

How grievous it is that those who delight in the Lord's love to them, and all that He is to them, and who also desire His glory and to be found walking according to His mind in brotherly love, uprightness and truth should yet be found to differ so greatly in judgment at this time. Having, however, this common ground of desire for the Lord's glory from love to Him, may we not count on Him to give that oneness of judgment prayed for at Kennington on Tuesday Oct. 19th? I was unable to stay long there and also felt that not being a London Brother it might be better to be silent.

There are three points however, which press on me in connection with T.W.'s reply and with what was said while I was at the meeting.

(1) As to O.S. not having been put away.

(2) As to his leaving the Lord's Table at his own meeting, which T.W. says is the only place he could leave it.

(3) As to what T.W. refers to in their letter as giving up what God has given to His beloved saints.

Now as to the first point it is quite clear as they say in their letter to Acton that he was not put away. But it is equally clear from that letter and their July 1st. notice that they have declared him out of fellowship on the ground that he had left the Lord's Table. &c.

This brings us to the second point, to understand which, it is needful to take account of T.W.'s actions and the circumstances which led up to them.

By an Assembly act Oct. 18th. 1903 Mr Strange's ministry was refused on account of its "unscriptural and speculative character" and because of "the unhappy strife and contention it has caused", this decision was necessary seeing that for long Mr S. refused to listen to the remonstrances of his brethren as to his ministry.

Consequent on this Mr S. deliberately turned his back on the Lord's Table at T.W. and went and ministered elsewhere, thus despising the Assembly discipline, and what was infinitely worse slighting the blessed Lord in whose Name, as in the midst of the two or three gathered round Him, the action was taken. Now dear Brother, I appeal to you as one loving our blessed Lord Jesus—was not O.S.'s course a dishonour to Him even if we suppose for a moment that T.W.'s act was a mistake? We find from 1Cor.v. and 11Cor.ii. that a saint's local Assembly is the one responsible to reject or to receive back such for God's glory. For instance, suppose while I was away on a visit I was convicted of theft, would not the gathering there rightly refer the matter back to my meeting here to put me away?

J.N.B. write—"No persons for example who had been put out, or who had deliberately separated themselves from—would have been received here. They would have separated from the unity of the body there". Letters Vol. 11. p. 252. The underlining is mine as it so clearly bears on the present case of deliberately avoiding his own meeting.

After a long period Mr S. did go back and broke bread on July. 30th /05, but was told afterwards that they could have no fellowship with him in the breaking of bread. After a further long period viz:—till Feb. 17th /07, during which he acted as before, he returned. On this occasion a brother spoke before breaking of bread of Mr S.'s ways and said they could have no fellowship with him in the breaking of bread: 2 or 3 more confirmed what had been said while 1 or 2 objected. As a result Mr S. sat back. Thus the Assembly as a whole refused him

fellowship on account of his long absence and thus slighting their discipline in the Lord's Name &c. Those who objected I understand broke bread, thus outwardly at any rate, bowing to the Assembly's act though differing in judgment from it.

Of course a ministering brother may be long absent from his own gathering all being right between him and it, without any question being raised, but where such absence is deliberate and consequent on discipline exercised as regards him, the matter is very different and it seems O.S. distinctly separated from the Assembly at T.W., separated from the unity of the body in practice, even though he broke bread at the Lord's Table elsewhere. Brothers at T.W. wrote me as regards this, "We do not say that he has not broken bread at the Lord's Table elsewhere since he left here, but we do say it was not in the unity of the Spirit." In this connection it might be well to notice, as a Brother pointed out to me some time ago apart from any connection with T.W., that in Acts ii.42. fellowship and breaking bread are mentioned separately, thus while both should go together, we alas, find some are breaking bread of whom we could hardly say they were in fellowship.

This would markedly be the case with Mr.S. who being refused fellowship at his own meeting yet broke bread at others.

Questioned as to why they did not give definite notice of their act of 17/2/07 they replied, "We have sought to avoid conflict with other Assemblies respecting Mr.S. and have raised no question, as he was upheld and justified by brethren who had influence amongst the saints and whom we had esteemed, and we also felt the circumstances called for patience and forbearance, and waiting upon God that saints might be exercised." Personally, I think such notice ought to have been given but one can but see from the above quotation the effect on T.W. of the practical refusal of their 1903 act and notice, for which are not we brethren generally greatly to blame?

Lastly as to the giving up spoken of in T.W.'s letter to London Brethren, is it not made clear towards the close of the letter that they refer to the proposal to reconsider and thus set aside their Assembly action and to again go into Mr.S.'s case with Brethren elsewhere.

Now this to me is the point—the most weighty thing in the whole correspondence. For Brothers from T.W. and Brothers from elsewhere, in whom both parties should have confidence, to settle this question is truly a giving up of the sufficiency of the Lord in the midst of the 2 or 3 in all their weakness and failure, and substituting for Him Brothers in whom both parties have confidence. I notice the London letter suggests this not because scripture points out such a course, but as "being in our opinion the only way of settling peacefully a matter which has brought sorrow and estrangement amongst us".

Looked at thus, beloved Brother, I am confident that you as much as any of us would shrink from such a thing so expressive of lack of confidence in "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and for ever" as wholly sufficient for us in days of utter ruin as in the brightest days of the Church's history. May we cling to Him. May we count on Him, and thus accepting T.W.'s acts as done in His Name, look to Him who walks amidst the golden candlesticks with eyes as a flame of fire and feet like unto fine brass, to Himself deal with what has not been according to His mind at T.W. At the same time let those who see the need of it remonstrate with the Assembly at T.W. in all brotherly love and faithfulness and leave it for the Holy Spirit to press it home to their hearts and consciences.

With love in the Lord,

Affectionately yours in Him,

(Signed) W.H.S.Fesbery.

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