

SOME NOTICE

OF

MR. DARBY'S "LETTER TO THE
SAINTS IN LONDON."

BY

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It is now about a year since I had printed for private circulation a tract on Ministry: it originated in the evil on the subject, of which I was painfully conscious in nearly every gathering of brethren with which I am acquainted. Brethren saw that there ought to be liberty for the exercise of any ministry that was manifestly of God's Spirit: the flesh took advantage of this liberty, as might be expected; and then, as it seemed to me, brethren failed to meet the abuse, as men with a zeal for God's glory and the good of souls should have done. I doubt not, however, that both as to what they did and refrained from doing, many were conscientious herein.

To the remedy of this abuse was my tract directed: its principle, I believe, was scriptural, and calculated to meet the evil. I endeavoured to express myself without offence to any; for truly I know not that to injure or offend was any part of my mind. Many, and those intelligent brethren, approved of the tract; till a notice of it appeared from Mr. Darby, characterised by a painful want of Christian candour and kindness. This I felt it right to answer, and in my answer righteously to reprove Mr. D. This reply was exclaimed against by some of Mr. D.'s friends. However, up to this time, my mind is unchanged concerning it, except that I should withdraw some expressions savouring of harshness; but I believe that there is such a thing as righteous rebuke quite consistent with the exercise of grace, and of this many seem to be forgetful. God's way is grace, and grace reigning too; but it is *through* righteousness. Men often speak and act as if it was grace at the expense of righteousness.

Shortly after sending forth this reply—also, as my first tract, for private circulation—I received a letter from Mr. Darby full of expressions of love and kindness, regretting his having hurt me, and, finally, requesting me to withhold my reply. This I tried to meet in the same spirit, and consented to the withholding the reply, on the understanding

that his tract to which it replied should also be withheld. So the matter, as I had hoped, terminated ; for in truth I am not partial to this kind of warfare, nor do I believe it healthful exercise for the soul ; it has, in every instance in which I have engaged in it, been forced on me—I have not once been the aggressor. .

Sometime after this, on the invitation of a very dear man of God, I consented to minister in his chapel ; and the very week that I did so a tract comes out addressed to brethren, noticing my having done so, and holding me up as one lapsed—a kind of caution against me. This proceeding seemed to me very sectarian, and I felt called on to resist it, which I did in reply. The same brother printed a short notice of my reply, and proposed at the same time, by the desire of brethren, to withhold it and his former address if I withheld my reply ; and lest I might fail in grace towards a brother, I did withhold it, though I confess reluctantly, for I thought that it contained important and needed truth. Thus I withdrew both of my replies from circulation, at the desire of the brethren to whom they were addressed : here, again, I hoped that the matter had rested ; but nearly a month after, a letter is published by Mr. Darby addressed “To the Saints in London,” occasioned by this my suppressed reply, but in reality a kind of general reply to all my three tracts, suppressed and not suppressed. I have been told that Mr. D. knew not of my tract being withheld, when he published his : but I do not think that it alters the case ; for if he did not, then surely his first act on learning it should have been to have withheld his letter. This he did not.

The tract is to the same purport as his former one, which he withheld, characterised by the same offensive imputations, the same want of fairness and brotherly kindness ; and this, after his most kind private letter so replete with affection. It is strange to me, nor do I well know how to account for it ; it has occurred to me, that Mr. D. may be dissatisfied at the terms of reproof which I used in speaking of the late doings at Plymouth, in which Mr. D. was so prominent an actor. It may not be so, indeed ; but whatever was the cause, the tract comes out, and this just on the eve of a meeting of many brethren, Mr. D. among

them, "to humble themselves, and entreat help and healing from God."—Strange preparation for such work!

So far I thought it well to go into the history of this matter for the better understanding of it. And now I proceed, in the first place, to set forth some extracts from my reply to the tract addressed to brethren, dealing with principles, and apart from all that was personal in it; this I stated on withholding my reply that I would do, and the letter of Mr. D. renders it the more needful, as frequent reference is made to it. I shall then make a few observations on Mr. D.'s tract.

I believe it right before God to adopt this course, and not to lie under false imputations. There are times, indeed, when one's only way is "as the sheep before her shearer:" again, there are times, as we learn from the example of the apostle, when the way of duty is to meet the accusation and repel it.

The following matter consisting of EXTRACTS from another tract, will account for its abrupt, and somewhat disjointed character. An expression has occasionally been altered to avoid offence.

Dear brethren, I assign the very same place to the minister now that I have for the last ten years, or indeed longer. I know not that my mind has since varied on the subject.

My "Reasons for withdrawing from the Establishment"* have been appealed to, as upholding liberty of the Spirit in

* This book I have withdrawn from circulation; and my reasons for doing so were these: first, that to my mind it appeared to be made an instrument in fostering what I think is a growing sectarianism amongst us, and which is hateful to my soul, as I believe it is to God. My second, and which I confess much weighed with me, was, that I found it hurt the minds of some dear men of God, and so hindered my communion with them. I covet communion with God's dear children in whatever system they may be. My third reason was, and bear with me, brethren, while I say it, that judging from what I witness here and elsewhere, I confess I did not feel the courage to unsettle the minds of any under godly care and a holy ministry. I might, indeed, give them truer notions as to the church—more dispensational knowledge; but this would be a poor recompence for the loss of what I deprived them—for any loss as to a holy humble walk with God. I fear that this has not unfrequently been the case, that accession of know-

ministry; and truly so they do. My views may have acquired more of definiteness in the ten years since these "Reasons" were written; but they are, I believe, the same now as then. I believe that there ought to be liberty for the Spirit; and I know not that I ever said or wrote a word against it: but, at the same time, I believe that there is scarcely a more crying evil in the Church, than one which is more or less prominent in nearly all the gatherings with which I am acquainted; and that is, *a license to man, under the name of Liberty to the Spirit*: an evil, I do believe, far more dishonouring to God, hindering to His Spirit, and hurtful to souls, than any which I know of in the one-man system of a servant of God.

Brotherhood is the ground of fellowship. *The Holy Spirit alone is the power of fellowship*, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. We come to the table of the Lord as brethren: but some of these brethren are endowed by God with ability to teach and minister, and some are not; and those so endowed should be received of the congregation as God's ministers, to edify and profit; where they are not, responsibility and loss will rest on the gathering.

I deny our power to meet on 1 Cor. xii. and xiv., for the simple reason that we have not now what the church at Corinth then had. We see in chap. xiv. directions for the *tongues, prophets, &c.*; but where are these now? And if we have them not, surely it is but miserable weakness and assumption to profess to meet on such ground. I do not deny our power as to Rom. xii. I said, that I believe we have what is there (all but the prophecy), and that we have it of God and *by His Holy Spirit*; but not as the immediate giving of God, distinct from means and natural endowment. I do not assail an "open for mutual edification," or assail any thing to edification. This, indeed, is the ground I take—to allow whatever is to edification as the *evidence of*

ledge has not been accession of spiritual power. When conscience is exercised, then it becomes a different thing; then one must urge faithfulness, without which, communion with God is in danger of being interrupted. These, so far as I know, were the motives influencing me in the withdrawal of my book; together with the feeling that it had done its work, at least the work contemplated in its publication, which the title briefly conveys.

the Spirit's work among us (Eph. iv. 11, 12); but I do assail an open for every one to rise up who will, under the profession of an open for the Spirit; and I assail it, because I see that it is destructive to edification, as it is dishonouring to God: and this many of the spiritual well know.

As to arrangement, I know of no meeting where there is not more or less of it; in some to a considerable extent: and so I think it was in the early and best years of our meeting together, when God's presence was most manifestly with us. I confess my belief, that more of it now would be for good; nor can I at all understand why we may not look for *the Spirit's operation and guidance* with arrangement subject to God, even as without it: so it would seem to me, except we leave ourselves dependent on impulse.

I fully acknowledge *the acting of the Holy Spirit in the church or individual*, as also the promise, Matt. xviii. 20; but a dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church, *apart and distinct from the members*, is what I confess my inability to receive, and what I am not aware that the Scriptures teach; let it be shewn me that they so teach, and it is enough—I bow; but, if in the body, distinct from the members, then where? What is the body but the collection of the members? what is in them, is in it.

I see these precious promises of *the Spirit's abiding and presence* during our Lord's absence in the xiv. xv. and xvi. of John; but surely no dwelling here, nor through the Acts of the Apostles, distinct from the individual believer. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be *in you*" (John xiv. 17); this *indwelling* would seem the great thing, and this I believe as to the church or individual.

I confess I have my fears as to the distinctions that are being made on this subject, both as tending to error and drawing off the mind from the more weighty matters; for myself, I believe in the one same *blessed spiritual presence*, whether it be *individually or collectively*: such I believe to be the teaching of the Bible: but from the way in which I have heard some speak of the person of the Holy Ghost in the individual, and distinct from this, the person of the Holy Ghost in the church, the thought has arisen in my mind which one almost fears to express—Do they believe in two Holy Ghosts?

I admit an open for proved competency to edify—proved in the souls of the saints; but I am sure that there should be authority somewhere: and that “somewhere” I do not think it difficult to discern in the Scriptures. It is with the rulers, elders or overseers. Let those minister whom God has qualified to minister, and those take the rule and oversight whom He has qualified for such work. The true and blessed thing would be, for each to take the place in the body assigned him of God, not all judging any more than ministering, or ministering any more than ruling.

I do not hesitate to say, that it is an untrue and unscriptural principle that would put “each man waiting on the Holy Ghost” to minister, and one which must necessarily, as human nature is constituted, introduce disorder. I assert that each man is not to wait on the Holy Ghost with a view to ministry, though he should for his soul’s profit, or *the Lord’s presence in the congregation*. “Let those who minister wait on their ministering.” There is a marked line of distinction in the Scripture as to the saints generally, and ministers particularly: as to the shepherds and the sheep; are not the Epistles to Timothy and Titus unto this end? And whenever this is made light of, mark, brethren, the disorder and spiritual dearth which will sooner or later follow.

In the opening of Acts xiii. we read, “There were in the church certain prophets and teachers.” These were known and recognised as such, distinct from, though one with, the body of the church: they ministered to the Lord; they fasted and prayed; and out of them the Holy Ghost calls His servants for His special work. There is no confusion here of what God has made distinct and separate. Again: look at the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv.: “He gave some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers;” *some*, not all, in these different ministries for the edifying of the *body*. And see further, the Epistle to the Philippians, i. 1: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” Now observe, the words bishops and deacons are untranslated words; they are merely Greek words anglicised. The old English word was “biscop,” which is much as the original, and translated in Acts xx. 28, “over-seer;” the other word is that sometimes translated, “ser-

vant," but most frequently "minister;" they are the same in purport—a true minister is the servant of God, and of man for His sake. But can any thing be more distinct than the order in the church at Philippi noted in these words? It was not *each man* waiting on the Holy Ghost to minister, but most distinctly recognised orders of elders or overseers, and ministers; the one to rule and to take care of the church of God, the other to minister as God gave them the competency or ability; and these distinct from the body of the saints. Here is the Scripture order; and surely this ought to be the order now: and I do believe that it is only as it is observed (in whatever weakness it may be) that there will be church or corporate blessing.

I see, very evidently, two different kinds of operation of the Spirit in the New Testament, which it will quite answer our purpose to describe by the usual language, *ordinary* and *extraordinary*. Now I believe that much of the ministry of the New Testament was what is called *ordinary*; and this, I believe, we now have, differing only in measure or degree; this, for distinction's sake, I would call ministry *by the Spirit*; but, apart from this, there was, confessedly, that which was extraordinary, as we see in I Cor. xii. and xiv., and other places; and this is what I see nothing of now: here, then, is a difference in the *mode*: this seems to me specially the ministry of *gift*; and this I would call, not so much man ministering *by* the Spirit, as the Spirit *by* man. In both cases there was responsibility to God. Now, I am sure that the Spirit remaineth among us, but neither in *mode* nor *measure* as in the New Testament times: not in *mode* as to His extraordinary acting; in *mode*, indeed, as to his ordinary acting; but not in *measure*. Now, further I say, that the only state of the church which ever left a universal open for ministry, or would encourage each one to wait on the Holy Ghost, in order that he might minister, was the *extraordinary* state, as we see in the church at Corinth, which now we have not. It should now be with us as in the churches at Antioch and Philippi, those exercising their ministry whom God had made ministers, the rest being silent. If we are told of the joints and bands, Col. ii. 19, then I say that there is room, in our every-day duties and intercourse—in the various relations and charities

of life—in the several claims and necessities of the body—for the exercise of those, without making them to contradict other Scriptures, or making them a pretext for disturbing what should be the godly order of our meetings.

We are told of a brotherhood in Switzerland, who refused to receive one, of some grace and power, *as a minister*. “We are a brotherhood,” say they, “and cannot receive a minister as a minister.” Why, it is manifest, on this ground, that this Swiss brotherhood would have refused Paul, or even Gabriel, had they come to them, except as brethren. It matters not what message from God they bear, or how highly accredited they be of their Lord: no; all is met with the little dogma of their sect, “We are a brotherhood, and cannot receive a minister as a minister.” Alas, for the poverty of man’s mind! But into what rebellion against God may it not lead us? I freely admit that we are not called upon to receive any one as a minister till we know his credentials: but mind, this is not the case with these Swiss brethren. No: it was not a question of credentials at all; but, “We cannot receive a *minister* as a *minister*!” And yet, when God accredits his servant, who is it that dares to reject him? Ay—a minister as a minister?

I believe in the divine institution of the Christian ministry; and I ask, if ministry be not of divine institution, then what is it but a thing of human presumption?

Again, the pastorship surely is not to be overturned on account of the abuse: if abuse is to deprive us of the truth, then what one truth will be left us? I am sure that no congregation will ever be kept together, in any degree of spiritual health, without ministry—careful, godly ministry.

I left the Church of England, desiring to be more largely a member of the Church of God, and not desiring any thing of sectarian straitness. This feeling I hold to; and on this, God helping me, will I act. I know only the name of Jesus as a passport to fellowship, and the bond of our union. I shall hold to my liberty to worship where I will, and to minister where I will, subject to my Lord and Master. The weak and tender conscience of any, I trust, I shall ever be ready to meet with meekness and forbearance: but a

sectarian spirit is what I feel no respect for. No one shall come between me and my liberty in Christ.

Brethren—before God I say it—it would be a burden to my heart to have given any just ground of trouble to the weakest among you; I would comfort, and not trouble you: but, in truth, my conscience acquits me herein. My desire, in any intercourse with you, as some of you will bear me witness, has been to minister to faith and conscience, and not to questions to no profit. Further, I trust that I am willing to confess before all, my very weakness and unworthiness, and to thank the weakest who will help me by his prayers; but, in humbleness and thankfulness to my God I would say it, I am not conscious of having gone back. I think that the name of Jesus, blessed be God! is as precious to my soul at this time as it ever was, and that the desire of my heart to be subject to his will is as strong as ever: but many things I see among brethren, from which I desire to be utterly separate: for instance, the sectarian narrowness, which is, I think, a growing evil; and the dishonour to God and his Spirit in denying the divine institution of the ministry, and making it a thing which every one may take up under the name of the dishonoured Spirit; and then the radicalism which would break through the order of society and the proprieties of life, putting many out of their place, and where God has not put them: if separation from these be “going back,” then I desire to go back, and stand as separate as I may.

I doubt not that the movement of brethren has had God with it; but then, it has had a good deal with it that was not of God; and it has had God with it more, I do believe, in times past, than it has now: and further, God was not confined to it, but wrought in other movements as much, or more, than among brethren. It is vain to say, that he who assails it is fighting against God's work as much as were Luther's opponents in his day; for what was the contest of Luther? It was the upholding of justification by Christ against the powers of darkness leagued against it; this was the battle of the reformation: and he who opposes the movement of brethren, is not surely all one fighting against God's work, even as the Papists and infidels who opposed Luther. How many of the truly godly of the

land have opposed the movement of brethren. It has been said that I oppose it; but to this I do not assent. I oppose its abuses, but not the truth it holds: as to this, my mind is unchanged; but again and again I say, that if I may not have the truth without being overshadowed by the abuse, then give me the one-man system of a true servant of God, as being, from all that I know of the Lord's mind, far less offensive to Him and injurious to souls.

I thus give my testimony on a subject of which I have been no inconsiderate observer. I see the evil working apace to its end; and I have little doubt as to what that end will be, if the evil be not resolutely, unselfishly met. A congregation may for a season be upheld by excitement, or novelty, or self-satisfaction as to spiritual standing, or something else of the kind; but living souls will sooner or later find out that they can but ill get on, without what God has appointed to help them on—sober pastoral care, and a spiritual ministry. I confess, that from failure herein, to my eye, you appear sufferers in no slight degree. Brethren, bear with me: I say it in faithfulness.

I will venture to say this one word in conclusion: no one brother gave himself, in whatever of weakness it may be, more wholly to the movement of brethren, or with more of sacrifice—probably this makes me the more sensitive to the evil—but I regret to say to how great an extent I have found myself hindered by others. I know not that I have been ministering any where since I came among brethren, where God of His grace has not given me testimony in the body; and where I have not been more or less hindered by some in ministry, or more commonly, pretending to ministry.

The good Lord give us more to have to do with Himself; for it is thus only that we can profitably have to do with one another. What a lamentable tale as to our sad weakness in what we are ever speaking of—the presence of the Holy Ghost—do our actings here present!

I think it well thus generally to witness to the evil, and there to drop it. My words may one day be remembered.

And now, brethren, peace be unto you. See that your souls are established in grace (it is the only establishing), and not merely in what one hears so much of—“our

principles." There may be great zeal for principles, while there is but little of growth in grace, or blessing in the soul.

Be assured that the abiding of the soul in Christ is worth all the niceties of knowledge; and just unto this, a holy ministry and godly care should work.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Your brother and servant in the Lord.

I now turn to Mr. Darby; and truly it is not happy to my spirit thus to have to meet a brother, with whom my desire would be to live in love, however in some matters we may differ; to my mind the difference is not great. I think that he believes in more than we have as to the Spirit; he thinks that I believe in less. This, however, would not at all disturb my feeling towards him; and therefore I exceedingly regret such a tract as this, which seems to me both unkind and unfair. Mr. D. may justify himself by zeal for the truth;* but surely the truth does not stand in need of the weapons he uses. The great object of the tract seems to be, to bring me in guilty of denying the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the church; the different subjects on which he treats all tend to this, and my own repeated assertion to the contrary goes for nothing; and therefore if I had to do with Mr. Darby alone, truly I should not utter a syllable; but there are others to whom I have ministered the word, and who have received blessing through my ministry, for such I think it needful that I should take

* I would notice here the way in which Mr. D. speaks, p. 6, of the "revival of assurance by faith," as also "the coming again in person of the Lord Jesus Christ," as "characterising the ministry of the brethren." But surely in justice we must confess, that these blessed truths were held and preached by many, specially in the establishments, long before "the brethren" appeared. Blessed truth surely is the assurance of faith; but, by incautious dealing with it, how many have been led to profess it who never had it of God: they would not seem behind their brethren, or to fall short of them, and thus get into a most untrue and unhealthy state by a kind of daubing with untempered mortar. In the same page Mr. D. states as one of the principles of brethren, "that nothing should be owned which was not of the Holy Ghost." Blessed if it had been so; but, ah, the failure and abuse as to this! We need indeed to see well to it, that what we get under the name of the Spirit, is really of the Spirit.

some notice of Mr. D.'s grievous accusations: surely it is not a little thing to weaken the testimony of a servant of God, and hinder its effects in the hearts of others.

Over twenty times in this one letter does Mr. D. charge on me the denial of, or unbelief in, the indwelling and operations of the Holy Ghost, in one shape or other. Now I ask of any one, with a dispassionate judgment, to consider the different expressions on this subject in the foregoing extracts: and which, for the more convenient reference, I have printed in *italics*; he will there find me asserting, "The Holy Spirit alone as the *power* of fellowship;" further, "our *power*, as to Rom. xii., of God and by his Holy Spirit"—"edification as the evidence of the *Spirit's work* among us"—"the Spirit's *operation and guidance*"—"the *acting* of the Holy Spirit in the church or individual"—"the Spirit's *abiding and presence* during our Lord's absence"—"the *indwelling* (John xiv. 17) as to the church or individual"—"the one same blessed spiritual presence, whether it be *individually or collectively*;" and finally, my assurance, "that *the Spirit remaineth among us.*" Now, there is not, I believe, one of these truths, which I here profess and hold before God, which Mr. D. does not charge me with disbelieving or denying, and that, as he says, "after reading and re-reading my tracts." I ask any candid person who has read my first tract on ministry;* does it deny the indwelling and operation of the Spirit of God in the church? In truth, it proceeds on the acknowledgment of this great doctrine; for it was written with a view to remedy the abuse resulting from it, and many were the testimonies I had to the value of the tract, and never did I hear of one entertaining the above suspicion till Mr. D. asserted it; indeed the distinct statement of the tract is, "the Spirit we have, or we have nothing."

But Mr. D. not only charges me with false doctrine, but plainly imputes dishonesty to me in dealing with the subject. Speaking of the Holy Ghost in the church, he says, "this it is which it is sought to deprive you of; it may be clothed in terms *which may seem* not to deny it, because that would

* This Tract I hope to publish if the Lord will.

alarm:" and a little further on he says, "I dare say it may not be admitted ; but if one comes to rob me of my treasure, his not telling me he is, nor admitting that he is, cannot satisfy me." Surely not ; one coming to rob is plainly a thief and a robber, whatever he may admit : but suppose one is charged with coming to rob, who has no thought of it, but the contrary, then what is to be said of him who makes so unfounded an accusation ?

Mr. D. is willing indeed to admit that those acting so, "may be ignorant of the truth itself, and therefore of the loss of it." It is an uncomfortable choice he gives one, between dishonesty and "ignorance of the truth."

Brethren, I never denied the presence of the Holy Ghost in the church or believer, since God of His mercy first opened my eyes to see it ; nor ever went forth to rob the saints through intent or ignorance, nor ever used feigned words to conceal any part of my thoughts, or to convey a different impression from what I felt and believed, though of all this Mr. D. accuses me. My repeated testimony has been to the presence of the Holy Spirit, however grieved and hindered ; and my exhortation, as many could bear me witness, to seek, in humiliation and prayer, increased power of the Holy Spirit among us. Mr. D. indeed says that I do deny it, and merely admit, "that grace just sanctifies natural talent and education." But this witness is not true ; and Mr. D., I trust, will see reason to repent of these misrepresentations and hindrances to a servant of God, who needs to be helped, not hindered. My repeated testimony is to the Holy Spirit, sanctifying and using man's endowments and attainments as He will, and their utter vanity without Him. Will Mr. D. deny that the Spirit uses man's mind and acquirements ? He cannot. Or will he assert that it is unholy and wicked men he uses ? He cannot : but this seems just what would follow from his opposition to sanctified powers. I read, however, of the "*vessel sanctified, and meet for the Master's use ;*" and such I will continue to believe God uses, and such I believe are pleasing to God, however Mr. D. may gainsay or oppose. How entirely do I see this God's way in my acquaintance with brethren ; and what ground of humiliation should it be to some of us !

Mr. D. repeatedly refers to my explanation of Eph. ii.

What I said on that subject I here quote, as Mr. D. considerably misrepresents or mistakes it: "A power in the body distinct from the members arises only from a too literal and, I think, debasing view of Eph. ii.; as if there were certain chambers in the spiritual temple, as in the material." Now as to this, my mind is unchanged, and, taking the passage in its merely literal sense, I am surprised how it can appear otherwise than debasing to any one: for what was the indwelling in the temple? It was the cloud of glory in the chamber formed by the walls of the temple. Are we to transfer this literally to the church? Are believers, are the living members of Christ, as walls forming a chamber, inside of which God dwells? This is the literal view; and, I ask, is it not a lowering and debasing view? Believers are not as the lifeless walls of the temple, enclosing a chamber, within which God dwells; no, they are themselves the temple—the church—the living stones, indwelt, inhabited of God. Mr. D. dwells much on this; I thus explain my meaning, and leave it with such as will calmly consider it.

Mr. D. quotes several passages from the Old Testament to shew God's dwelling of old with men, and asks, "Are we worse off now as to this?" I confess that, according to the literal view of Eph. ii., I do not see how we are better off: I believe, as the Scriptures teach us, that we are better off, for we have the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, not as in the chamber of a house, but in the living members of the body.

In quoting from one of my tracts on this subject, Mr. D. says, "Take Mr. H.'s own account of it, 'a dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the church, *apart and distinct from the members*, is what I confess my inability to receive.'" Now this, *by itself*, would leave an unfavourable impression on many minds; the whole sentence runs thus:—"I fully acknowledge the acting of the Holy Spirit in the church or individual, as also the promise Matt. xviii. 20: but a dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church, *apart and distinct from the members*, is what I confess my inability to receive." It is manifest how the former part, which Mr. D. omits, affects my meaning; and so in Mr. D.'s next quotation, he omits the former part, expressive of my belief in the presence

of the Spirit, individually or collectively. Mr. D. will charge me with denying the Holy Ghost in the church, because I do not see it distinct and separate from the members; but surely as well might I charge Mr. D. with denying the unity of the body and the unity of the Spirit, because he will so separate the body from the members, and divide the indwelling of the Spirit as to both.

Mr. D. refers to my suppressed reply to himself: I quote the passage he refers to, for it is my belief, and I see no scriptural reason to relinquish it: "I quite admit, in coming together to wait on God in spirit and in truth, that there may be a very great increase of spiritual power, but not apart from the dwelling in the members. When the Spirit was first poured out, there was great power; but surely from the members being filled with the Holy Ghost, and nothing distinct from this. So on the renewal of the Spirit (ch. iv. 31), and, indeed, all through the book; but it was individual power, from the individual indwelling in each; and then aggregate power from the union of all: this union is most pleasing to the Lord, and where we may ever expect increased power."

I regret the use of the word "aggregate," it does not harmonize with the rest of the sentence, or accurately convey my meaning. I do believe that there may be increased power and presence of the Spirit in coming together, though I have my doubts if it often is so; for I think you will generally find the testimony of saints unto this, that their highest joy and sense of spiritual presence is when alone with the Lord. But alone, or in fellowship with others, I see the one and the same Spirit, whether in the one or the thousand; and I cannot but look with suspicion on these distinctions that are being so insisted on.

Let us look a little at those scriptures which more prominently bring this subject before us; and first, John xx. 22, "He saith unto *them*, Receive *ye* the Holy Ghost." No dwelling in the body here apart from the members. Next we come to Acts ii., and on this Mr. D. says, p. 18, "in which of the members was He acting when the place shook where they were assembled?" It would seem, neither in the members nor the body: "it filled all the house." Observe, I never denied the separate dwelling of the Holy Ghost where He will or God willeth, but only *not in the body apart from the*

members. I do not see this in the Scripture ; and abuse has resulted from it. When the Holy Ghost does come to them, in Acts ii., what is the testimony,—“ they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak,” &c.; but not the body here apart from the members ;—neither in the fresh outpouring (iv. 31),—nor in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, ch. v.; they lied to the Holy Ghost, more specially I believe in Peter, as I think it is plain from comparing ver. 3 with 8, 9.—So also in the seven full of the Holy Ghost, ch. vi.—So in the individual cases of Stephen, ch. vii., and Saul, ch. ix. These members of the body were filled with the Holy Ghost. Where is the distinction in their case, or what did they get additional as to the body? They went in the fulness of the Spirit—what did they find more at the meeting together? they would go rather to give out than to get. Others were partakers of what they previously had of God, though doubtless in communion there was common blessing.—So also in the first outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles, x. 44.—So in the Ephesian converts, ch. xix.—So also in 1 Cor. xii. we see the indwelling of the Spirit in much power in the members.—So also in ch. xiv. the comer-in knew God as in them of a truth ; but, how? from the exercise of the members, the speaking of the prophets to his conscience.—So also in Ep. iv. ; and, indeed, I do not know of any scripture which speaks a different language ; if there were such, it would not, I believe, have escaped the acuteness of Mr. Darby. He refers, indeed, to 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17 ; but I do not discern the body here apart from the members. “ *Ye are the temple of God, the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.*” Indeed, every indwelling we read of in the church seems to resolve itself into the members ; and truly, for what is the church but the members? And I cannot see, with Mr. Darby, what you “ are losing for your souls by such statements.” I do not know how we can be losing by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost ; and this is my belief and my teaching. But I confess, the way in which Mr. D. speaks of the Spirit, is to me more like Irvingite pretension than the sobriety of truth as to our present state ; indeed, it would seem as if he suspected that he exposed himself to some such imputation from the disclaimer of pretension “ to inspiration in the sense of new revelation.” And a very

necessary disclaimer ; for it is just the remark I have heard some to make. Mr. D. says he means "simply that the Holy Ghost acts in leading, guiding, filling, and using the vessel." That is, He acts in and by man. All this I fully admit in the tract^s Mr. D. so opposes. It is my belief even as Mr. Darby's. Mr. D., however, seems to know my belief better than I do myself ; and accordingly, in p. 11 of his letter, he gives the following representation of my views : "Not only is there no distinct dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the church other than in the members ; but, *though the term be used*, there is none in the members neither, save as just influencing graciously every saint. It amounts to the general idea of grace, or gracious influence, sanctifying natural or acquired powers. Living power by the moving of the Holy Ghost there is none. This living power in the members working to the good of the body is gone. Gift is denied absolutely in the members ; none exists any more (grace may act on their hearts) ; and the Holy Ghost does not dwell in the body *apart* from the members ; so that really between what His action in, or rather on, the members, on one part, is reduced to, and the denial of His dwelling or acting on the body apart from the members on the other, His personal presence, as acting in any power in the church, is wholly denied." This is a bold charge, and a very unfair one. Mr. D. brings his own words and puts them on my thoughts, and his own thoughts and puts them on my words, and thus makes out a statement of error he seems anxious any how to fasten on me, but which is utterly abhorrent to me, and unwarranted by anything I have said. And all this after a letter of such affection as I have not often received. If this be the fruit of his love, then what is its value ? Mr. D. dwells here and elsewhere, through his letter, on my denial of *gift*, and draws from it his own conclusion, never once intimating what I was so careful constantly to keep in view in my tract, the particular sense in which I used the word *gift*, and that in the commonly-received acceptation of the word I had no thought of denying it.

Mr. D. dwells on what I say of ministry by the Spirit, and the Spirit by man, which he is "satisfied is merely substituting man for the Holy Ghost." Now observe my

words ; I say, that, "for *distinction's sake*," I would call the ordinary ministry "*by the Spirit*," but I say, that, in the Scriptures, besides this *ordinary* ministry, we also have *extraordinary*. Mr. D. has not ventured to deny this ; nor indeed do I see how any one can, if there were only such chapters as Acts ii. and 1 Cor. xii. before us. Now this I would call more especially the Holy Ghost ministering by man : that both expressions may be used as equivalent, I never meant to deny ; it was not my intention to go into the scriptural use of the *terms*, but to distinguish on a *subject*, where I believe it is very important to distinguish ; and as to this, many will agree with me. Thus, I never heard one speak, of whom I could say, "that is the utterance of the Holy Ghost—the Holy Ghost is speaking by him ;" but through God's grace I have heard many, of whom I could say, that they were speaking by the help and guidance of the Holy Ghost. Now this is simply the distinction I wish to make and observe, *for distinction's sake*. This Mr. D. makes the ground of a fresh charge of the lowest Arminianism as to the Spirit, and not believing in the presence and acting of the Holy Ghost ; and vindicates this on the ground of my calling on brethren in my former tract to retrace their steps ; but this he introduces altogether out of its connexion.

In a note here Mr. D. says, "In every shape and way the acting of the Holy Ghost Himself is denied. Suppose a person believes he is led by the Spirit of God to exhort his brethren, this is denominated as *impulse*. Man may act by the Spirit ; but this would be the Spirit acting by man, and this cannot be." Where did I say, "it cannot be," or deny the Spirit acting by man ? Mr. D. denies it for me ; but I have asserted it over and over again. I say, indeed, that I do not witness, as of old, the Spirit *speaking* by man, the *utterance* of the Holy Ghost now ; and Mr. D. has in nowise changed my mind as to this. Mr. D. here and again reverts to *impulse* ; but he seems to use the word in a sense different to that in which I have used it ; he seems merely to refer it to the acting or power of the Spirit in man : this I never denied, but use the word rather in reference to a *felt* or *conscious* working ;—a sensible impression or motion of one's mind or feelings, what we

generally understand by the phrase, "the Spirit moves me;" now, I am free to confess that this is not in anywise the source of my ministry: if it be so with Mr. D., of course I do not judge him herein; but I have said I minister in the intelligence of the word, and looking for the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, as being in God's way; and knowing nothing to profit without the Spirit; and what I say of waiting, I said solely in reference to the waiting of my own soul on God for his service: I wait, not on impulse, but on God, to have my soul fitted for any thing He may have for me to do. Mr. D. says, he waits to get strength, through the blessing conferred on some others; but this is an unfair turn to the subject; as to others, I venture to say, that there is not a ministering brother who has more waited for them, or given a freer open for any thing they may have of God, or God may send by them.

In p. 19, Mr. D. represents me as saying, "that unity is gone; that open for the Holy Ghost to act in the members is a by-gone mode of God's dealing in His house, because the Holy Ghost acts neither in mode nor measure as in the New Testament times." Every one of these assertions are untrue; the three strung together are taken from three different tracts—two of them suppressed. I cannot help saying, Where is the fear of God in this acting? Where is brotherly love? I said that unity is gone as a *visible thing*—visible unity; and who will deny it, in the wretched, broken, divided state of the church? I fully admit its unbroken unity with God. "God has a living body, that He will never fail," was my word, in reply to Mr. Darby—I say the extraordinary acting of the Spirit, as we see it in 1 Cor. xii. and xiv., is a by-gone thing—and as to mode and measure, I say, "Not in mode as to his extraordinary acting; *in mode indeed*, but not in measure, as to his ordinary acting." Now, I ask, what is this but deliberate misrepresentation? And really, this kind of thing, whatever it be, is but a fair sample of the character of his tract. Mr. D. scruples not to take different sentences from different tracts; he takes them all out of their connexion; he takes as much of each as he likes, and leaves the rest; he strings them together, and draws his own conclusions from them. I ask, if we were to deal even with the Scriptures after this manner, what error or evil is it that we might not make them to sanction?

Mr. D. refers to the subject of "arrangement;" and if one takes my views from his representations, then truly they are absurd and foolish enough. What I say on the subject, is simply this: that I see arrangement in the New Testament; and I know not why we may not have it now, in subjection to God; that I see no reason why we may not look for the Spirit's presence and power with arrangement as without it; but if not, then, as I said in my first tract, "If it be found inconsistent with dependence on God, away with it; any confusion is better than self-dependance, or the order that excludes God." Anything of arrangement seems very offensive to Mr. D., of course, as interfering with the Spirit's sovereignty: the Spirit may indwell, act by impulse, lead, guide, teach, animate, sustain, witness, help, &c.—every thing but arrange; this would seem subversive of his acting. But was not the appointment of elders in every church the Spirit's arrangement? Were not the different offices we see in Eph. iv. the Spirit's arrangement? Were not the appointments and directions (Acts vi. and xiii.), and the directions to the gifted brethren for the exercise of their gifts (1 Cor. xiv.), the Spirit's arrangement; and much besides with which the New Testament supplies us? Here then I see a principle to act on; I believe that we have the same Spirit, and we have the oracles of God; only let us see that our arrangement is in subjection of soul, and I believe that we shall be less in danger of grieving or hindering the Spirit, than by leaving an open for any one to rise, and call the name of the Holy Ghost upon what is too often but the fancy or forwardness of his own mind, or the excitement of his feeling. However I lay down no rule, only let us have godly order; but if Mr. D. thinks so hardly of arrangement, as interfering with the Spirit's order, how is it that he countenances it in so many things as I before noticed: "our hours and places of meeting, our lectures and preachings, our hymn books, and various plans for meeting the necessities of the saints, both spiritual and temporal, are but arrangements; besides much also, unexpressed it may often be, but well understood." How is it that Mr. D.'s jealousy for the sovereignty of the Spirit does not appear in these things? And how is the sending hither and thither for help under the force of circumstances consistent with this high profession of dependence on the Spirit, and the acknowledgment of

His liberty and sovereignty—would it not seem as if the profession was felt to be insufficient for the exigency? And how is it that in preaching or teaching, Mr. D. so often takes the service to himself—not a bit too often in my mind: I think it quite right that he should. But is Mr. D. consistent with himself herein? Is not the Spirit present when one is preaching or teaching; and if he be present, and God's people be present, then, on Mr. D.'s principle, is not His liberty abridged, and His sovereignty interfered with, by the restriction of the ministry to one?

Mr. D. accuses me of denying the blessing altogether, because a principle has perhaps been abused, and then passes judgment on me: "It is simple unbelief in the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost; he presses us to retrace our steps, to have no open ministry." It is hard to have to deal with such imputations, and coming from a brother too with whom one has taken sweet counsel: I only say, in reply, I do not deny the blessing wherever I find it; I do not disbelieve in the presence and operations of the Holy Ghost; I do not press any one who has not strayed to retrace his steps; I would have open ministry of every thing that God has given us to profit; but I would not have an open for the extraordinary ministry of the Spirit, because we have it not: all this I have said again and again, as Mr. D. well knows.

I see (p. 20) Mr. D. says, he "owns a ministry, but cannot deny the blessed truth of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the body" [no, this is reserved for me]; "and here I will add, I do not say among the gathered brethren." This one would hail: it is free and charitable; but in the next page, speaking of those gatherings of brethren where God was owned, Mr. D. "found more blessing than when man's arrangements, as proposed by our brother, had taken the place of God: elsewhere I have found decent things of man, a fair show in the flesh, but a sepulchre; the God I found my delight in was not there." And does Mr. D. really mean to assert, that God's presence is confined to the assemblies of those who meet as do "the brethren," as Mr. D. calls them? I can hardly think it, and yet his words seem very like it; surely, if it be so, it is a very narrow sectarianism.

In his last paragraph, Mr. D. would represent me as contradicting myself; but I know not that I have done so. He quotes my words, "'I do not deny our power as to Rom. xii. :'

how is this, when he has insisted that there are no gifts at all?" Why, I plainly stated how it was, that we have the power for ministry, teaching, and exhortation, not as of *gift*, but that we have it of God's Spirit. Does not Mr. D. know of any spiritual power but *gift*? or will he not allow the Spirit to act but in *gift*? as I believe, the Spirit is power, and not *gift*. He continues, "he would allow an open for edification; none of us would wish for any other." Then why not help instead of opposing me in seeking to attain it? this has been all my object. "Before," Mr. D. continues, "he would allow none." When?—for I know not. "I appeal to his own words." What words?—for I know not, if Mr. D. will but deal fairly with them. "The open depended on gift, and these are all gone." The *universal* open, I say, depended on *gift*; the open now, on known ability of God to edify. Unto this, how frequently have I witnessed: and what contradiction is there in this? But it is vain to follow Mr. D. in these continued misrepresentations, as it is a work full of sorrow to one's spirit. In closing, Mr. D. says, "If he feels he has gone too far, and out-stepped the teaching of the word, I do not want to shut the door on his return to it." This is very kind of Mr. D.; but would it not hence appear as if Mr. D. held the latch of the door in his own hand? Now this much will I say, Mr. D. well knows that there is not a gathering in the kingdom, that is not open to me even as unto him; but many gatherings there are with which I could not sit down with a clean conscience; and just here is my difficulty. I cannot, in the fear of God, identify myself with any gathering, when I find this universal open, and consequent dishonour to the Holy Ghost, in calling His name on man's doings. However I may have been hindered individually—as to the body of brethren in the different congregations, I have known nothing but a kind and welcome reception; truly they have received me as one sent from God, and have been willing to give all heed to my message. It is not from the body my hinderance has been: and as to the principles generally I see no reason to doubt their truth. I believe that they are of God's word; but, as I said in first coming among brethren, the abuse will be very bad: it is in reference to the abuse, and the abuse only, that I have often said, and say again, "I believe the one-man ministry of a man of God altogether preferable, and more pleasing to God." Far pre-

ferable to this, however, I believe to be the open for known and felt ability of God to edify, whenever it may be in the body: but I see no evidence now, nor do I believe in such a power or working in the body as was in the apostolic days, when there was an open for every one to rise with his psalm, his doctrine, his tongue, his revelation, or interpretation: this power or working of the Spirit, as in I Cor. xii. and xiv., I do not believe that we now possess. I see no trace of it: it is the bygone mode; but this alone it was that left a *universal* open for ministry in the body; and this is just the thought of my first tract.

Now to assume this—to leave an open for this—is but to engender the weakness and abuse of which so many of the true-hearted complain. But while I deny this power, such as we see in Acts ii. and I Cor. xii., do I therefore deny the Holy Spirit and His indwelling in the body? God forbid. However the unholy thought be imputed to me—I believe in the Holy Ghost even as in the Lord Jesus—I believe in His presence with the church while the bridegroom is absent—I believe in nothing for good without Him. Further, a dwelling in the body I see, and a dwelling in the members; but in neither distinct and separate from the other; and from such distinctions as I hear, it is, that the thought has arisen in my mind, Do they believe in two Spirits? Whether it be in the body at large, or in the minutest members, it is still one and the self-same Spirit pervading the whole and acting as He will—as the one soul, the one life in the human body and its members. There is no life in the members apart from the body, and no body at all apart from the members. I further believe that we may look for increased power of the Spirit in coming together; and His operation will, of course, be different, according to the requirement of the body at large and the requirement of the individual. All this I have expressed in my tracts, and nearly all this Mr. D. charges me, I think, with denying: yet it is my belief. But I will confess it is not without fear that I at all enter on these distinctions: I see how they may be multiplied, and to what danger to the soul. I fear to dogmatise. I would sum up my faith on the subject in few words—I believe in the Spirit's presence, and that there is nothing for good without

Him, whether in the body or the members. I know of no life in the soul apart from Christ—no power in the body apart from the Spirit.

My feeling is, that I have but little difference with Mr. D. as to this. I differ with him, indeed; but it is in his acting, or rather countenancing others in acting, on an assumption of the power of the Spirit that we now have not, that there is nothing to warrant: thus, I believe, is there dishonour to His name and hurt to His saints. To what an extent I have seen this—to what sickening of soul and body—even among the most spiritual. It is usual now so to speak of the sovereignty and rule of the Spirit as guiding and ordering our meetings, as quite to supersede all foresight and human means. Indeed, the way in which some speak of the Spirit would almost lead one to question the need even of the Scriptures being given; but I believe we shall find that it is in the use of means God ordinarily meets, and guides, and blesses us. Now, by this assumption, what we really have of God is often undervalued and hindered, and weak and foolish thoughts are gendered, and a liberty allowed for the most part amounting to every one doing what is right in his own eyes, and then calling it of the Spirit. At one time we hear, “We don’t want ministry; we come to meet the Holy Ghost;” another time it is, “We do not want ministry; we come to break bread;”^{*} as if God’s gracious appointments for blessing were irrecon-

* It was manifestly the practice of the early Christians to meet for communion on the first day of the week—the resurrection morning; and there seems no reason why it should not be a continued practice. But it would seem very much a matter of indifference, whether we so meet on the morning or evening of the Lord’s day; or whether leavened or unleavened bread be used. If one will adhere to the letter of the word, then is there scripture for these things; but the great thing for us is, to get into the spirit of the word.

There is now a growing feeling with many in favour of having the communion before the ministry of the word, as honouring the ordinance as the special object of meeting; but this, I think, is rather an unhappy arrangement, for where there is ministry of God, would not the effect of it be to raise our souls up into communion, and so to a more happy and healthy partaking of the ordinance? Was it not by some working of this kind originally, that it became a mysterious or superstitious kind of rite, to be used only at distant intervals, and with much preparation?

cible with each other. Why, Paul would seem to have been sadly astray, according to the judgment of some of these brethren, if we are to judge from the account given us in Acts xx. 7—11. I know that these things are but the abuses; but why are they not resolutely met with the remedy which God provides for every abuse? And why are many of the poor weak ones, whose souls may be pining for the Word of Life, according to its different ministries—of instruction, comfort, exhortation, warning—the food of God's providing, according to what He knew our wants to be? Why are their souls cheated of their portion by such silly distinctions? Ah, it is to be feared that an enemy's hand is in it, who would cover over his own working under the plea of zeal for some truth of God.

I here close this tract, and with it, I trust, this controversy. I do not think that I shall read anything more which Mr. D. may write on the subject. My confidence in him, as a fair and candid writer, is greatly shaken; I grieve to say it. The ground of this may not appear to a general reader, and just because he is a general reader, glancing hastily over the surface of a subject. But to look closely into his controversial writings, it is really difficult to account for the means which he allows himself to use. I shall not dwell on this painful subject. But, in truth, I should not know my own opinions from the representation Mr. D. gives of them from my tracts. I must ask my friends the justice to take my opinions from myself, and not from Mr. D. or others.

Mr. D. speaks of his statements making me angry; but my feeling is more of sorrow than of anger. I have known Mr. D. long and intimately; and it is painful to me to witness how much there is of what I feel to be unjust and unkind in his tract; the much and valuable truth it holds I can unhesitatingly acknowledge; indeed, there is much it would be both wicked and foolish to deny; though, of course, from its connexion, in a reply to me, it would appear as if I denied it.

I doubt not that many will follow with Mr. D.; but I doubt not also that a day of re-action will come, when many who have been hastily led away will find that the principles of Mr. D. on ministry are much better as recommended by

his pen, than by the sober test of experience ; they will then, probably, acknowledge the importance of the principles which my tract sets forth.

I only further add, that I regret anything in these tracts which may appear harsh or unkind. Anything in this way is only matter for humiliation to a Christian : I would speak the truth, but without unkindness. I am sure that expressions appeared so, that I never meant to be so. I am willing to make the same allowance for others. If our Christianity does not enable us to love, notwithstanding some differences, then surely the measure of it must be very poor.

For myself I can say this at least, the desire of soul is to the Lord. I would live for Him for the little while, and love and help the brotherhood as I may ; but this help I cannot give at the expense of my liberty in Christ. I must give the large sense to that word—the brotherhood—which God, I believe, would have it to bear. I would embrace within it all who love Jesus, and seek increasingly oneness with them, dwelling more on that blessed name in which we are one, than on the points of difference which the enemy would magnify to separate us.

I fear the spirit of sectarianism so congenial to our nature. I do not wish to contract my lips to the *shibboleth* of a party. Surely as the blessed Spirit is in any power with us, Jesus will be uppermost—Jesus Himself—and our hearts enlarged with the things of Jesus, and not with the distinctions which, however they exercise the mind, do not act holily, healthily for the soul.

Brethren, peace be unto you,

Grace and peace in Jesus.

Yours to serve for His sake,

C. H.