, the appropriateness of Eph. 6; for if honour paid to the father and mother were emphatically prized under the law and its earthly promises, how much more should children obey their parents under the gospel. "But we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man [the use to which it is now often and wrongly misapplied], but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners," etc.