

Dear Bro/

Thanks for yours & enclosure which I saw before, also the original of your second joint circular, & other letters; also a statement from the meeting you withdrew from. No doubt it was a mistake to receive the independent preacher; but could this mistake un-church the gathering, & when did the meeting cease to be on true ground? It is clear that until an assembly of God has scripturally refused fellowship with a meeting, 2Tim. ii. 19 (this is the only Scripture you give for your step) cannot apply. Their rejection of a remonstrance from an assembly to clear themselves from evil evidences that the Lord has removed the candlestick (Rev. ii. 5); and it would then be iniquity to remain with them. But all this is of the nature of discipline, and must be done by that which carries with its judgment His authority for the church as a whole. Individuals can act for themselves only, and if they leave a gathering while it is owned elsewhere, they are outside, and the evil left inside. Suppose, for instance, that after their withdrawal, remonstrance from an assembly led the gathering to clear itself: clearly then those who withdrew would need restoration. So long as a gathering is owned & must stand in the Lord's name against the evil, protesting for conscience sake, and contending for the faith, counting upon Christ (Jude 3, 4). An assembly is to purge out the old leaven, put away the wicked person (1Cor. v.); ~~but~~ I am not to purge myself out of an assembly of God.

Facts of a case are of local responsibility, but the divine principles governing the case are universal, and to be pressed; and I believe those referred to in my letter to you are applicable to the case, and should have governed. Observe, you give but the one Scripture, and this clearly does not apply: and is it not a most solemn step without clear and positive Scripture?— especially when you judge and un-church an assembly owned by yourself up to the moment you left it! How could such authority be assumed by individuals? To admit such a principle is to abandon Church discipline, and shipwreck the assembly upon the rocks of clericalism!

Your circular gives no just or sufficient grounds for the grave step. The gathering is not charged with having ^{given} up divine ground, but of receiving a man loose in his views, especially upon baptism! Surely this is inadequate. And as a fact, his reception did not put them into fellowship with his work in Texas, but brought him, personally, into fellowship with us, and subject to discipline; so that, if necessary, he could be silenced by rebuke (1Tim. v. 20; Titus i. 11-13); or if a "wicked person", put away, for the Lord is "in the midst" (Matt. xviii.) Baptism has nothing to do with fellowship at the Lord's table, tho' it is a matter of order in receiving; and leaving the assembly on the ground of a "new test" as to baptism, as a letter stated, is weakness in the extreme, and cannot be justified. It is baptist ground, not church — a new sect and order of Baptists admitting pouring and sprinkling as well, as immersion. This is serious.

It is not a question of going "on with a loose brother openly and fully endorsed", or "with a fornicator", as you say, but of standing and maintaining the truth in the Lord's name, not forsaking the assembly; or, if the latter, of putting away. No doubt W. is "a strict independent baptist and loose withal", but is this iniquity? ^{not}

From your letter it seems the meeting have ^{gone} with W. after all; nor with the Neutrals, as was before stated; but if they go with Raven are you free from the responsibility of allowing those whom the Lord has gathered ^{together} to be scattered (John x.)?

it is also clear to me that your beginning to break bread without the fellowship of a recognized assembly is unscriptural. See Acts 11.42. Fellowship precedes the breaking of bread which is indeed the practical expression of church-communion (1Cor. x.); and if begun without fellowship (which is a mutual thing) it is, in principle, independency. The Lord's table is spread only in the unity of the church, and therefore it cannot be spread without the fellowship of a recognized assembly — more especially in such cases, in order that the Lord's name, and the truth of it may be guarded. Brothers, many or few as such, cannot authorize this any more than exclude from the Table. Saints may go out, but the assembly ~~is~~ has to say ^{ad} to their return; otherwise corporate responsibility and discipline are given up, and we are upon loose ground/. If a meeting is owned after it has begun, it is union of meetings, and not church unity. So are you not asking us to abandon divine ground, and commit ourselves to what involves the destruction of the corporate testimony of Christ? Are we not entitled to Scripture authority for what you have done?

Permit me to suggest for your consideration whether you should not retrace your steps. Perhaps the meeting will own the mistake in receiv-



ing W. If, however, the meeting has actually gone with R. you could, having ceased breaking bread, satisfy the assembly could, having ceased breaking bread, satisfy the assembly elsewhere of the fact, and owning your error in leaving the Lord's table, and beginning a table as you did, I do not see why you could not be authorized to begin in fellowship with those truly gathered in the unity of the Church. However humbling it may be to own our mistakes we should never consent to the setting aside of divine principles. God will certainly resent such a course (Gal. vi.7).

Please write again and return the enclosure,

Yours in the Lord
 (Signed) ~~Yours~~ W.E.Gardiner.

P.S. Mere letters of commendation cannot give true assembly standing to a meeting begun wrong. W.E.G.

(Copy)

Chatham Ont: Canada Sep 29/93.

Dear Bro/

Yours of 11th inst: with stated enclosures received. You say "it was not leaving an assembly as it was judged by the three assemblies gathered unto the name of the Lord," &c. Now, these "three assemblies" were not an assembly of God having authority to act in discipline, but merely a conference of brethren, without such authority. There was not therefore assembly action in what was done at the meeting; but their decision, you dissented from. So I dont see the ground of your contention that "it was judged," unless in the assumption that the seceders were the assembly! It was clearly was a difference in judgment, but should you not have bowed to your brethren? See 1Pet. 5/5. A local assembly only, when assembled as such to the name of Christ, has authority to act in discipline (Matt. xviii; 1Cor. v.) The assembly effected must set for & clear itself as in the case of an individual when he has

failed (1 John 1.) A conference may consider & advise, but the matter whatever it is must be ^{ad}judged by a recognized assembly (Acts xv.) The gathering at M. that received W. was competent, & responsible for its action which if wrong, it should have been requested to correct. But you do not charge that W. is a "wicked person," so he could not be put away for looseness merely. But he had been received into fellowship where he could have been disciplined if found necessary (Titus 1:11). How could you say there was "iniquity" at M. until evil was proved to be there, and judgment of it refused? ~~How~~^{How} could M. be un-churched but by a recognized assembly of God which alone has authority to pronounce the Lord's judgment, and that after their remonstrance to clear away the evil had been refused. But is this not a very different thing from a few brothers attempting to cut off three assemblies because one of them had received a loose brother? So that as before said, 2 Tim. ii. 19 has no application to this case.

Whatever those you left may have since done, the fact remains that you left the Lord's table; and if they have gone with R. it is just as necessary that you should give up your independent position, if you would be restored through a gathering elsewhere.

In the copy of your 1st letter, you state that the gathering at M. has owned it was wrong in receiving W. Does this not show that had you ~~stood~~ your ground, you might have saved them all?

If you are willing to confess everything that is contrary to the word^s surely you will not hesitate to do so for leaving God's assembly, and setting up an independent table.

The brothers here do not hold themselves committed to your meeting through your letter of commendation. They were ignorant of the state of things, & could not sanction the secession, nor the independent table.

In conclusion, I do hope that you may be led to retrace your steps.

Yours in the Lord

(Signed) W.E. Gardiner.

Mr C. Morris.)
Knoxville, Tenn.)

(Copy)

Chatham Ont: Oct. 2/93.

Dear Bro/

Thanks for your letter. It gives me an opportunity to state that your conclusion that Chatham was satisfied about the meeting at K. from their having received a letter of commendation from you, as you stated in your letter to a brother in Toronto, is not correct. The

brothers here were ignorant of what had occurred there, or they could not have received the letter. The Brother stated to me, a day or two after they were received, that trouble had occurred to me, a day or two after they were received, that trouble had occurred at in K.; that all, with the exception of those whose names were on the list and a few others, had gone with the Key Leads Neutrals; but he could give no further particulars. But when we learned the state of things there, we felt that we had unwittingly countenanced what we consider to be a serious breach in the unity of the Spirit. The explanations of Mr Morris have confirmed us in our convictions that we did wrong in receiving your letter, and as I have told Mr. M., we do not hold ourselves as committed to the movement through our mistake.

From what Mr M. writes you dissented from the decision of the conference of brethren at K., and your company assume to be the assembly there; and you state that the others left; but surely you have no ground for this statement. They issued a notice that you left had left, and your own account of the occurrence confirms what they claim. As I told Mr M. M., you have no scripture for your action, and the matter has been aggravated by setting up another table.

It is clear that if leading brothers are to set Scripture aside, and act in this way, church ground and principles are given up. But I venture to hope that you may be led to reconsider the matter, and you retrace retrace your steps, rather than risk what may be very serious for the assembly at large, if you persist in your independent position and you others others should own your action. I should hope that individual protests would be sufficient in this case, and that you would not force further

action for the protection of the principles we own.

Yours in the Lord

(Signed) W.E. Gardiner.

Mr Allen McDonell,)
240 Gillispie St.,)
North Knoxville,)
Tenn.)

P.S. Since writing to Mrs Bridge I have had a personal interview with her.

have

W.E.G.

N.B. Whatever the old meeting may since done, your position is unjustifiable.

W.E.G.