

**WESTPORT DARBYISM**  
**EXPOSED.**

BY

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TO REV. P. POUNDEN,

Overseer of the Church of God in Westport, or Rector of that Parish—"Grace, mercy, and peace, from our great God, and Saviour Jesus Christ."

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD—With much sorrow of heart have I seen a reply to the Seventh Number of your Tuam Tracts, on "the Church of Ephesus," by J. C., wherein not only is your divinely delegated authority set aside, but the Anglo-Irish Church traduced, and truth forced by a tortuous sophistry to yield an apparent support to flagrant error. In truth, I grieve deeply, and desire to express my sympathy with you at the continued perseverance of many in guilty schism, who owe you all love and obedience, as their spiritual ruler.

I. Did I not know better things of the reputed writer, and things which accompany salvation, I would be inclined to pronounce him *dishonest*. Great must be the perversion of mind, under any circumstances, which could generate such MISREPRESENTATIONS as those I must now notice.

1. J. C. says, "The establishment is avowedly a nation in the flesh, holding its place among the nations

of the earth, as the term *national* church implies.—See Art. 34, where the title is confessed !!!” Is it so? Let us hear. “Every particular or *national* church hath power and authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies, or rites of the church, ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done to edifying.” Such is the *confession* of the article. No intelligent child would take *the National BANK* to be *the nation*; the *national REVENUE* to be *the nation*; the *national TROOPS* to be *the nation*; or the *National BOARD* to be *the nation*! It would be an insult to a man, who has studied logic, or even learned grammar, to tell him, that he avowed the Commissioners of Education to be the nation, and confessed the title to be theirs, because he called them the National Board. He would at once tell you, that what belonged to the nation, or was supported and favoured by the nation, was not to be confounded with the nation; and if he thought you able to understand him, he might speak to you of the difference between *substantives* and *adjectives*—*objects* and their *qualities*. Yet this writer, who has learned obviously both grammar and logic, not only makes the above notable blunder, but rashly says, “*the national establishment*” is “the greatest and proudest amongst the nations, the ready vindicator of its rights, and avenger of its wrongs; the principles of its warfare, carnal retaliation; its weapons, the cannon, the musket, and the sword!!!” The hallucination which could produce such trash is evidence of an unsound mind. Let the writer inquire of O’Connell

and his tail, of Feargus O'Connor and the Chartists, of Dr. Burnett and the three denominations, or even of Rev. John Code and the Darbyites of Westport, if the church establishment is the nation?

2. How shall I describe the next blundering statement? He says, "It had been more correct if the tract had said bishops, *priests*, and deacons, as avowed in the Prayer-book to be the three orders in the Church of England. This is the doctrine of the Prayer-book; the dogmatic statement of the articles 32 and 36; and the language of the bishop, when ordaining to the office of priesthood.—(See the service for Ordaining Priests.) It cannot be explained away by substituting the word presbyter for priest; for whatever the word priest means in the New Testament, when applied generally to the members of God's church, it means in the Prayer-book, when applied exclusively to the clergy." The enumeration of officers found in the Church of Ephesus, was doubtless felt to be a sore point, by one who objects to their formal appointment in the Church of England. But when J. C. implies that the *presbyters* of Ephesus are a different class of men from the *priests* of the Church of England, I can only wonder at his ignorance. Can it be that he never read "Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles," or the Latin text of the Articles, which was prepared and sent forth at the same time with the English version? Has he forgotten, that in the Latin of those Articles to which he refers us, *presbyteri*, and not *sacerdotes*, is the word employed?

Has he never seen the Greek version of the "Book of Common Prayer," throughout which the word *presbyter* is correctly employed as the rendering of our word *priest*? Has he never heard that the English word *priest* is but an abbreviation of the Greek word *presbyter*, coming to us through the French *prestre*? Does he not know the difference between a "dogmatic statement" and a list of titles incidentally used? Might he not have found in canons xxix. and xxxi. a corrective to his blunder; for in them "deacon and *presbyter*" are the terms employed? Must he not know, that in our office for "the Ordering of Priests," the Scriptures appointed to be read relate only to pastoral and evangelical employments; that there is no reference whatever to sacrificial functions; that the "*Epistle to the church of Ephesus*" is regarded as establishing the fact, that "the Holy Spirit has appointed divers orders of ministers in the church," chap. iv. 7-13, being actually put in the fore-front of the service; and that the statement of St. Paul, in this place, is the *dogmatic* basis of the thanksgiving appointed upon the occasion?

"Almighty God, who of thine infinite love and goodness towards us, hast given to us thy only and most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer, and the author of everlasting life; who, after he had made perfect our redemption by his death, and was ascended into heaven, sent abroad into the world his *apostles, prophets, evangelists, doctors, and pastors*; by whose labour and ministry he gathered together a great flock in all parts of the world, to set forth the eternal praise of thy holy name. For these so great benefits of thy

eternal goodness, and that for thou hast vouchsafed to call these thy servants here present to THE SAME OFFICE AND MINISTRY, appointed for the salvation of mankind, we render unto thee most hearty thanks," &c.

I would also ask, how it appears that the word priest in the English version of Rev. i. 6 ; v. 10 ; xx. 6, the only passages in the New Testament where it is "applied generally to the members of God's church," the original Greek signifying a *sacrificer*, has the same import with the word priest "in the Prayer-book when applied exclusively to the clergy?" Or to give J. C. the full advantage of every cognate reference, must the term in the Prayer-book and Articles signify the same thing with the *sacrificing body* spoken of, 1 Peter ii. 5, 9, where alone the term is found in the Greek Testament? Throughout the English version of the Bible the word priest denotes a *sacrificer*. Throughout the Prayer-book I have shown that it denotes a presbyter or elder. May it not have been employed in the English Bible by our translators, to wean us from the thought of bloody victims as an essential feature of true devotion, and to familiarize us with the more important and spiritual function of the ministry under both the Jewish and Christian dispensations ; according to Johnson's definition of the word priest, "one who officiates in divine worship?" or to adopt the Darbyite phraseology, "in service to the head of God's church."

3. If "in the use of the word priest, the Prayer-book does not once recognise the priestly standing of

the congregation of God's people, according to 1 Pet. ii. 9 ; Rev. i. 6 ; v. 10, does it follow, as said, that it "thus deprives God's church of its nearness to him, possessed by union with Christ the head, giving to an ordained clergy, even as the Church of Rome does, the privilege of nearer access to God on their behalf—a mediatorship between God and the people—taking the place exclusively proper to Christ, to whom alone a special priesthood belongs?" This were indeed to make the church an offender *for a word*. Does not J. C. know in his heart that throughout her services, the church has recognised the nearness of access unto God, which belongs to the congregation at large, requiring them, in multiplied responses, to take their due share in the public prayers, to follow the minister in the confession of sin, and to unite with him also in the utterance of the Lord's prayer and creeds? Have not the very rubrics he quotes established the case against him? But I must not too hastily dismiss his Scripture references. If believers in general are called sacrificers, are they not also, in the same connexion, called kings? "In the use of the word" KING "the Prayer-book does not once recognise the '*kingly*' standing of the congregation of God's people." Does it therefore follow, that she "deprives them of their nearness to God, possessed by union with Christ the head, giving to" a crowned sovereignty the royalty that belongs to Messiah and his saints? If their kingdom be future, as I hold it to be, so is their priesthood.



4. Is Messiah's promise to be with his ordained ministry to the end of this dispensation, nothing more than a promise to be "with the *writings* of the apostles?"—an expression I do not well understand. I am sure J. C. was serious in what he wrote, but did he ponder it? Are not these parallel propositions?

1. "Moses and the prophets were with the Jews, for they had their writings.

2. "The apostles are with us Gentiles, for we have their writings."

Can it be also said that

"Christ was with the apostles, for they had his writings!!!"

This must be proved before J. C.'s novel and hasty interpretation of Matt. xxviii. 20, can stand. Admit such an explanation, and what becomes of the favourite Darbyite text, "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them?" Is the Lord Christ in the midst of them by his writings?

5. Did the Church of England or of Ireland receive apostolical succession from the Church of Rome "at the period of its ripest corruption?" Neither! Does not J. C. know that an apostolical successional ministry existed in Britain before the invasion of Austin and his monks? Is he not aware that the yoke of Rome was not imposed on the apostolical successional ministry of the Church of Ireland till the conquest of the country by Henry II? Let him know now, if he never knew it before, that the

Church of Ireland derives her orders from the East, and not from Rome. At the Reformation, was it not discovered that it was required of stewards, that they should be found faithful? Was it not resolved, then, by faithful men taught of God, that they would henceforth govern the family over which they were placed in rule, according to the prescribed directions bequeathed them by the absent Householder, Head, and Overseer of the family, instead of the iniquitous and ruinous laws imposed on them by a Roman usurper, who lorded it over God's heritage? "But," asks J. C., "if Christ was with the pope and his bishops then, what was the benefit secured to the church by succession? What preservation of truth was secured thereby?" Certain it is that truth was secured, perpetuated, and transmitted even to J. C. by prelates who once held communion with, though they did not receive their succession from the pope. But I ask him in reply, can the unfaithfulness of a steward vitiate his original appointment? Is there no advantage to be derived from the appointment of stewards, because some stewards plunder their masters, and oppress their fellow-servants? If an unjust steward repents of his evil ways, and returns to the paths of honesty, are his abandoned misdemeanours a proof that he never received a trust, and that his exertion of sway is an empty and unsubstantial pretence? Has J. C. yet to learn, that an argument derived from abuses must fail in reasoning about the legitimate uses of office, authority, privilege, property, or aught beside?

6. "Again," J. C. writes, "if Christ was with Rome then, why did these men leave its communion? for to depart from it was to depart from Christ. 'Lo! I am with you; he that receiveth you receiveth me; he that despiseth you despiseth me.'" Was it to Rome these promises were made? Did they imply impeccability or infallibility? Did they apply to every apostle at all hours and seasons, in every act, and in every undertaking? When Judas was sent with the eleven to preach the Gospel, those who received him received Christ; when the chief priests received him as a traitor, did they then receive his Master? When Peter was reprov'd by Paul for his dissimulation at Antioch, was Christ with him? Have not these promises exclusive reference to the legitimate exercise of delegated authority? Were they not fulfilled to the Church of England when her sons cast off their lethargy and superstition? Was not Christ proved to be present with those faithful ministers of his word, and presbyters of his church, whom he taught to reject the spurious additions to genuine Christianity, which by subtlety were imposed upon them for a long season—whom he supported under grievous trials and persecutions—and whom he constrained to depart, not from Rome, but from the errors Rome taught, and from the bondage in which Rome held them? Be it remembered they were not *separatists* but *reformers*. This distinction is forgotten in the next sentence—"If Christ was not with Rome when these men received their ordination from

her" (which they never did), "and that he was not, their own departure (*reformation*) declares then the chain of succession from the apostles lost." How so? Christ never left himself without a witness in the church; he was with the faithful in their faithful proceedings at all times; and he showed himself to be now in the midst of her, by restoring to her both purity of doctrine, and purity of worship.

7. "The divine authority of the pope of Rome, not merely three centuries ago, *but at the present day*, is formally acknowledged by the Church of England." Is J. C. sane? Is it, indeed, "beyond denial that whosoever asserts the exclusive authority of a clergyman, upon the ground of succession, (and upon what other ground can it be urged?) maintains the divine authority of the popes of Rome, and makes himself a transgressor for *leaving them*?" What has apostolical succession to say to the supremacy of the pope, and his right of dominion over the church universal? Can it extend beyond the undeniable proof of his episcopal authority over, and within his own see? Can the acknowledgment of his orders, or of his derivative episcopacy, be construed into the admission of his faithfulness in discharging his ministerial functions? Can his commission to preach the Gospel, and ordain presbyters, justify his omission of these duties, or sanction his usurped supremacy; his odious tyranny over princes and prelates, nations and churches; his impositions, idolatries, legends, or decretals? Did

the right of Frederick to the throne of Prussia confer on him a right to become the spoiler of Poland?—or did the ordination of the apostate Sergius give validity and authority to the impious romance in the composition of which he assisted the impostor Mohammed? I hasten to the next gross blunder.

8. “One *fact* is better than many arguments. *If a priest of Rome conforms to the Church of England, his holy orders, which he got from the pope are esteemed so valid, so genuine, that he enters at once, without any new ordination, upon his official ministrations, by the mere abjuration of certain doctrinal errors, and strange to say, of that very authority of the pope, in virtue of which he is received as a duly ordained priest of the Church of England?*” Would it not be well before a man ventures to describe *facts*, he should first be sure he is acquainted with them? Can J. C. be ignorant of the fact that no presbyter, even of our church, who has received ordination amongst us, is permitted to enter at once upon his official ministrations, till appointed thereto by the bishop? Did he never read the thirty-eighth canon of the Irish church?

“No curate or minister shall be permitted to serve in any place without examination, and a trial first to be made of his sufficiency, sobriety, and fitness, every way for the ministration whereunto he is to be deputed; having respect to the greatness of the cure, and meetness of the party; and being found worthy, he shall be admitted by the bishop of the diocese, in writing under his hand and seal. And the

said curates and ministers, if they remove from one diocese to another, shall not be, by any means, admitted to serve, without testimony of the bishop of the diocese, or ordinary of the place, as aforesaid, whence he came, in writing, of their honesty, ability, and *conformity* to the ecclesiastical laws of the Church of Ireland."

Is J. C. now to be told, for the first time, that a probation of three years is wont to be demanded in the case of all repentant schismatic presbyters; and that even then they must not only *ex animo* abjure the pope, dissent, and heresy, profess the doctrines of the church, and embrace her discipline, but subscribe thereunto solemnly, in the presence of the bishop of the diocese, before they can "be permitted to preach, read, lecture, catechize, minister the sacrament, or execute any other ecclesiastical function, *by what authority soever* they be thereunto admitted?" And is it too, the very *abjured* authority of the pope, in virtue of which a recanting priest of Rome may thus, after due caution, be admitted by a bishop of our church to the exercise of ministerial functions? When J. C. took the oath of abjuration, he swore that "no *foreign* prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual," within these realms, did he then swear that they had no authority within their own realms or sees? Did he then swear that foreign prelates could not preach, or were not bound to preach the Gospel, or ordain presbyters? Their authority to preach or ordain, within their own

jurisdiction, was never disputed; their authority to rule our presbyters, or impose their presbyters upon us, both was, and is disputed. Their authority so to interfere is then effectually set aside, when these presbyters are restricted from exercising any ministerial functions, till they first renounce the right of foreign intrusion, usurpation, or jurisdiction, and till, having given evidence of their soundness in the faith, they consent to act under the authority of our bishops, and not under the authority of the pope. But, wherefore, do I attempt to reason in so plain a matter? Surely the monstrous assertion that the Church of England *formally* acknowledges the *authority* of the pope, rests solely upon a contemptible quibble. She rejects his *authority as pope*; she acknowledges *his authority, in his own diocese, as a bishop*, though an erring, and a fallen one; and quibbling on the word *authority*, J. C. unblushingly charges her with acknowledging what she renounces and abjures. In the madness of his factious zeal, this open schismatic presumes to pursue this audacious perversion of plain English, and truth, to such an extent, as to charge every clergyman of the Church of England, “whether knowingly or ignorantly,” he says, it matters not, “with acknowledging the pope to be ‘Christ’s vicar on earth,’ *i.e.* that he is”—I can scarcely write the blasphemy—“that he is the Holy Ghost in the church; and accordingly he sends forth whom he will as ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God.” True it is that the Holy Spirit is promised

as the instructor or comforter of the church, during the absence of the Lord Christ, and may, therefore, be said to be his vicar; but because a certain prelate arrogantly assumes the title of Christ's vicar, does he, therefore, assume to be the Holy Ghost?—or because he ordains certain presbyters, if he ever does ordain them, which I more than doubt, does he, therefore, pretend to act as the Holy Spirit? Did Timothy, the first Bishop of Ephesus, pretend to be the Holy Ghost when he ordained elders?—or did Paul acknowledge Titus to be the Holy Ghost when he left him in Crete, that he might ordain elders in every city? J.C. might have withheld the assurance, in which every clergyman will readily join him—"I cannot call that the Holy Ghost which is in reality the pope of Rome!" As he adds, "he must be honest with God, and true to the responsibility imposed on him by the communication of his light," I trust his honesty, and sense of responsibility, will lead him to repent of the sin of which he has been guilty, in publishing so gross a libel—in dissenting from the church on the ground of such imaginary blasphemy—and of resorting to such logic in support of such falsehood.

9. J. C. tells us, that the Church of England acknowledges "that Christ was to be with *men*, irrespective of even *their tradition of truth*, by allowing that he is with a priest of the Church of Rome," and, therefore, that "every pretender may impose upon the credulity of the ignorant by



saying, that he is one who forms a link in the chain of succession." May I inquire where J. C. has found this *dictum* of the Church of England? Where has she affirmed that Christ is with each and every priest of the Church of Rome? If the statement has any point, this is what J. C. affirms; and God forbid we should deny that Christ is, in any sense, with any priest of that corrupt communion. He may, while I write, the Lord in his infinite mercy grant it, be secretly at work with many amongst them, in leading them to cast off their bonds, and to discharge faithfully their transmitted functions. But J. C. confounds two things quite distinct in themselves—the promise of Messiah to be with a corporate body; and the interest of each successional member of that body in the fulfilment of the promise. He confounds the presence of Christ in the church, with the series of men who compose it; his engagement to be with them in the fulfilment of certain duties required at their hands, with the illusory notion of his pledged assistance in the neglect and violation of those duties. Nay, he goes beyond this, and supposes the promise to reach a *pretender*, who *says*, he "forms a link in the chain of succession." What sort of reasoning is this? Is it that of an honest and sound mind? A promise to a corporation is a promise to each separate member who breaks his trust, and also to all who pretend to be, but never were, members of it!! The nation piously undertook to support the church, did she, therefore, pro-

mise to support, *per fas et nefas*, every individual, whatever his crimes, who was included within the pale of the church? And, further, did she undertake to support all who, affecting to be members of the church, might choose to set up separate altars throughout the country?

10. "To accept promotion or authority to preach *from man*, if already endued by the Holy Ghost with power to do so, is virtually to deny that blessing, and the gift to communicate it, to be of God; and to ascribe it to man.—Ps. lxii. 11." Can such sophistry impose on any? Did Paul and Barnabas ascribe to man the gift which rested on them, and deny to God the power to communicate it, when, at the direct command of the Holy Ghost, they accepted authority to exercise that gift at Antioch from their brother prophets and teachers, "Simeon, that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen?"—Acts xiii. 1–3. Was the gift, that was in the first bishop of the Church of Ephesus, ascribed to man, because he received it "by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery?"—1 Tim. iv. 14. Who denies that the power to heal sicknesses, to preserve life, to give food to man and beast, belongs to God, though physicians are consulted, perils avoided, and husbandry pursued? Does a reference to second causes, and the employment of ordained means in ordinary matters, or in the common affairs of life, imply a denial of the principle, or disobedience to the precept, "Ascribe ye power unto God?" If David refers to this twice repeated precept, is it not to repress the employment

of *unrighteous*, and reliance upon *lawful*, means, for the attainment of desirable results? Records he not the precept in order to enforce the law of moral conduct which he had just laid down, "*Trust in Him* at all times . . . trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them?" Does the avoidance of injustice and avarice, and sordid feeling, (the affections being weaned from the treasures of time,) amount to the same thing with an abandonment of our proper callings, and a systematic rejection of gain? Is diligence in business incompatible with fervour of spirit? And is the pursuit of trade inconsistent with a believing reliance on God for our daily food? When Paul supported himself by tent making, and his own hands ministered to his necessities, did he deny that the power to sustain him belonged to God? When J. C. ministers to the Darbyites, does he deny that the power of communicating blessing is an attribute of the Spirit? and if he be judged the conduit of grace, without profaneness, can he charge those with profaneness who ascribe the communication of ministerial gift and office to "laying on of the hands of the presbytery?"

11. Men sometimes expose their vicious reasoning by resorting to illustrations. J. C. has fallen into this mishap. Endeavouring to support the foregoing misrepresentation he says—"this principle is illustrated in the parable of Jotham, (Judg. ix. 8-20,) where the trees are said to go forth to anoint a king over them; and the vine, olive, and fig tree,

which possessed virtue already from God to gladden, to honour, and to feed, refuse to leave their inherent virtues by accepting promotion from the trees; and the only one that did take the offer—that assumed office, *at the call of the people*, was the bramble, that had nothing but fitness to be burned, or to burn the trees!” Was ever parable so tortured? Was it not directed against one, who was not only a wholesale fratricide, bearing upon his head “three score and ten” times the guilt of Cain, but who by deceitful speeches, guile, and sophistry, had withdrawn the hearts of the people from their legitimate rulers, and boldly usurped dominion? Were we at liberty to derive an argument from this parable, methinks it would apply with greater exactitude to those who, by subtle talk, and misrepresentation, are the originators and maintainers of schism; withdraw the hearts of the people from their legitimate spiritual rulers and governors; are accredited only by the acclaim of their deluded followers; assume authority that does not belong to them; and with fratricidal breath defame, disparage, and subvert the rights of their brethren. How did Jotham apply his parable—“If ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; (for my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; and ye are risen up against my father’s house this day . . . then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice

in you ; but if not ——” After such a manner might you also address the separatists of Westport—  
“If ye have done truly and sincerely in that you have made J. C. your pastor, and if ye have dealt well with the reformers and the church they cleansed and nurtured, and have done unto them according to the deserving of their hands, for they fought for you, and adventured their lives far, and delivered you out of the hands of the pope and popery, and ye are risen up against them and their representatives, by whom ye were fed and nourished, preserved and taught ; then rejoice ye in J. C., and let him also rejoice in you—rejoice in your filial disobedience and ingratitude, in your open schism, and unfounded calumnies ; but if not—I leave the alternative to be supplied. Fire came out of Abimelech and burned the house of Shechem and the house of Milo ; he himself came to a fearful end—God requited his wickedness, “and all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads, and upon them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal.” What was the wickedness of these men of Shechem but their presumption in attempting to appoint their own ruler ?

I thank J. C. for identifying the bramble with him who has “assumed office at the call of the people.” Who then is the bramble at Westport ? He who enticed the hearts of many, and withdrew them from their legitimate presbyter to himself ; or he, who was placed over them in the Lord by that holy prelate, who has now entered into his rest ? Does the

Church of England accredit any person whatever in office at the call of the people? Are any owned in the assumption of office, or usurpation of rule amongst the Darbyites in any other way than by the call, or consent, or acquiescence (call it what you will) of the people? Such ecclesiastical republicanism must bring with it its own punishment in due time. I know the voice of the people (call them all saints, if you please, or let them all be so in reality,) is held by these ecclesiastical innovators and destroyers to be the voice of the Holy Spirit (the very counterpart of the *vox populi, vox Dei*); but if so, how can they escape from the guilt, which they impiously seek to attach to the divinely appointed and divinely perpetuated ordinance of episcopal ordination? Is it, according to their new method of reasoning, less a denial of the Holy Spirit, as the source of all ministerial authority and office, when that office is assumed by the consent of the people, by their positive acknowledgment or tacit acquiescence, than when it is conferred by transmitted delegation? Whether is the imposition of hands by one, (for which we have Scripture precedent,) or the tacit acknowledgment of many, (for which we have no precedent,) the greater intrusion (if the former is to be so regarded) upon the office of the Holy Ghost?

12. In addition to these glaring misrepresentations is a misstatement, or series of misstatements, concerning the "three senses in which the word 'church' is used in Scripture," and the consequent denial of our national church to be a church. While

in terms a threefold sense is attributed to the word church, as *universal, visible, particular*, the tripartite interpretation is merely nominal. The church *universal* with J. C. denotes the whole body "of the elect," quick and dead; the church *visible* the elect "sojourning upon earth at any given time;" a *particular* church the elect of any locality. Thus the visible, or any particular church, is with him only a portion of the invisible, with this distinction, that in the two latter there *may be* amongst those who are called *out of* visible fellowship with the world, and into visible fellowship with one another, by individual union with the invisible Head, *some*, who, though "addressed as the elect people of God," will in the end be found "without the wedding garment." This attempt to identify a particular church, or to speak more plainly, a body of separatists, with the invisible church, fails in definition, as it has been found to fail in practice; and an ordinary reader might fail to see therein any opposition to the ordinary interpretation of the visible, or of any particular church. But I pause not here to correct this new nomenclature, for I have not undertaken to write a treatise, and therefore proceed to notice the grand fallacy—that the church is not a church, *i. e.* possesses no external constitution. Thus writes J. C., "as the church is the body of which Christ is the head, any number of believers gathered together in *his* name **MUST BE** scripturally gathered, *not as the members of a church*, but as the members of Christ's body." This language is not very precise, seeing that the church to

which Christ is given as head is said to be *his body*; —but this with J. C. is the invisible church, and with him a church scripturally gathered must be an inorganic mystical assembly, having no external form or character. True, he says, “it is evident that the body must be characterized by its head, as to the plan and constitution of its fabric.” One might expect from so evident an analogy that we should have been favoured; with a delineation of the various members of the body, their several functions and offices, such as that contained in 1 Cor. xii. 14–30, where apostles and teachers are ominously distinguished from their feebler and less honourable associates; that “the plan and constitution of the fabric” would have been carefully laid down;—but, no. The spiritual and heavenly endowments which ought to belong to all who name the name of Christ; the vitality, and not the structure of the body; its graces and virtues, not its external form, are with J. C. “the plan and constitution of the fabric.” He enumerates many such in the language of the Scriptures, and thus sums them up: “Hence we can see the scriptural character of a church in the apostolic day—*Crucified* with Christ—*risen* with Christ—*spiritual* with Christ—*heavenly* with Christ—and *gracious* and *suffering* with Christ. These are the essential marks characterizing a true church.” These marks are doubtless plain and conspicuous to Him “before whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid;” but are they equally discoverable to human eyes? If so, hypocrisy could



have no place; and the reluctant admission, that particular churches, *not gathered as churches*, may include mere nominal professors, need not have been made. The internal lineaments of true believers then are the only marks which this writer gives of a church, and he therefore leaves us without information as to the plan and constitution of a church. It may suit his purpose to deal in mysteries, and decry what he neither understands nor fairly represents; but no sensible persons can take him as a guide in church building, or in their search for the church *visible*, such as it was modelled by apostles, evangelists, and prophets.

Under the twelve heads above enumerated, I have met and exposed all that J. C. has advanced in his famous undertaking to prove, "that the Church of England, so far from being characterized by all the essential marks of the church of God, has not one feature of resemblance to it; and that those things which the tract [on the church of Ephesus, to which he attempts to reply] mentions as essential marks, [such as "a presiding bishop, presbyters, or subordinate overseers of flocks, and deacons," "baptism," and "a rule of life,"] are not such at all, no more essential to the nature and constitution of a church, than the furniture and DOMESTICS are to the reality of a *house*"—say FAMILY. Truly, if the church be an aerial invisible company, and possesses no properties, distinguishable by the outward senses, there can be no dispute upon the subject; but, if it be a terrestrial corporation, it must have corporeal features,

and possess arbitrary institutions, an organized system of procedure, suitable officers for the discharge of various functions, and a code of law for the due regulations of its affairs. If it be a house, it must have a substantial form and being—it cannot be all foundation or all topstone—there must be provision for the entrance of light, and heat, and air; the materials must be of sundry shapes, qualities, and characters. If it be a family, all cannot rule, there must be a gradation of authority—a distinction between parents and children; those who rule and those who serve—those who teach and those who are taught; the family, strictly so called, the *domestics*, the way-faring man who lodgeth for a night, and *the stranger within the gates*. I now turn from the misrepresentations peculiar to J. C. and his party, on which I have deemed it well to animadvert, and now desire to express my regret that he should endeavour to circulate amongst your flock, in addition

## II. PERNICIOUS ERRORS OF NO ORDINARY MAGNITUDE.

1. INFANT BAPTISM he denies, and the nature of baptism he misconceives. I have always held, that to be consistent, the Darbyites should renounce the initiatory rite of the Christian church, as applied to children. As membership depends on baptism, if all are baptized, all are members, till they either cut themselves off from the church, or are cut off by her, and then no question can arise as to the right of membership. J. C., having questioned the right, is therefore consistent in rejecting the apostolic and

prevailing administration of the ordinance to infancy; but, in arriving at consistency, he has distanced and repudiated the practice and judgment of the great founder of his schism, rejected apostolic usage, and opposed himself to the teaching of the Holy Ghost. While parental love survives, it will operate as a check on this barbarous refusal of baptism to infants. While men are able to appreciate the value of historic evidence, even though they may have no respect for the unanimous consent of the fathers, they will not be caught in this snare; they will be constrained to admit that a usage which prevailed throughout the whole church, from the days of the apostles to the days of Munster, which survives not only in the west but in the east, amongst the Syrians, Armenians, Nestorians, and Greeks, is NO "relic of human tradition"—NO "*figment of the Church of Rome.*" That whole families should have been baptized by apostles, *without including children*, must ever be deemed incredible by all whom prejudiced system does not blind; that children should be holy, (1 Cor. vii. 14,) and yet inadmissible to baptism, is a contradiction in terms; and that the command to baptize all nations did not include children is a theory as repugnant to common sense as it is to universal tradition and right feeling. It is not a little singular, that those who are so prone to reason on what are called general principles, which they often, alas! misapprehend, should fail to discern the principle involved in our Lord's tender reception of little children, and condemnation of the

repulsion with which the parents, who would have devoted them to him, were treated.—Mark x. 13–16. The reproof addressed to the disciples on the occasion, for their ignorant assumption, that he was unconcerned for infancy, and unable to convey to them a blessing, should be laid to heart by all who refuse to receive them at the baptismal font. That reproof speaks volumes to those who own their claims. The argument derives immense corroboration from the commendation of childhood; from the exhibition of a child as the exemplar proposed to the disciples; from the assurance that the reception of one such little one amounts to the reception of the Saviour himself; and from the fact that their angels do always behold the face of the Father.—Matt. xviii. 1–6. In all this we discern a positive recognition of the hereditary principle which prevailed in Israel, and an adoption of it as one that was to abide under the new dispensation; else, surely, the faith of the parents, in presenting their offspring, had never been met with such cordial approbation, or been accompanied with such gracious behaviour and such positive blessing. Is it “the will of our Father which is in heaven, that not one of these little ones should perish?” and can we deny admission to them into the outward church, by receiving them at “the laver of regeneration?” Further, our Lord not only accepted the children presented to him, but took the occasion of solemnly asserting the impossibility of receiving the kingdom of heaven in any other way than that by which a little child receives it. It is *passively*, and

by free, unmerited gift, it is received by any. St. Paul travailed in pain for his *little children* in Galatia, till "Christ should be formed in them," (Gal. iv. 19,) intimating plainly that these reasoning adults must, whether we consider the title he gives them, or the image he employs, acquire the characteristic benefit of this dispensation, in as passive a manner as the veriest infant. And do infants stand on the very same ground with those of mature age, nay, are they preferred before them, and models for them, and shall they be excluded from the first appointed ordinance of grace? Were they thus significantly favoured by the great Head of the church, and shall they be reduced to a worse condition than Jewish children under the old covenant? I am not disposed to contravene J. C.'s interpretation of circumcision as applied to Messiah; but does he forget, that while he was circumcised himself, he became also "the minister of circumcision?" Knoweth he not that circumcision is typical of the same grace with baptism? If any be "buried with Christ in baptism," are they not also "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands?"—Col. ii. 11, 12. Though none ever maintained that the Jews "were *made* the children of the flesh by circumcision," St. Paul has ruled that *that* rite was the symbol of a spiritual grace—"He is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the *heart*, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." If circumcision denoted the "putting off the body of the

sins of the flesh," whereby the conscience was defiled, and death merited, as shown in the bloody nature of the rite; baptism, prefigured by the deluge, the symbol conjointly of death and life, doth also now save us, being expressive of "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and being the symbol itself of life and resurrection. Very much, however, of all this error is to be attributed to a false conception of the pre-requisites demanded of all candidates for baptism. If the rite is only to be administered to those who are already born from above, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and who possess *that faith* which is the gift of God, and is the result of his own operation upon the heart, it is obvious that, unless the administrator possessed the divine prerogative of searching the thoughts and intents of the heart, he would be incompetent to undertake the performance of the office. The question also would be at once decided. But where, I ask, is the authority to be found in the Scriptures of truth, for requiring such a condition of soul on the part of those who approach the baptismal font? Not, surely, in the law of the institution. Ponder the terms employed:—

Disciple all nations,	{	a. <i>Baptizing</i> them into the name of the Father, &c.
		b. <i>Teaching</i> them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Such is the literal rendering of the words. From the form they assume, it appears at once, that all nations

were to be disciplined by being baptized, and by being instructed to keep the ordinances of the Lord. Not a syllable implies that evidence of genuine conversion was previously to be demanded, while the promise of the perpetual presence of Messiah with his ministers, which has been perverted in the strange manner already noticed, is given for their encouragement in *thus* proceeding to disciple all nations. It is plain, however, that a readiness to submit to the rite, resulting from a professed belief in the truth of Christianity, publicly preached in their hearing, must have preceded the administration of the ordinance, unless, indeed, the apostles had gone forth with the aid of the secular authorities to compel the reluctant submission of all nations to this command. Accordingly, we find it was the invariable practice to allow all parties indifferently to receive baptism, so soon as they expressed their concurrence in the system of divine revelation announced to them. They were not placed on trial—previous evidence of sincerity was not demanded. They said they believed, and they were baptized *straightway*. Nor is this all. We have evidence that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was attendant on the administration of the outward ordinance. The disciples of John, at Ephesus, were no sooner baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity than the Spirit descended upon them, and referring to this fact, St. Paul afterwards writes to them—“in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, in whom also, *after that ye believed, ye were sealed*

with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.”—Eph. i. 13. In one case only did the descent of the Spirit precede baptism, and that simply as an indication of the Lord’s will that Gentiles should be received into his church by the ordinance in question. It is to be carefully observed also, in the instructive case of Ephesus, that St. Paul’s inquiry of John’s disciples, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” amounted simply to the question, “Have ye been baptized?” For upon their expressing their ignorance of the bestowal of the Spirit, he at once asked, “Unto what then were ye baptized?” I conclude, then, that the gift of the Spirit is annexed to and consequent upon baptism, thus justifying the largely quoted language of the Church of England in her formularies. If that gift ever precede the administration of the ordinance, and we dare not confine the Most High God to any one law or process of blessing, it is through a merciful and extraordinary deviation from his own appointed rule. From that rule we may not deviate: but who shall prescribe rules to the Almighty? I am not to be told that miraculous power was referred to in the cases above cited. The Spirit *in power* did rest on the Ephesians, but he also *sealed them after faith*, or (which is the same thing in result) *after baptism*, as the Spirit of promise, the earnest of their inheritance. Supernatural endowment did not always imply the gift of this greater blessing, but in this case the greater blessing, not less than the marvellous power, was subsequent



to the act of baptism. Neither let it be said, that baptism followed immediately upon profession, because the apostles possessed the discerning of *spirits*. They did not possess the power of discerning the thoughts of the mind; they were only able to discern between unclean spirits, affecting purity, and the Spirit of Jehovah, working with visible power in the members of the church.

2. THE LAW.—This oft decided question is again, it seems, to be brought into controversy. Enough of mistake has been penned on this subject by J. C. to admit of a very long polemic reply. A few words will, however, suffice for my present purpose. To explain the matter more fully, I would refer to my recently published discourse on “The Law of Sinai and of Zion.” That the law of Sinai, disrobed indeed of its terror and condemning power, was a rule of life to the Church of Ephesus, notwithstanding, is fully apparent from the *authoritative* repetition of the fifth commandment to the *children* who belonged to that church. St. Paul quotes that commandment as *formally* to them, as the Church of England does the Decalogue in her church service.—Eph. vi. 2, 3. If “the reading of the law every Sunday” be a “denial of the grace of God,” the enforcement of the fifth commandment by St. Paul was a denial of that grace also. Think you, that when the apostle enforced this precept, he would have withheld his ardent prayer, that it might be written on the hearts of these juvenile disciples? or that he would hold them guilty of denying that they were “partakers of

the blessing of the new covenant," if they ventured on hearing his epistle read, to cry, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law?" The cry of mercy is not the cry of those who would justify themselves; and a desire to have this law permanently written upon their hearts, an entreaty that they might be inclined constantly to observe it in their lives, could only arise from the persuasion, that they must be debtors to grace for their morality, as well as for their pardon and acceptance. Yet this petition, as used by the Church of England, is actually quoted by J. C. to prove that we are guilty of denying the grace of God!!! Could St. Paul have been called a denier of that grace, when he said "the law is spiritual"—"I delight in the law of God after the inner man," &c? Could he have failed to pray that the law, which he pronounced to be spiritual, and in which he thus delighted, might be written in deeper, and still deeper characters upon his heart? But if Saint Paul quotes the moral, he also quotes the ceremonial law; and if the church be under obligation to obey the one, she is under obligation to obey the other! Nay, but we are sent to the ceremonial law to learn principles of moral action. As the mouth of the ox must not be muzzled in treading out the corn, so is the labourer to be considered worthy of his hire. Timothy was left at Ephesus "to oppose the heterodoxy of teaching law to the church." 1 Tim. i. 3; so the apostle's words are forced to speak, "That thou mightest charge some to preach

*no other* doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies." Methought these were heathen speculations. This careful expositor has furnished us with a new version of the next verse—"The end of the commandment is charity." Where love, such as is there described, is to be found, there the end proposed by the law is gained. Can I read correctly J. C.'s gloss hereon? "There was an end to the commandment (of law) where there was love!!!" &c. I will not follow this writer through his other perversions of plain texts, but satisfy myself with saying, he mistakes the question at issue. He argues against us, as though we maintained that the believer is under the law, as a tyrant, or a covenant, and not under grace. God forbid we should maintain such a position. Yet do we maintain, that being under grace we establish the law—give stability to it as a rule of life—and provide for the due observance of its holy precepts. What else is this but what he himself has written. "Dealing in *grace* God shows his love to the sinner—gives him life and righteousness—makes him a child—and brings him near unto himself, in Christ, as one of his family. Now, the same grace that thus saves him, constrains him, by its *beseechings* to obey." To obey what? There must be law, or there can be no obedience. The rule of conduct, which love beseeches us to obey, is contained in the Decalogue, is amplified in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the moral portions of the New Testament; and is exemplified in the character of the Blessed Redeemer.

True, "God speaks as a Creator in law—he speaks as a Father in grace;" but he speaks in law and in grace of one and the self-same righteousness. "He *demand*s love in law—he communicates love in grace." Then grace but supplies what law demands; and the testimony of both is the same. To repeat the requirements of law, is to recall the promises of grace; and the repetition of the ten commandments in church, is but an enumeration of blessings pledged by the Spirit, and which we are bound to seek and supplicate.

Very superficially, dearly beloved brother, have I thus subverted the leading errors and misstatements of this tract of J. C. The Lord graciously recall him, and all who with him have withdrawn from your ministry, to the true church of God established in this land, and put an end to all schism and division.

Your affectionate and unworthy fellow-presbyter,

JOSEPH D'ARCY SIRR.

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