

A LETTER

RELATING TO

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Beloved Brethren,—

It is judged by some that a fuller statement of the facts as to the trouble that has arisen among us would be useful to many. I had already in my letter in the circular of December 19th given what I supposed sufficient, confining myself intentionally to what was contained in papers written and circulated largely among us, so that thus the means of judging of what I said might be within reach of all. It is true that other things have since transpired, and the brethren at the Natural History Hall have published their own "Narrative," which conclusively establishes, however, the ground and manner of their action, so that it should be plain to every one how far removed from Scripture (or from all that has been received among us, though that be of little account comparatively,) their principles are. Accordingly it is no wonder to find that wherever the whole matter has come up for simple, godly inquiry, it has been more or less unanimously decided against them, while at Ottawa, Halifax, Toronto, and Philadelphia majorities have forced a division by the refusal of inquiry and the most open disregard of the con-

sciences of the saints. Still, if another review of the facts of the case may be helpful to any, I am content, nay, could not rightly refuse it. May God only use it for real help.

The "Narrative" makes plain that the attack was planned and begun, before ever my last tract was printed or written, when all the ground of it was the paper on "Life and the Spirit," *printed for private circulation only, and not published at all*. The letter of C. W., (copied and circulated zealously, as every word of unfavorable criticism since has been,) placed at the beginning of their statement, stands there as the justification of all that has since taken place. It deserves, therefore, the fullest attention, and for this purpose I reproduce a quotation here:—

"Now as to the views themselves, while he held them privately, or only let them out occasionally to individuals, they might be borne with, and every effort made to deliver him personally from them; but when, in spite of repeated warnings and remonstrances, he promulgates them in print, and sends them far and wide, and challenges their acceptance by God's saints, as views to be received as His truth for His Church, it is another question entirely—it becomes a heresy, and he a heretic. He gathers a party round himself by these views, and makes division or heresy in the Church of God."

These, then, are the principles openly accepted by A. P. C. and those with him, and which explain their course.

If held privately, the views might be borne with, there was nothing in them fundamentally false. In point of fact, they *had* been "borne with" (if that is the right term,) for years past. C. W. "bore with" them at Croydon in 1881, (after they had come out

in the meeting there, as the "Narrative" shows,) he urged the holder of them into co-editorship with himself in a magazine to teach the saints. But more: in *Helps by the Way* the same views substantially had been brought out by another under my own editorship, and actually sent far and wide and acceptance challenged of them as truth for the Church. Of this A. P. C. was well aware, as he answered the paper in the same periodical; J. N. D. was well aware of it, as it was the cause of his own tract on Sealing being brought out; and C. W. was well aware of it when he undertook, with me, the editorship of "*Words of Faith.*" And still more: *I had already stated my expectation of publishing my own view.* But at this time no one dreamed that this was heresy. J. N. D. in his last letter to me, without one word of rebuke or remonstrance for my views, coupled the writer of the former paper and myself together in the wish, "The Lord be with you both in your work."

My reasons for printing my first tract I need not enter into. We deceive ourselves often, and might deceive others as to this; but it could not be expected that I should even imagine it was heresy to print it. Of repeated warnings and remonstrances not to do so, I am wholly ignorant. A paper upon "The difference between 'in Christ' and 'in the Son,'" I had forwarded, while an editor of it, to C. W., for insertion in "*Words of Faith,*" and he told me he could not put it in without a disclaimer on his part of its being his view. He never spoke of

heresy, and on my part I did not press its insertion, but asked him to send it to J. A. T., who thereupon wrote me a kind but very strong letter, in which he *did* urge me not to put forth these views at all. He was the only one who did so, and after weighing seriously, as I have done all that has been published or written on the subject, I felt I could not accede to his request. I had no idea it was more than brotherly counsel, or that I should be heretical in not listening to it.

My tract was intended to lay my views before those who could intelligently judge of them, hoping that by conference they might be cleared in points that were still indistinct to me, and my own ground might be fully known. For this purpose my thought had been to get some copies by the electric pen, but I found printing was cheaper, and printed it. Far and wide I did not send it, nor press it upon any. Some thirty copies I sent to all the laborers in England whose addresses I had, and to a few who were not exactly that. In America a still smaller number were similarly distributed. They were sent to the most unlikely people in the whole world to gather a party around myself out of; and many, I knew, were quite opposed to them. A quieter course would better have suited heresy. I do not think it possible for any one to devise a better method to secure the exposure of the error speedily and effectually, if error it were.

Of those to whom I more particularly addressed myself, one brother replied alone for a long time,

and he most kindly and at some length. Afterward, our brother W. J. L. wrote, professedly not taking up more than a point or two; and his letter was copied and circulated against me. For *without* reasoning or remonstrance with me, before this the denunciation had begun. C. W. wrote his letter to P. J. L. Another wrote (not to myself), applying Romans xvi. to me. A paper which was asked for, for a magazine, was shut out, *not* because of error in it, but simply because it was signed with the objectionable initials. A. P. C. had come to America as (according to his own words to me at Plainfield) "the representative of English brethren." In short, the course was already initiated which has culminated in the action of the Natural History Hall.

My first tract was meagre, written only for a certain class, and in some points unsatisfactory, where the Lord had (I must for myself still affirm) given me since, in various ways, more light. I felt I owed it to the truth which I believed I had, to write another, quoting this time from letters or printed writings whatever would contribute to the elucidation of what was in question. Whether I should print all this I had not yet determined,—not for some time after. It was completed fully a short time before the Plainfield meeting began.

Meanwhile A. P. C. had come to see me on his way south, but we could not agree; and every where he was already bringing up the matter. At Napanee, where there was a meeting before the Plainfield one, it was pressed hard. I was not at it, and had

remained for the most part ignorant of what was going on, lecturing and preaching as usual, not knowing or asking whether brethren received my views or not. At some places, when lecturing on Romans, they more or less came in necessarily, and to a few, with whom I was intimate, I showed what I had written. No where and upon none did I press them; so far as I remember, wrote to none upon the subject even.

The Plainfield meeting came, and for three days, A. P. C. not being there, we had, as many can testify, quiet and harmony, the points of difference not being introduced. On the Lord's day morning A. P. C. arrived, and at the close of the meeting warned brethren of Judaism coming in, and that those who served the tabernacle could not eat of the Christian altar.

From that time till nearly the close of the meeting we heard of it with little intermission. In the meetings no one replied, but outside of these it could not be kept entirely out. A. P. C. stated to me in a private interview, as before noticed, that he was the representative of the English brethren, and that J. N. D. had been raised up of God to give us the truth, and (save fundamental doctrines) whatever he put forth, he (A. P. C.) received as truth. Again, he urged me to withdraw my tract, and again I stated that, until they refuted it, I could not.

After the more public meeting was over, it was agreed that we should meet privately to discuss the doctrines in question, and quite a number stayed.

I read part of my last tract in manuscript, and he replied. He contended against my paper being printed, because it took up J. N. D. (whose tract on Sealing he was giving to every one throughout the meeting), but even yet no charge of heresy was made.

Soon after the meeting, J. A. T.'s paper appeared in "*Words of Faith*," and Cecil's answer to my first tract came out in Montreal. Both were scattered widely, and awoke attention every where. Nothing had been published by me as yet at all, and this was an additional reason for publication. Otherwise, I no more spread the latter tract than the former; it was never advertised, or put into the list of published books; and about the same number was distributed in the same manner as before. After this I did no more, but returned to more perfect quiet than ever, lecturing on the Psalms at New York, on Matthew, or preaching the gospel, at Plainfield.

While I was thus employed, a letter from Canada received by another, not myself, informed me that A. P. C. had been pressing these questions unceasingly at Montreal, and that brethren were much troubled about it. I thereupon wrote to the brethren through G. Smith, to urge upon them quietness and forbearance with one another. I dwelt upon the fact that the differences were mainly of long standing, and had not hitherto interrupted fellowship, and that those who opposed my views did not agree with either J. N. D. or one another. I received an

answer from Smith, sending me back my letter, at the wish of the brothers' meeting, for correction, and an extract they had printed from Vol. xxxi. of the Collected Writings, to show me that J. N. D. taught a double quickening as A. P. C. did, and that the latter had stated that there was nearly a breach at Croydon between Mr. Darby and myself on account of my doctrines. Moreover, G. Smith said that to state that Old-Testament saints had life in the Son was (he believed) "fundamental error," and must cause division. I saw that I could do little in this case by writing letters, and felt I could not excuse myself if division took place without my doing what I could to avert it. I left, therefore, the next day for Montreal.

I arrived Thursday night. Friday was a lecture of Cecil's in the hall. Their "Narrative" shows that he was lecturing to public audiences on these very subjects, and I found that many would no longer attend the lectures, partly on this account, partly because of the way in which A. P. C., with Mace (who had more lately joined him in it), was openly working for division. Some of these brethren wished to meet me on Friday night, and did so at a private house, perhaps fifteen or so altogether. No effort was ever made to deter any from going to the public meeting, but I felt free to meet those who could not go. At the brothers' meeting at Mr. B.'s, on Saturday, Cecil reproached me with this, saying I had come for peace and was already causing schism by having a meeting when an assembly-meeting was

going on. I denied that it was an assembly-meeting, but he still contended that when an acknowledged teacher was exercising his gift, this was an assembly-meeting. Others declared why they could not attend his lectures. I spoke of Smith's letter to me, assured them I had not come to Montreal to teach doctrines of mine, but simply and really to seek to prevent division; and urged Holden's teaching in his "Eternal Life" to be clearly the same as what was condemned in me. Cecil replied that Holden was young in the truth when his book was written, and I was not.

Finally, we asked for meetings to see where the heresy was, and they at last consented to meet in the hall the next week. Accordingly we met Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and the following Tuesday, again to consider this. I do not dwell upon the meetings. The doctrines have been treated sufficiently elsewhere. But in the course of them, extracts from Holden, Patterson, and J. B. S., to show that prominent doctrines objected to were held singly by each of these, were read and urged against division. They said that was not Scripture, which of course we knew, and that we had to prove our doctrines to be scriptural, which we denied, contending *they* had to prove that they were heretical. Then A. P. C. denied that they meant doctrinal heresy, but making a party. I asked where the party had sprung up, or how I had made it. The answer was, by putting forth the doctrines. But what need to discuss the doctrines, then? and why speak of fundamental

error, as was done? Would a tract on baptism be held as heresy because a party would be made by it? Here they vacillated between the party-making and the doctrines, evidently bewildered.

On Saturday, I went, at the invitation of a brother, to Ottawa, where I had also been openly charged with heresy. A meeting had been arranged for the evening at a private house, where others could meet me; but Mace had heard of it, was in Ottawa as soon as I was, and went round warning every one against attending my meetings and inviting brethren to another meeting elsewhere the same evening. A few came, nevertheless. The next day, at the close of the morning meeting, a brother asked for a meeting to inquire as to my heresy. It was refused, Mace and others openly protesting against it. I begged them at least to read my book for themselves, and Mace added they would be hypocrites if they judged it without doing so. Yet at Montreal they had actually been forbidden to do so; and in Ottawa, when afterward, on being urged to sign a circular in sympathy with the first Montreal one, some objected that they had not read my book, Mace himself, or his companion, replied, "Do you not believe what we tell you about it?"

For Tuesday night, I went back to Montreal. On Saturday, at the brothers' meeting, we urged once more, Would the matter rest here? or did they mean to press things to division? To our astonishment, they replied, "No one ever spoke of division but yourselves"! I asked, "Why, when I read Smith's

letter, which spoke of it, did you not tell us so?" They again affirmed it. A brother asked, "Then, do you mean to say you have no such thought?" "Oh," it was replied, "*it may come to that!*"

Next day, their first circular, rejecting my ministry, to which they had got names by private, personal solicitation, was read in the meeting. It was asked, "You do not claim this as an assembly-act?" "No," they answered, "only of the elder brethren." But at the door, A. P. C. himself distributed a tract to show that unanimity was not necessary to *assembly* action; and this was sent round (whether every where, I cannot say) as companion to the circular!

On the Wednesday following that, a prayer-meeting took place, at which A. P. C. openly charged us (though of course not by name) with schism, following human leaders, and hypocrisy in praying to God without repentance. Many rose and left while he was speaking, for which they were afterward rebuked as disorderly, and declared to have no part in discipline-meetings. This enabled A. P. C.'s party more openly to assume to be the assembly when they sent me professedly their "second admonition" to Ottawa, where, at the time, I was. This I rejected, as the act of a faction only; and they ended by declaring me outside, spite of all protests by a large number of the assembly, at a meeting on the second Wednesday after the prayer-meeting referred to.

During this time, I was away, visiting by invitation several of the neighboring gatherings, but

returned the day after to a meeting of those who dissented from the action. About forty were present. All were pressed to speak openly their mind, and there was united judgment that the Natural History Hall had ceased to be the table of the Lord. One or two proposed waiting, but after consideration, it was judged by all that it would only be lack of faith to allow the table to lapse in Montreal. The course pursued by the majority left no hope, with regard to them, of any result from this, and to wait upon the action of other gatherings would be mere feebleness where the case was plain, and principles adopted which were entirely subversive of the whole ground on which we met. These principles have since been put forth openly in their recent "Narrative," and may well be left, as stated by themselves, to the judgment of brethren.

On Friday, I left Montreal to return to Plainfield, and on the second Lord's day after my return, a printed circular was read from Montreal announcing the action against me, and asking for the concurrence of the Plainfield assembly. Their answer they have publicly given, and this was the first real assembly-action with regard to the matter. Boston, about that time, also gave a unanimous judgment, followed, a few days after, by Hyde Park.

I do not think it needful to add more. The questions presented by all this are exceedingly serious. The adoption of a creed, none the less real because an unwritten one; the tying down of all ministry to conformity with this, and the quenching of the free

action of the Spirit among us ; the establishment of party-action for that of the assembly ; the compulsory subjection of the consciences of the younger to those of the elder : in a word, clerisy and sectarianism in full sway ;—this is what the Natural History Hall openly identifies itself with. We need not, surely, fear that the Lord will allow those who are walking with Him to be ensnared in such open evil. Yet it is plain in three years we have traveled far.

Very truly, in Christ, ever,

F. W. GRANT.

Plainfield, February, 1885.

P. S.—I have received more than one letter, urging upon me to do what I could to satisfy my brethren, and to check even now the lamentable division which has begun. I answer, would indeed that it lay with me to do so. The cancelling or withdrawing of my tracts would satisfy none, as long as I was free to teach the doctrine of them. But this, as long as I hold the doctrine, I dare not give up. I have examined with care, and prayerfully, all that has been written against me, and it has only confirmed me the more. I would gladly have gone any where to meet brethren, and confer with them as to what I hold, and be instructed where I was in error. None have asked me ; few cared even to reason with me. I sent my tracts to all I knew who could best expose my views if false, and for a mere private

paper which took substantially only the ground that had been publicly taken by others before, I was pronounced a heretic.

As to life in the Son for Old-Testament saints, in maintaining which my chief error is supposed to lie, I am clear that it is J. N. D.'s own teaching. Who can read his Coll. Writings, Proph. iii. 554, and deny it? It is they who have mistaken what he has elsewhere said, as I have shown in the February number of *Help and Food*. I am satisfied that as to quickening together with Christ, he never meant to teach that it was a *second* quickening. A brother has recently written to me that it is indeed out of death in sins that we are quickened with Him, but that this is the condition reached only in Romans vii. 24! Is this too J. N. D.'s doctrine? Surely not. In the very article on Colossians in Vol. xxxi, which has been elsewhere referred to, I find it defined as "*not a movement of my heart toward God,*" and that surely is the truth. Out of this state it is we are quickened together with Christ, and, with that, forgiven all trespasses. (Col. ii. 13.)

If to hold and teach this (and almost all I hold on these points hangs upon this) be accounted heresy, then we must appeal from the judgment of our brethren, to Him upon whose mercy and faithfulness to His own we can surely count, and leave the result to Him.

F. W. G.