

THE "BRETHREN."

WITH AN APPENDIX

CONTAINING

SOME NOTICE OF THE MENTION MADE OF THEM IN

MR. WINSLOW'S

"Silver Trumpet."

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THE “BRETIREN.”

THE writer, in preparing another and enlarged edition for the press, desires it to be explicitly understood that he has employed the title “Brethren,” not in a sectarian sense, but as a brief, convenient, and generally understood designation, often given to the Christians, who, in these days, are gathered to the name of Jesus, in the confession of the utter failure of the Church, but of the never failing faithfulness of the Holy Ghost. He feels that *names* banded among men are a light matter; and that the grand point is the truth of *things* in the sight of God. This, so far as it relates to the position of saints while waiting for Jesus, he has sought to state as concisely and clearly as he could, avoiding mere controversy, but not the difficulties of souls, and would now commend this paper to the blessing of the Lord.

THE main peculiarity which marks the position of those called “Brethren,” is, that they desire to *stand together in heart and in action upon God's ground for the union of His people*: and consequently in separation from all that, to their consciences, takes away this ground.

But this is not even professed as a fixed, irreversible point of doctrine and practice, by any other Christians, though Popery owns it after a carnal manner.

All the Protestant national bodies have asserted, and acted on, the pretended title to accommodate their modes of government, rites, ceremonies, &c., according to the will of their rulers, whether they be within or without the so-called churches. These, consequently, vary in different ages and

countries. The dissenting bodies, again, have been formed, generally speaking, either according to the self-devised plan of some individual mind, as e. g. Wesleyanism, without even the idea of its being a church entering into the mind of its founder; or according to some partial views of Scripture truth, as e. g. the Baptists.

The chief error of nationalism, in this or in any other country, is the *latitudinarian* opening of the door to receive into the most solemn acts of worship and Christian fellowship *the whole population*, i. e. in principle, irrespective of the search after living faith. That of dissent, on the contrary, is the *sectarian* closing of the door on real Christians, who cannot utter the Shibboleth of the party; and thus many brethren are excluded. In a word, the characteristic evil of the latter is, that they *do not* treat as Christians many who are known to be such; whereas the equally characteristic evil of the former is, that they *do* treat as Christians many who are known not to be such at all. The one system makes the limits broader, the other narrower, than God's limits. In either way, the proper, scriptural idea of the Church is practically destroyed: dissent virtually affirming that it is not *ONE body*, but many, while nationalism virtually denies that it is *the body of CHRIST*. God would have *his children* not to be separate, but to meet together in the name of Jesus. Now this is evidently set aside, when you separate any who ought to be united (*viz.*, all believed, on proper grounds, to be true Christians); or when you associate as brethren in Christ with any who ought to be separate (*viz.*, those who are plainly of this world,* or who, if they profess, deny Him in evil doctrines or works.)

* The Evangelical Alliance—which I believe to be a result, however, imperfect a result, of the testimony at home and abroad to the present ruin of the Church—is in fact an acknowledgment that there is no such union avowed and acted on in modern Christianity. It is really, therefore, a confession on the part of its members that they felt dissatisfied with their respective systems: for obviously, if any one system among Protestants had been according to the mind of God, there would have been no need of the Evangelical Alliance. Now it is remarkable, and ought to be known more widely, that the most able and spiritual of its Continental advocates has publicly allowed, not only that he regrets the constitution of the Alliance, but that the ground taken by "Brethren" is a better one. Compare pp. 12 and 38 of the "Alliance Evangélique (Section de la Langue Française, Paris 1847)." "Cela dit, si l'on nous demande :

It may be replied, perhaps, that though this was, beyond all legitimate question, the order and rule of the Holy Ghost in the early days of the Church, times and circumstances are altered now. Gifts of healing, working of miracles, diversities of tongues, no longer exist as they once did. All this is freely admitted. But I ask: is there such a body as *the Church** any longer on the earth? If there is, *the Spirit of God* is Himself personally on earth, as truly though not so manifestly as at the commencement: for He it is, who is the formative agent and ruler of the Church. It was He that baptised Jews and Gentiles into one body. *It was He that was to abide for ever.* The Church, properly so called, began then, as an accomplished fact, (see Acts i. 5. and I Cor. xii. 13); for I speak not of the hidden purpose of God. She began at Pentecost, dowried with the promise of the Father. Believers, of course, there had been before, as we know, from Abel downwards; but though quickened of the Spirit, they were not baptized of Him, they had Him not dwelling in them, like the saints after Pentecost. This was the precious privilege, for which it was *expedient* that Christ should go away, "for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you." (John xvi. 7.) It could not be, till Jesus was glorified.—(John vii.

n'avez vous pas des doutes sur la convenance d'une base dogmatique? ou tout au moins, ne regrettez vous pas que tel ou tel article ait trouve entrée dans cette base? *Nous répondons: oui, dans ces deux cas, et surtout dans le second.* Nous avons lutté même pour notre part contre les articles en question. Mais la grande majorité de l'assemblée ayant été d'un avis contraire au nôtre, nous nous sommes rendus, soit parce que nous estimons possible que d'autres voient mieux que nous, soit aussi parce que à défaut de ce qui nous paraît LE MEILLEUR, nous sommes d'avis de 'retenir ce qui est bon.' "

* When we speak of the *ruin* of the Church, it is not meant that the Church does not exist upon the earth. On the contrary, if it did not exist upon the earth, it could not be in any such condition. The phrase is similar to that which we apply to a man of broken fortune. We say "he is a ruined man." Of course, it is understood that the man exists. So it is with the present state of the Church. That state doubtless occasions difficulties, for many things are not as they ought to be, nor as they once were. But the word and spirit of God are for eternal service, and suffice for every emergency. "If therefore thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light: but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." The humble, obedient heart will never lack divine guidance.

39.) But when sent down from heaven, the Spirit of truth was to be *in* them, and to abide *with* them for ever. "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; *even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—(John xiv. 16, 17.)

It is the owning, then, of the Holy Ghost, as Christ's vicar—the really present, sole, and sufficient sovereign in the Church during our Lord's absence—which is the leading feature in the testimony of "Brethren."

This cardinal truth of the presence of the Holy Ghost in and with the Church has these two immensely important consequences:—

1. It is not by baptism, infant or adult* ; it is not by the adoption of this or that article of creed: it is "*by one Spirit,*" the Holy Spirit of God, "*are we all,*" i. e. all of us believers, "*baptized into one body.*"—(1 Cor. xii. 13.) It is (if one may be allowed so to say reverently) the highest qualification

* It is not denied that baptism was the outward sign or manifestation of a member of Christ's body. Only it is important to remember that a believer was baptized as a member of the Church in its totality, and not of any particular assembly. Recognised by baptism as a member of the Church, one was necessarily owned where one happened to be if there was an assembly there; and the Lord's supper was the constantly recurring outward pledge and symbol of union and communion. "For we being many, are all one bread, one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."—(1 Cor. x. 17.) It may be added here, that those who preached, in no way regarded baptism or the Lord's supper as rites to be administered by them. Thus Peter *commanded* Cornelius and his friends to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts x. 48), and Paul writes that "Christ sent him, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."—(1 Cor. i. 17.) He says this markedly as to the Corinthians, and *many* of them believed and were baptized, (Acts xviii. 57,) so that other brethren must have acted in this service. As to the Lord's supper, the same thing is as plain if not more so. In fact the idea of an authorized person to break the bread does not occur, nor any thing that I know that gives a colour to it in the New Testament. See Acts xx. 7, and 1 Cor. xi, where, if under any circumstances there might have seemed the need of some restraint: for the Corinthians had turned the table to fleshly license. But while the Spirit reproves the evil, and presses the holy and solemn character of the feast, He leaves the manner of its celebration as unrestricted as ever. It is the saints as a body who are in His view, and not a privileged class which claims the administration as their right. Circumstances apart, as for example in the case of a novice, any brother was competent to baptize or to break the bread.

which God can impart—the indwelling of the Holy Ghost Himself in the blood-washed believer—which introduces into the one body, the body of Christ. *But this is the privilege of all true Christians.* Nothing, therefore, short of a platform such as to admit *all* Christians, and Christians *only*, can satisfy faith, because nothing short of this satisfies the Spirit of God. When it is said "Christians only," it is meant, so far as man can discern, as guided by the Word and Spirit of God. If they are not, they will be made manifest in His good time.

2. After the Apostle has discussed the confession of the Lordship of Jesus by the Holy Ghost, (1 Cor. xii. 3), which is the foundation of every thing here, he shows that there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; diversities of services, but the same Lord; and diversities of operations, but the same God working all in all. Then in 7-11 he enters into the detail of these manifestations of the Spirit. It is given to each for common profit; whether the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, &c.—different manifestations, "but *all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit*, dividing to every man severally as He will." Now, while it is confessed that some or many of the exterior gifts are no more found, it must be here affirmed that this does not in the smallest degree negative the truth that the Spirit Himself does abide. But if He abides, has He resigned His functions? If even in these days, when pride cannot cloak the spiritual declension it so vainly strives to deny—if still one Christian has "the word of wisdom," and another has "the word of knowledge," is it from the Spirit of God, or from some other spirit? It cannot be the spirit of man, "for what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." —(1 Cor. ii. 11.) Can it be mere man's wisdom now? or is there such a thing as the teaching of the Holy Ghost? It may be assumed, I trust, that the Christians, who read this paper, believe that there is still real power to evangelize the world and to edify the Church. If so, whence comes it? Not from human wisdom: for the natural man knows nothing but natural things, and can neither receive, nor communicate, the things of the Spirit of God. Real, spiritual power is of Him. Who of us, believers, is not a witness that this power still continues?—weakened and blunted, alas! it is, for He, who

works, is grieved with all the sin, and confusion, and desolation around Him. But He does abide, and His power abides; and the way in which He acts, according to the Scripture cited, is, "dividing to every man severally as He will." Clearly then, *He* uses whom *He* pleases. It is no humanly divided caste that He employs to be the narrow and exclusive channel of His blessings. No! He does not vacate His own sovereignty. It is not the pleasure, therefore, of a preacher, nor of a synod of preachers, nor of a congregation, nor of a sect,—nay, nor of the true Church, much less of a worldly power. It is the *Spirit of God*. And He divides *as He will*. Again, He divides to each, or *every man*—(i. e. inside the Church)—not this or that particular gift, but He does divide something for the common good—"to every man severally as He will."

Hence the government of the Church, as described in Scripture, is, if one may be permitted the phrase, the monarchy of the Holy Ghost. And if He be allowed free scope to work, it is, if we are in truth to follow God's Word, according to the pattern of "many members yet but one body." It is in the unity of the whole body. After this manner we shall find His testimony regulated, as is plain from the Acts and the epistles: and this, whether inside or outside the Church.

As to the testimony to those without, compare Acts viii. 1, 4; xi. 20; xviii. 24—28; and Phil. i. 14. The main body of the Church scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, went everywhere preaching the Gospel. Among them Philip was conspicuous in Samaria and elsewhere. If it be said that *he* was officially set apart, the answer is, it was to serve tables, not to preach the word of God. The office was instituted that the twelve, relieved from care touching this business, might give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. If Philip preached with power, if Stephen disputed with irresistible wisdom, and if both wrought miracles, none of these things was in virtue of an appointment which related simply and specifically to the daily ministrations. Compare Acts vi. 6 with iv. 35. Further, the others travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. Did these brethren

assume what was unjustifiable? Were they reprov'd even by the Church at Jerusalem, ready as many there always were to censure what seem'd irregular? "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."—(Acts xi. 22—24.) Did the Lord mark His disapprobation? In a previous verse we are told that the *hand of the Lord was with them*; and a great a number believed, and turned unto the Lord.—At a later period, "Apollos spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord," and this, when he knew only the baptism of John. Instructed more perfectly, through the instrumentality of a believer and his wife, who were as unauthorised as himself, he is soon found more active and honoured than ever; "he helped them much through grace; for he mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly shewing by the Scripture that Jesus was Christ." Even at Rome, many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by the bonds of Paul were much more bold to speak the word without fear. It is true the motives of all were not good but this is a danger which no human restriction could ward off, and motives baser even than these were necessarily introduced when the so-called ministry of Christ became synonymous with a large, powerful, and, in some cases, lucrative profession. It was not so in apostolic days, yet even then there were those who preached Christ of envy and strife, as well as others of goodwill. What then says the large-hearted Apostle? does he purpose to fetter that large, blessed liberty, because it was now abused by these unholy feelings? nothing of the sort. "Notwithstanding every way," says he, "whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, and will rejoice." Without quoting other scriptures less direct, but equally showing that doctrine, not ordination, is the divine test of rejecting or receiving those who profess to be ministers of Christ; it is clear that several passages have been adduced, which prove that such christians as can, are at liberty, not to say are bound, to preach the Gospel. Not one text can be brought forward which contradicts, limits, or

qualifies the principle. Scripturo *never* prescribes a human commission as a necessary preliminary to that work. On the contrary, the parable of the talents in Matt. xxv. teaches by its solemn judgment the danger of waiting for other warrant than the fact that the Lord delivers to the servants His goods wherewith they are responsible to trade. To doubt the grace of the Master, to fear because one has not the authentication of those who presumptuously claim, and trifle with, His right, to bury the talent in the earth, is to act the part of the wicked and slothful servant. For the Lord of the harvest, to use another parable, alone has the title to send forth labourers. (Com. Matt. x. Rom. x.) In a word, the question is not, whether all christians are qualified of God to preach the Gospel, but whether those who are so qualified may not, preach without waiting for any human authoritative call. Scripture, we have seen, decides that they may.

As to the testimony to those within, 1 Cor. xiv. shows, plainly, that the only restriction upon the exercise of gifts by brethren, was this: "Let all things be done unto edifying." Women were positively forbidden to speak *in the churches*. Elsewhere, they were responsible to use whatever gift the Lord imparted to them, subject to His word. Thus Priscilla, no less than Aquila, takes Apollos and expounds to him the word of God more perfectly. (Acts xviii. 26). And the four daughters of Philip did prophesy (Acts xxi. 9,) but not in the assemblies. The Spirit forbade that. (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.) A woman was not suffered to teach nor to usurp authority over the man. (1 Tim. ii. 12.) But all the brethren, as a whole, were exhorted to "follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy;" and, of course, they were to exercise their gift as God empowered them, so that all things were done decently and in order.

Hence it is that James says (iii. 1), "My brethren, be not many masters," *i. e.*, "teachers," an exhortation as entirely out of place in modern arrangements, as it was suitable, wholesome, and needed in their case whom he addressed: an exhortation which manifestly implied that there was an open ministry, which might, very possibly, be abused by the flesh, but which the Apostle, instead of closing or restricting, turned to the good of their souls, by pressing upon them their direct responsibility to God. On the other hand, the entire family

of God are exhorted not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets were gone out into the world. (1 John iv.) Even the elect lady (2 John) is told that if any come and bring not the doctrine of Christ, he is not to be received. Those who hear, as well as those who teach, have need to take heed. Responsibility is maintained on all sides: from this none can escape.

In Rom. xii. we have the same thing, though from another point of view. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think: but to think soberly, according as *God* hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us*, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministry; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." God's dealing to each was looked to, and not a mere human commission to one, or to a few. Hence *faith* came in, and *each* is exhorted to think soberly of himself, and to use what God has given him, instead of pretending to more. It is not one member absorbing all the gifts, or hindering others, but it is many members, and yet but one body, having gifts differing, and exhorted to employ them, not merely through love because we are every one members one of another, but because of the grace given on God's part.

So in Ephes. iv. 4-16: "There is *one body* and *one Spirit*. . . . But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ . . . from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Col. ii. 19 is to the same effect: "The Head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Again, 1 Peter iv. 9-10

makes it a matter of positive obligation that "as every man hath received *the gift*," even so they should minister the same *one to another*. Thus, and thus only, should they be good stewards of *the manifold grace of God*. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of *God*; if any man minister, let him do it as of *the ability which God giveth*; that *God* in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Can anything more clearly show that mere human acquirement is of no value, while the idea of human restriction is perfectly shut out? Whatever came from *God*, and nothing else, was to be used and received, without further sanction, that *God* might be glorified in *all things* through Jesus Christ.*

* The case of Paul in Acts xiii., which is sometimes referred to in proof of the necessity of a human commission, proves, in fact, the contrary. It would be strange indeed if it did, seeing that in Gal. i. 2, he takes such pains to insist that he was an Apostle, "not of man," *i.e.*, as the source, "nor by man," *i.e.*, as the channel. He had been preaching for years before this separation by *the Spirit* to the special work recorded in Acts xiii., xiv. Further, those who fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on him and Barnabas, had been cherished and taught by them, as by those who were over them in the Lord. To such an imposition, I know of no objection. It pretends to confer neither gift nor authority, but is a simple commendation to the grace of God, which might be repeated. (Acts xv. 40.) Is there one feature in common with the ordination of our day? And is it possible that Christians, in order to justify a modern ordination more thoroughly by Acts xiii., have pretended that Paul was only an inferior Apostle; a messenger of the Church, like Epiphroditus! (Phil. ii. 25.) But see Acts xiv. 4; Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1, ix. 1-6; Ephes. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Gal. i. 2; 1 and 2 Tim. i. 1; Tit. i. 1; where the highest form of the Apostolate, if we may so say, is claimed, and its entire independence of man.

It is too often forgotten that Matthias was chosen Jewishly, by lot, before the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven to baptize the believers. The Church, properly speaking, was not yet manifested. His election, therefore, can furnish no precedent for a state of things which was modified and governed by the presence of the Spirit. Nor do we read of the use of lots ever afterwards. The Moravian system, with its usual and blind servility, has tried to copy this and other forms which were peculiar to Jerusalem.

In the instance of Timothy, there were prophecies going before (1 Tim. i. 18,) and an actual gift imparted by prophecy, with the imposition of the hands of the presbyters (iv. 14,) and by the imposition of Paul's hands (2 Tim. i. 6)—a case, which it is not only impracticable to imitate, without an Apostle and an Apostolic presbytery, not to speak of prophecy,

From these Scriptures we learn also that the gifts from above were for the blessing of the whole body of Christ : not one for one particular section of the Church, and another for another ; but *all open to the whole Church, and the whole Church open to all.*

Thus, according to the Divine plan, if I am a member of the Church *at all*, I am a member of the Church *everywhere*. If I go to any quarter of the world where saints call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, I am a member, not by permission nor by courtesy, but by the universal recognition, on the part of believers, of the title which grace has given me. Baptized by the Spirit, I am a member of Christ's body where-soever I may be. In Apostolic days, that membership, and none other, was known throughout. There might be differences of view. There might be need of the word " whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Some might eat herbs, and some might eat meat ; but the Spirit said, and says, " Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." Now the glory of God is identified, not with some, but with all the members of the body of Christ. If the weakest member, therefore, were excluded, (save in case of necessary, scriptural discipline,) so far would that glory be forgotten or despised ; and those guilty of such exclusion ought to be avoided, as causers of division and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned.

As is the ground of membership, so it is of ministry. It is of God's Spirit. If not, it is nothing (or worse), and ought to be so treated by all those who honour God rather than man. If a Christian be an evangelist, he is so everywhere, and not of this or that district, congregation, or chapel. If he be a teacher or a pastor, or both, he of course exercises his gift where he usually resides. But then he is not *the* teacher, but *a* teacher :* and he is a teacher in *the* Church,

but which is a mischievous pretension, unless there is the power to bestow the gift which was bestowed then. May God deliver His people from saying, " I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!"

Lastly in 2 Tim. ii. 2, it is evident that the question is one, not of authority to appoint successors, but of communicating the things which Timothy had heard of the Apostle by many witnesses. It was not to consecrate a clergy, but to commit sound doctrine to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also.

* In the church at Antioch there were at least five.—Acts xiii. 1.

and not in *a* church. "We," says the Apostle, writing to far distant saints whom as yet he had not seen—"we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." He is not speaking of what was to be in heaven, but of what actually was on earth—the unity of Christ's body here below. "Having then gifts differing," &c. So, (1 Cor. iii.), in meeting the carnal, because exclusive, preference of one servant of Christ above another, the Apostle presses the broad and blessed truth—"All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," &c. It was a sectarian spirit in respect of those who ministered, that Paul rebuked. It is the same principle in 1 Cor. xii. 18—28: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." "God hath set some in *the* Church,"—not in *a* Church. Viewed as churches, Apostles could be in but few. There were none in the church at Corinth when Paul wrote. Teachers, stand clearly, on the same base—apostles in *the* Church, teachers in *the* Church. Again in Eph. iv. 11-16, whether apostles, or prophets, whether evangelists, or pastors and teachers, they are given of Christ, not to be the solitary officials of a denomination, but for the perfecting of *the* saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of *the* body of Christ, till *WE ALL come*,"

&c. ; and in verse 16, it is "the whole body fitly joined together," not broken into sects—the whole body "compact by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part"—a practical thing, an not a mere theory,—a thing meant to be in the Church while on earth, and not at all referring to heaven. We shall not need such ministration there. In this passage there is also, would notice, a warrant to faith for expecting the continuance of the gifts of Christ till His body be completed. And of truth, *He* has never failed during all the long years of ruin in which His gifts were well nigh smothered, as they were too really and painfully misused ! For I fully recognize that there have been even in Popery, in her clergy and laity, those who had gifts of God's grace to build up His own people, and to spread Christ's name among sinners. But at the same time I as utterly deny that any of these were Christ's gifts in virtue of the commission which Popery conferred, any more than that others were not His gifts for the want of such a commission. The same remark, I need hardly add, extends still more widely to modern Protestantism. Would to God that the tender love of Christ, in thus cherishing the Church as His own flesh, might touch a chord in all His members, that together we might weep over our common sin, and that together we might rejoice, extolling the grace that has abounded but the more !

There is, however, a distinction to be observed, which cannot be forgotten without injury. When the body came together, as such, the assembly was under the rule of the Holy Ghost. It would have trespassed upon the right of Christ for any individual, however gifted he might be to absorb the regulation of it into his own hands. The Giver is there, and He is the ruler, not His gifts. The order of such an assembly is definitively laid down in Scripture. (1 Cor. xiv. 5). "Ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be comforted." "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order."

It is quite a different principle which governs a servant of the Lord in the exercise of whatever talent has been intrusted

to him. He owes an immediate and individual responsibility to Christ to trade with it. He may preach to the unconverted, or he may instruct more perfectly the children of God, if he possess both gifts. He owes it to his Master to exercise all he has received for the good of souls, hindering and hindered by no one else. Every servant, be his gift great or small has the same liberty and the same responsibility. Two or more may see it good to associate in the ministry; but let us remember that if Paul chose Silas, recommended to the grace of God, Barnabas took Mark, and we do not read that *he* was *thus* honoured of God in confirming the churches. (Acts xv. 36—41).

These gifts, let it be borne in mind, must be kept distinct from *local charges*, such as the elders* or presbyters of Scripture, which are ever regarded there as the same with bishops, or overseers, (as indeed Cranmer and others allow, whose practice was totally different.) The charges had to do with some one church, and were appointed by an Apostle, or by a delegate possessed of a direct and special commission from an Apostle to that end. Such a delegate was Titus. But Scripture nowhere intimates that *the authority for appointing elders* was meant to continue. We have seen that the *gifts of Christ* were to be "till we all come, &c.," but Scripture never confounds them with local charges, although both clearly might co-exist in the same individual. We know this to have been Philip's case, who was one of "the seven," and an Evangelist besides.

Pastorship, to come still closer, is a gift (Eph. iv. 11.) elder-ship is a charge; but the gift of feeding the flock of God is so far from being incompatible with the office of an elder or bishop that it was evidently one of the most important qualifications sought in those who desired that good work. So Paul (Acts xx. 28.) exhorts the Ephesian elders to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy

* In Acts xi. 30, they are mentioned for the first time in connexion with the church at Jerusalem. They are prominent at the council in chapter xv. but not a hint is dropped in the Acts touching their appointment, if they really had any outward authorization. James (v. 14) mentions the elders; and Peter (Ep. v. 1,) and John (2nd and 3rd Epistles) call themselves elders but do not speak of official establishment. This appears to be confirmed by the way in which the elders are in one place contrasted with the "younger." (1 Peter v. 1, 15.) Experience is in question, much more than an office.

Ghost had made them overseers (bishops, ἐπισκοπους) to feed the Church of God which He had purchased with His own blood. "Feed the flock of God," said another Apostle, "which is among you, taking the oversight thereof (ἐπισκοπούτες) not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage,* but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Peter v. 2, 3). In the first Epistle to Timothy (iii.) we find aptness to teach and ability to take care of the Church of God among other requisites. Titus too (i. 9) was told to ordain such as held fast the faithful word as he had been taught that he might be able by sound doctrine to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. But it would be too much to draw thence that all the elders necessarily laboured in the public ministration of the word. They were appointed to exercise a godly, fatherly care over the Church; but labouring in the word and doctrine was not an indispensable adjunct. Hence the Apostle says in 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." In one way or another, all elders were assumed to feed the flock, but there might be elders who did not serve, at least publicly, in the word: a principle recognised in the Presbyterian system.

Another remark is to be made on the question of rulers. Paul, in writing to the saints at Rome, exhorts "*him that ruleth*" to do it with simplicity. Now all the evidence we have goes to shew that there was no official nomination as yet, if ever, at Rome. Peter's primacy there, at best, is a mere, and questionable tradition: *he* was distinctively the Apostle of the circumcision, as Paul was of the uncircumcision, and the latter had not yet visited the faithful in the Gentile metropolis. Accordingly, there is not a word which supposes elders to have been appointed there. Nevertheless, it is evident that those at Rome like the rest of the Church, had gifts of grace in their midst—prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, ruling, &c. These they might possess and

* Τῶν κληρῶν the clergy, for so all the flock was then named. The distinction of people and clergy, is essentially a Jewish element, which afterwards crept into and undermined the Church. At that time the christian people were the clergy. They ministered for mutual profit, each whatever gift he had received, (1 Pet. iv.) but there was only one body and not two castes. This alas! is not the only part of the Apostle's words which we have to confess was soon unheeded, and practically reversed.

they are exhorted to use diligently, but not a word is said about elders. It has already been observed that at Corinth no elders are even implied, and yet the brethren were besought to submit themselves to such as *addicted themselves* to the ministry of the saints, and to *every one* cworking and labouring. Again in 1 Thess. v. 12, 13, "We beseech you brethren, to know *them that labour* among you, and *are over you* in the Lord and admonish you; and to esteem them *very highly in love for their work's sake.*" Do not the exhortations "to know" them which labour and rule and pre- side (the same word as in Rom. xii. 3) suggest the thought that it was not a class officially appointed? *Office* must have been self-evident, and therefore would render needless an exhortation to *recognize* such labourers. The esteem and love was for their work's sake. An official place is not alluded to. In Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, certain chief men are named (*οἱ ἡγούμενοι*, leaders or guides) but there is nothing indicative of exterior appointment. It is probable that they were persons whose age, character, and gifts gave them a certain place.

Now if any one in our day could give satisfactory (i. e. scriptural) proof that he was an apostolic delegate, his appointment of elders ought to be respected; and respected I have no doubt, it would be by all, at any rate, whose eye was single to the Lord in the matter: if such proof be wanting, they ought to be as decidedly disowned. If then in Scripture we see not elders appointed by any save Apostles or their delegates, can nationalism or dissent justify their respective appointments by the Word of God? Apostolic succession seems to be the only consistent plea in its pretensions as to this: "in its pretensions," I say, for reality it has none—it is christianity Judaized, or rather it is Judaism christianized. (See Bingham's *Eccles. Antiq.* b. i. ch. v.)

The dissenting principle of electing a pastor is purely human, derived not even from Judaism, much less from Christianity.* Yet some have professed to see it in Acts xiv. 23:

* Hear the testimony of one who was himself thus chosen, the able author of *Sp. Despotism* (p. 153.) "It is not without some amazement that we find a congregational church, on the modern scheme, proceeding in the momentous act of creating or of electing to itself a pastor and teacher, without being able to allege from the New Testament any law or licence to that effect, or any one example, satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

"When they had ordained (or chosen, as seems better.) them elders in every Church." But this proves not that the Church, but that *they*, *i. e.*, Paul and Barnabas, chose the elders. Some argue from the etymology: but usage, not etymology, is the only safe guide. The word *χειροτονέω* meant originally to stretch out the hand. Hence, it was applied to voting or choosing in this manner, and by an easy transition, to choosing without reference to the manner. Thus in Acts x. 41, the same word, compounded with a preposition, is applied to God's choice, where the notion of the Church's voting is, of course, excluded. When it was a question of a gracious, prudent use of tables, or the like, as in Acts vi. and 2 Cor. viii. 19, the assembly, or assemblies, did choose; though, even in Acts, if the multitude of the disciples looked out seven faithful men, it was the Apostles who appointed them over their business. In short, when God imparts the gift, *He* chooses: when the Church gives what she can, *she* may employ what instrument seems fitting. As she cannot bestow a ministerial gift, neither ought she to choose, but receive all those whom God has given for her good.

As to *elders*, then, an Apostle goes, (Acts xiv. 23), or leaves a delegate for a season during his own life, to appoint them (Tit. i. 5-9) or describes to another the requisite qualities. (1 Tim. iii. 2-7.). In *no* case is the *Church* invited to select them. They had no such authority, even in their brightest days. No Epistle addressed to a church touches the question, and fitly so. It was not their mission. Titus was left in Crete expressly to set in order what the Apostles had left undone, and to ordain elders in every city, as the Apostle had appointed him, and none else. Afterwards he was to come to the Apostle in Nicopolis: (ch. iii. 12.). This is the sum of what Scripture states. You cannot have the one without the other. The Apostle looked, and taught the Church to look, for the coming of the Lord, as their immediate hope. This

.... . On *secular principles* nothing can be more simple or reasonable than that those who pay should command; and in the present temper of mankind, specially in certain circles, it may be nearly impracticable to secure submission to any other law. Nevertheless, this serious question returns upon us.—Is this the law or this the principle recognised as the basis of church polity in the New Testament? We are compelled to answer it is not."

of course stimulated, and in no way hindered, present care for the sheep, but it was inconsistent with perpetuating official organs for ages to come. Accordingly we find no such arrangements in the Epistles. But as for *gifts* they rest on quite another ground—not upon Apostles who might be removed, but upon Christ who never ceases to be the head and source of nourishment, and cannot but love and cherish His body, the Church. These gifts never needed man's sanction, even when Apostles lived. Christ dealt them without intervention of any: so that what Paul said of his own Apostolate, might be said, in principle, of them all,—“Not of men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.” I speak, of course, of the manner and source of the gifts, not of their measure.

As regards discipline, it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind that it does not depend on gifts, offices, or any other thing than the blessed fact, that the body, the Church, is Christ's body, is gathered in His name, and has the Holy Ghost present to guide and energize its movements. He is, we may say, the soul of this holy and heavenly body. Hence the fullest directions respecting discipline, either in putting away or restoring, were given to the Corinthian church, where it would seem, there were at the time no elders. That there might be, and were churches without elders, is manifest, from Acts xiv. 23 and Tit. i. 5. The churches existed before any such charges were appointed. Elders were desirable, no doubt, for the administration of a church, but by no means indispensable to its being. Certain it is that at Corinth elders are not alluded to, and the disorders which broke out there are pressed home on the entire body. Nor does the Spirit, in correcting the abuses, suspend their functions as a church, until elders were duly appointed. On the contrary, whether it be the extreme and solemn act of excision, or the worthy celebration of the Lord's Supper, it is the body which is addressed, rebuked, and charged with ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well in all these grave particulars. And this is the more striking, as it is clear that there were among them those who came behind in no gift; (1 Cor. i. 7); and that, at any rate, the household of Stephanas, addicted* themselves to the ministry of the saints, and

* The word is *ἐραζαν*, and means that they *set, appointed, or devoted themselves* to the ministry. It is one of the words sometimes translated

that the believers, in general, are besought to submit themselves to such. It is not the labourers, I repeat, but the body which is appealed to in matters, which the common consequence of a fallen Church has made the peculiar distinguishing right of the clerical, ministerial order. Doubtless, where overseers were, as at Philippi or Ephesus, they, in their exercise of godly care, would naturally and justly have a large share in the practical details; and the more so, as an appeal to the Church is the last and most painful resort. (Matt. xviii. 15-17.) The main object being to restore the soul, if so it may be, to the Lord. But the known sin of a Christian affects the conscience of the body, for it is one body; and if not judged, little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. If the offender mourn and depart from the evil after a godly sort, he is restored, and all rejoice: if he continue in that which dishonours Christ, the body must be cleared at all cost. "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. . . . For what have we to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Further, Scripture even more sternly deals with false doctrine; because it is subtle, more poisoning in its effects, and more directly touching the Lord Himself, than a bad walk. It is ever a work of the flesh, and may be emphatically of Satan, far more than a mere carnal spirit of action. See Gal. v. 9-20; Rom. xvi. 17, 18; 1 Tim. i. 18-20, vi. 3-5; 2 Tim. ii. 23-26, iii. 6, iv. 3, 4; Tit. iii. 9-11; 1 John iv, 1-6; 2 John 10, 11; Revelation ii. 14, 15, 23, 24. As it is the body which puts away, so it is equally for the body, under His direction who dwells there, to restore. God may use the instruments He sees fit to rouse the body to a remembrance of Christ's holiness, including a wicked person, (1 Cor. v.), and of Christ's grace

"ordained." Let those who have not scrupled to ridicule "self-appointment," weigh this passage, and remember that *what they despise, as so carnal Corinthians may have done, the Holy Ghost by the Apostle distinctly and unqualifiedly commands.* If they will obey God, let them submit themselves unto such.

forgiving and restoring a repentant brother. (2 Cor. ii.) In either case, it is the conscientious action of the body which the Lord expects. If everything fail to awaken, if in spite of patient testimony, the assembly persist in doing, or cloaking, evil, and so in tarnishing the Lord's name, the claim to be His body becomes null and void. It is an entirely corrupt lump, from which the Spirit, who loves Christ, would have us to separate, instead of wasting our energies in the effort to amend that which is irremediable, and only waiting for the judgment of the Lord.

There remains but one more difficulty for us to state and seek to remove. It has been supposed that the assertion of the failure of the church forces us to say that we, in these last days, *cannot* have recourse to the Epistles to the Corinthians, &c; and *so* to fall back upon the promise "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." The present pamphlet, of itself, is a sufficient answer to as hardy a charge as could well be made. It has been proved that *nationalism* and *dissent*, CANNOT defend the principles of their membership or of their ministry, by such Scriptures as 1 Cor. i. iii. x. xi. xii. xiv. xvi., Ephes. iv., &c. The great truth of the Church as being God's habitation through the Spirit, who is the sole energy and distributor of the gifts of Christ in the unity of the whole body, is recognised by neither: it could not be practically owned, for one moment, without condemning both, in all their varieties. Are all our brethren responsible to own this truth whatever may be the results of their confession? If they are not, let it be openly said. But if the Church once knew, lived, rejoiced, suffered, in realizing, the blessedness of such a place, where and what are we? Are we not to feel, are we not to confess, are we not to have done with, all the evil known to us, which has overspread the professing body and made it a witness against Christ, not for Him? If I find myself honouring as the Church of God a society or system whose laws are inconsistent with the leading Scripture principles of that Church, am I not to confess my sin, and come out from the unclean thing? or am I to abide and sin on, that grace may abound? This is the true question. It is now admitted by almost every Christian of moderate spirituality and intelligence that the existing ecclesiastical condition, national or dissenting, is not to be defended, if we compare it

with the Word of God. Not merely in the detail, is it wrong, but in its fundamental principles. Hence it is that some eminent names in the religious world, boldly avow that the Word of God, though perfect as regards individual justification, leaves men to their own discretion in the formation and government of churches: that is, they say we ought not to have recourse to such epistles as 1 Cor. &c. for present direction. One party is satisfied with things as they are; another yearns for a Church of the future wherein man may have things on a grander scale. But if the saint of God shrinks from so fearful a principle as casting away the word of God which displays and demonstrates the infidelity of the Church to its calling, what is he to do? Can a Christian hesitate? Is he not at once to cease from the evil he feels, and to humble himself before God for the failure of himself and the Church? And if he knows two or three disciples meeting in Christ's name and opening the door wide that the Holy Ghost may act freely and fully, according to the blessed Word, He has written and by whom He will, will he not gladly find himself there? Instead of using Matt. xviii. 20 as a licence to do what is right in their own eyes, will they not, thus gathered, learn to their joy that Jesus is ever faithful? Will they not bless God for the authority and sufficiency of His Word? and, if there be any difference, for the proved comfort and living applicability of the very scriptures, which their adversaries say they cannot have recourse to? Will they not afresh thank Him for the Holy Ghost who loves to act in the body, as well as in the members, to the glory of the Lord Jesus? It is God we need, it is the living God we have to do with, and not principles merely. His presence only can give power and blessing, even when the principles are right in themselves. This is what we seek, knowing that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

APPENDIX.

“THE SILVER TRUMPET, &c.”—By OCTAVIUS WINSLOW, M.
Second Edition. London: 1849.

THOUGH there is nothing in Mr. Winslow's book of sufficient weight, in itself, to detain one, it may be worth while to expose the nature of an assault on “Brethren,” which has made it work acceptable to such as have no just or Scriptural grounds of offence. The pen of a lady, I am told, sufficed to prove that the first edition contained a heap of reproaches, which could be excused only on the supposition of ignorance, if that extenuation be admissible. Certain it is that seventeen pages or more of the attack have disappeared from the second edition: showing, I presume, if we are to consider the author a reasonable man, that though he adheres to some of his charges or insinuations, which he still prints, he had, what appeared to himself, substantial reasons for leaving out by far the larger, and the more offensive part.

In the face of this, one is grieved to find that hands, tongue and pens of others, continue to circulate what the author has expunged. As, however, Mr. Winslow has retained a small fraction, I proceed briefly to analyse what remains.

His first remark is an error lying at the root of Popery itself: “By whom is the trumpet of the Gospel to be blown? Who are the trumpeters of the Church? Thus has He instituted the CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, the highest office in His church, apart from which, no church can be complete.” He actually argues upon the assumption that those who blew the silver trumpet answer to the Christian ministry! (Num. x.) “The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets.” These, in the Christian antitype, he supposes to be *the ministers of Christ*. His argument makes Jewish priesthood to be illustrative and representative of ministry in the Church. Who would have believed that one intelligent christian, nationalist, or dissenting, could have read this statement, in p. 42, without perceiving the startling fact that even a Baptist preacher, when assailing those called “Brethren,” instantly abandons the New Testament, and slips into one of the worst tenets of the Tractarian school—that school which is the principal object of his warning in the latter part of this very work.

The idea that Christian ministry corresponds to Jewish priesthood, (and that is the essence of the argument,) is a Popish fiction, contrary to all the Scriptures which treat of this type. Thus, the Epistle to the Hebrews gives it another application utterly inconsistent with that idea. There, priesthood is connected, in the highest sense, with Christ, who is now ministering as the great High Priest in heaven; or else, in a lower point of

view, the *brethren, as such*, and not the official and gifted persons merely, are addressed as enjoying its highest function—boldness to enter into the holiest—by the blood of Jesus. To assert a priesthood in any other sense, to treat Christian ministry (which Mr. W. does) as the counterpart of Aaron's sons is, unwittingly, but in effect, to deny the essential nearness to God, which the blood of Christ has established for those who believe. It is to lay again the foundation on which Rome built the system which subverts the mediatorial glory of Christ. But it is an assumption: Mr. W. attempts no proof. Nay, I am persuaded, he would have combated his own idea, if the desire of saying *something* against "Brethren" had not blinded his eyes. At any rate, the reader has only to consult Heb. x. 19-22; xiii. 15; Peter ii. 5-9, and Rev. i. 5, 6, in order to see, that all believers, and not only those who minister in the word, are true priests. They who deny the rights of Christ, as regards the priestly dignity of the entire consecrated family of God, draw fearfully near to the pit which swallowed up Korah and his gainsaying band, who opposed the Apostle and the high priest of the Jewish profession. So far, therefore, as this type goes, the assault rests on a very capital error. Professing to expound, Mr. W. herein contradicts, the scriptural doctrine. For it is *not* all the ministers only, while it is all the members of Christ, who fulfil the type of the priests; and the priests are those who are commanded to blow the trumpets. That is, the explanation by the Holy Ghost, in the epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter, as well as in the Revelation, plainly, and absolutely refutes the explanation of Mr. Winslow. And if blowing the silver trumpets really meant preaching the gospel, as Mr. W. says, it would prove that *all christians* are commanded to preach, which is the reverse of what he says. In other words, the moment we appeal to these three consenting, Apostolic witnesses, Mr. W. is proved to be totally, and doubly, wrong.

The truth is, that the type does not refer to Christian ministry in the sense we are discussing.* If it did, it would, as we have

* It may be here remarked that Israel, the Levites, and the sons of Aaron exhibit in type, not three castes, into which the Church resolve themselves, but the Church viewed in three distinct, though perfectly congruous, positions: first, the Church, simply as the people of God redeemed out of this Egypt-world by the precious blood of the Lamb; (1 Peter i. 19); secondly, the Church, as chosen for the service of God, who sets each servant in his proper place; (1 Peter iv. 10, 11; Rom. xii. xiv; 1 Cor. vi. 20; xii;) and thirdly, the Church, qualified to come boldly unto the throne of grace, as the sole priesthood whom God now recognises, and subject to Christ, as Son over His own house. (1 Peter ii. 5-9; Heb. iii. iv. x. xiii.) There are great and striking diversities in our service, as there were among the Levites of old: there are none in our title of priestly access to the sanctuary. All the holy brethren are equally exhorted to draw near to God, just as there was no distinction in

seen, invest all believers, (who decidedly are those typified by the priests,) with the ministration of the word. But this, neither Mr. W. nor the "Brethren" believe. Both believe that Rom. x. 15 is distinct as to the mission of the preacher, and that Eph. iv. 7 guarantees a succession of ministerial gifts till the body of Christ is complete. This then is not the true inquiry, which it is evident from pp. 43-45, Mr. Winslow does not even understand—unless he has solved it aright. The real question is, Who sends the preacher? Who gives the evangelists, or the pastors and teachers? Is it the Lord, or is it man? There is not a syllable in either chapter which implies that it is the prerogative of any man or the Lord Himself. Mr. W. speaks as if these texts furnished a convincing argument for his views; whereas, as I have shown, both of us agree that there are, and have always been, those whom *the Lord* has sent and given for the blessing of the Church. *Neither the one nor the other passage can be made to prove either sender or receiver other sender than Christ.* And this is precisely our view, whereas Mr. Winslow's system treats the Lord's mission as insufficient unless "the people" put their fiat upon it. To his disciples Jesus said (Matt. ix. 37, 38), "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." This is what we do without assuming powers which the Lord never gave us, nor Mr. Winslow, nor even his congregation. *We do not arrogate to ourselves the appointment of the Lord's labourers. Mr. W.'s system does, without being able to produce a single warrant of Scripture, explicit or implicit!* Mr. W. may fairly ask the Episcopalian, *What bishop, apostle, or any other man appointed Apollos, or the brethren, who preached during St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome?* He may ask, *If none but the Lord gave the apostles and prophets, what pretext is there for assuming that the evangelists, pastors and teachers, needed to receive orders at the hands of the Apostles?* and he will wait long before he receives a Scriptural answer; because, in this at least the Episcopalian system, is fundamentally, at fault. But in my view I must ask Mr. W., *What text gives the least authority to a congregation to choose a pastor or appoint an evangelist?* He can produce none. If he cannot agree with those who confide in the goodness and wisdom of the Lord, who calls His own seed and delivers unto them His goods—if he will consider *our* appointment in the Lord's appointment, without man's help, to be a "spiritual" in this respect among Aaron's sons. Save the high priest, who, by tradition, represented Christ, all the sons had the same relations and equal privileges as priests.—Even Churchmen are ashamed and the "priestly element," (involved in Mr. W.'s reasoning, if such it is called,) and are seeking to have it expunged from their service. "Church Reform," by W. T. Blair, Esq., pp. 3, 4. London: F. and Oakey. 1851.

imposing, and plausible chimera," we will pray that his eyes may be opened to see its Scriptural certainty, and that *his* principle of the popular appointment is a chimera, destitute, even, of these poor properties. See 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4, for the most direct notice, so far as I know, God has taken of it in His Word: "After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

Briefly, the question is not whether any ought to preach without being sent, but whether, if sent by the Lord, they need the further recognition or appointment by man, before they can lawfully exercise their gift. We believe that, in principle, the Christian who has a gift, is at once free and bound to use it, and that, in practice, the nationalist and dissenting appointments have hindered the ministry of many good men, and have authenticated the ministry of many bad men. All we do, in this respect, is to assert the right of *God* to set each of the members in the body, as it hath pleased Him. Is this a warrant to charge us with denying ministry? Or, rather, is it not the clearing away of the rubbish, ancient and modern, which obscures the lights which God hath kindled, which forbids their burning as freely and brightly as He intended? The day may come when Mr. Winslow's trumpet is to give a certain sound for this truth, instead of an uncertain sound against it. May he then be more zealous for God than he is now for the rights of man? Meantime, let him remember, *he is wholly mistaken in supposing that we consider all Christians to be ministers in the word.* It is a few in the Church who are thus gifted for the edification of the many. So far from supposing there is no such thing as ministry, "Brethren" hold, and have always held, from Ephes. iv. 12, 13, that Christ cannot fail to maintain and perpetuate a ministry, as long as His body is here below. Their printed books and tracts, their teachings in private and in public, affirm this as a certain, settled truth. Insomuch that it is as absurd to charge them with denying the divine and permanent place of ministry in the Church on earth, as it would be to charge Charles I. with denying the divine right of kings. The first article in the original "Christian Witness" (Jan. 1834.) insists upon it, not as a past, but as a present thing. It has always been with "Brethren" a most prominent theme. It is so still. One must hope that Mr. W. was ignorant of these plain, notorious, and unquestionable facts.

A few remarks will despatch the rest of the assertions, noticing, by the way, the looseness and inconsistency of the language, such as, that God has taken this part of the work (*i.e.*, the appointment of the trumpeters of the gospel) exclusively into His own hands. This is true, if we defend the precedent of Acts viii. 4; xviii. 24-28; Phil. i. 14, as valid and right. So "Brethren" hold, but is it not altogether condemnatory of the main and distinctive article of the congregational polity—the polity which Mr. W. espouses? Does he not, unintentionally, expose the human and unscriptural foun-

dation on which he rests, as Baptist preacher at Leaming Surely, if there be one thing which, more than another, int with the *exclusive* and *manifest* appointment of a minist God, it is a popular call, appointment, or election, in vir which, the author himself holds that position.

I.—“It will not suffice to meet the design of Christ, in th mation of Christian churches, that there are, gatherings, saints in small parties.” Does Mr. W. not know that Ch churches *are* “gatherings” of the saints? Is he ignorant fact that such is the precise force of the word which the employs?—Next, as to the “small parties,” that depends on circumstances. In some towns and cities I have heard many as 500, or even 1000, communicants: but I also kno the Lord Jesus has said “where TWO or THREE are *gathe* gether in my name, there am I in the midst.” This is a ; ing of saints in as small a party as can be conceived; a ciously does the Lord own it, if Mr. W. cannot. Will permit me to say in love, that if his aim had been to disp contempt for objects dear to the Lord, he could scarce expressed it more plainly. I hope it may have been a slip If so, he will obliterate it.

II.—It is added “in obscure places,” referring, prob the avoidance of edifices which, more or less, seem to imi temple, or its medieval and modern corruptions. As “Brethren” do prefer, under ordinary circumstances, a commodious room, though it is well known that we feel dage whatever in renting an old chapel, or any other publi ing, and employing it in a more excellent way. An upp (Acts i. 13, xx. 8,) or a river side, (Acts xvi. 13) is not to secure a place” for us, even though there be but two or th in the name of Jesus. The temple, (Acts v. 42,) or th gogue, (Acts xiii. 14.) the private house, (Acts xx. 20,) market, (xvii. 17,) the prison, (Acts xvi.), Mars’ hill, (Act or the school room, (Acts xix.), are all welcome, if we *free*, in all of them, to testify both to the Jews and to the repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Chri

III.—Again, Mr. W. charges us with meeting “in irre forms.” May we ask to whom would *he* persuade us t sponsible? As a dissenter, he repudiates responsibility vine things, to the Queen or the Parliament, to a magis even to a bishop. To whom would he have the saints i ington responsible? To himself, or to his congregatio principle is, that every saint is responsible to Christ, as th who has an absolute and irrefragable, and immediate cla the allegiance of each, as His servant. Nothing, we b dissolve, weaken, or interfere with this responsibility. A of Christ may help another saint, according to the measu grace given to him, but *never* ought to step between d

and the Lord. Are we seriously expected to give up this precious and solemn responsibility? and for what? A Baptist congregation vote one preacher out and another preacher in, and then bow down to the "golden calf" which their own hands have made. Is this the form, is this the responsibility we are to respect, and to imitate?

IV.—Mr. W. explains further—"without a pastor*—without an overseer†—without officers‡—without Gospel order§—without holy discipline||—without a proper, authorized, and constant oversight."¶

Now, Ephes. iv. states that the ascended Christ gave pastors and teachers, &c., for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. They were joints *in and for the whole body*, which is the doctrine, and accords with the practice, of "Brethren." *Never does Scripture define a pastor for a church*, which is the doctrine and practice of Mr. W.'s system, and of most others. According to the Scriptural principle, there might be in a given locality several pastors, there might be one, there might be none. There is no trace whatever in Scripture of a human and uniform arrangement, whereby a single congregation had a single pastor. On the contrary, the New Testament excludes such a notion.—Next, Acts xx. 17, 28, not only identifies the elders with the bishops or overseers, but exhibits a *plurality of overseers* of the church in question—not *an* overseer, as in Mr. W.'s system. I put it to any man's conscience, whether a plurality of overseers is not shut out of nationalism and dissent? and whether the door be not opened among "Brethren?" Plurality, again, we see in Phil. i. 1, whether of bishops or of deacons. Where do we see this now?

As to gospel order, Mr. W. ventures on the dangerous ground of citing 1 Cor. xiv. Is it possible that an honest and spiritual man could assert that the "order" enjoined in that chapter, and in that shamefully abused verse, is in the smallest degree applicable to the contracted "one man" ministry, either of the religion as by law established, or of congregationalism? Is it *their* "order" for the prophets to speak two or three, and for the rest to judge? Is it truthful to say of *their* assemblies—"ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted?" Let Mr. W. answer candidly—would not he and his congregation treat the smallest approach to such a procedure as indecent and disorderly? Alas! it is so. God's order for His assemblies is forgotten, is despised. By the rules and rubrics of the religious world, it would be the greatest disorder. And yet the verse which sums up and enjoins it, Mr. W. is not ashamed to quote! Nay, (what should cause another blush) against the

* Eph. iv. 11. † Acts xx. 28. ‡ Philip i. 1. § 1 Cor. xiv. 40.
 ¶ 2 Thess. iii. 6. ¶ Heb. xiii. 7.

very Christians who, through divine mercy, are seeking to carry out this very order! If Mr. W. try to escape by saying that the order described in 1 Cor. xiv. 1-40, is by-gone, and therefore inapplicable, I ask, how he came to cite against us what is, on such an hypothesis, inapplicable? In either way he is in error.

Further, Mr. W. insinuates that "Brethren" are "without holy discipline." An assertion more flatly contradicted by stubborn facts, which are widely known, never was uttered. If he had really sought information were there not hundreds, all over the country, who could have told the author how they had shrunk from "Brethren," because they felt the discipline they seek to maintain, to be so rigorous, compared with the laxity which generally speaking, prevails among dissenters, as well as Churchmen? Does Mr. Winslow's acquaintance with "Brethren" or their writings, lead him to the conviction that they are, on a candid survey, more worldly, and more carnal in their own walk, or more indifferent about the walk of other Christians, than his Baptist friends, or our Anglican brethren? Is it that he has found "Brethren" more ignorant of the Scriptures, or slower to obey them, than other Christians? Has he not singled out "separation" in p. 75, as a sort of badge attaching to them? And may not this be due, in part, to their acting on the apostolic command to withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, &c.,—the precise text which he cites against them as if they had no ear for such withdrawal! What is his warrant if he mean this? Or if not this, what does he mean?

The last clause, "without a proper, authorised, and constant oversight," requires the fewer words, because it is involved in the previous counts of the indictment, and it has been already fairly, and I trust, decisively replied too. "Brethren" long for such oversight. Wherever it has pleased God to raise up pastors after His own heart, they gladly, thankfully, own His grace, and esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. Where God has not vouchsafed this, what can we do but pray for them, and meanwhile, look humbly to Him who never denies Himself to the weak, dependant soul? but, by the grace of God, we trust to be kept from the sin of making imitation-pastors, or of choosing a particular servant of Christ to the exclusion of others. It is the CHURCH OF GOD, and therefore we dare not meddle with it, as if were *our own* Church; and the gifts of prophesying, exhorting, of ruling, (Rom. xii.) and the pastors and teachers, or the evangelist (Eph. iv.), are the gifts of Christ; and we feel bound to acknowledge and profit by all such rare and precious fruits of His grace, by all these proofs of the power and love of the Spirit. May it be so increasingly with all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!

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