

A
PHOTOGRAPH
OF
DARBYISM

PAST AND PRESENT

BY

Protoplast.

(A DIALOGUE)

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CATALOGUE OF PAMPHLETS.

Quoted in the following Pages, with prefixed numbers, for reference.

- No. 1.—THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS, A Periodical published by J. B. Rowe, Whimble Street, Plymouth, from 1834 to 1840.
- No. 2.—DARBYISM: ITS RISE AND DEVELOPMENT. By Henry Groves. 2nd Edition revised. London: James E. Hawkins, 70 Welbeck Street, Bristol: W. Mack, Park Street.
- No. 3.—THE SEPARATING BRETHREN COMMONLY CALLED DARBYITES AND EXCLUSIVES, &c. Dublin: G. Herbert, 117 Grafton Street. London: James E. Hawkins, 70 Welbeck Street. 1873.
- No. 4.—HIGH CHURCH CLAIMS OF THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN. A Series of Letters. By W. H. Dorman. London: Morgan & Chase, 38 Ludgate Hill.
- No. 5.—AN ANSWER TO THE REV. JOHN M'LOUGHLIN. Dublin: George Herbert, 117 Grafton Street. 1855.
- No. 6.—THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD; or, The All Sufficiency of the Name of Jesus. London: G. Morrish, 24 Warwick Lane. Bristol: W. Fryer, 2 Bridewell Street. By C. M. M.
- No. 7.—THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD. What is it? Dublin: Dixon, Stephen's Green, 1868.
- No. 8.—LETTER TO A FRIEND. By B. W. Newton. Houlston & Stoneman, Paternoster Row.
- No. 9.—REFLECTIONS ON THE RUINED CONDITION OF THE CHURCH, and on the Efforts making by Churchmen and Dissenters to Restore it to its Primitive Order. London: D. Walther, Piccadilly. 1841.
- No. 10.—SHIBBOLETH; or, The New Test of Communion amongst Certain Brethren. London: Published by Houlston & Stoneman.
- No. 11.—A VINDICATION OF THE SEPARATION FROM THE PLYMOUTH AND BETHESDA MEETINGS. In reply to Mr. J. W. Stokes' Circular, and Some Remarks thereon. [Written by L. Pilson, Dublin.] Dublin. 1868.

- No. 12.—ANCIENT TRUTHS RESPECTING THE DEITY, AND TRUE HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS. By Benjamin Wills Newton. London: Houlston & Wright, 65 Paternoster Row. 1857.
- No. 13.—CHRIST OUR SUFFERING SURETY.—By Benjamin Wills Newton. London: Houlston & Wright, 65 Paternoster Row. 1858.
- No. 14.—COMMUNION OF SAINTS. London: W. B. Horner, 15 Paternoster Row. Dublin: Tract Depot, 13 Westland Row. 1872.
- No. 15.—A LETTER ON BETHESDA FELLOWSHIP, with Appendix, &c. Letter signed with the initials J. S. O. G. Morrish, 24 Warwick Lane, London. 1865.
- No. 16.—IS THERE NOT A CAUSE? By *Philaletes*. London: G. Morrish, 24 Warwick Lane.
- No. 17.—EXCLUSIVISM UNVEILED. A Hand-book of Sixteen Questions on the Tenets peculiar to Darbyism. London: William Macintosh, Paternoster Row. 1872.
- No. 18.—REFUTATION OF CERTAIN CHARGES MADE BY THE BRETHREN. London: Houlston & Wright, 65 Paternoster Row. 1867.
- No. 19.—THE PRESENCE AND ACTION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN. Romans viii. By J. N. D. London: G. Morrish, 24 Warwick Lane.
- No. 20.—THE RECENT DOCTRINES OF THE FIVE. London: W. Macintosh, Paternoster Row. Dublin: G. Herbert, Grafton Street. 1868.
- No. 21.—A CAUTION AGAINST THE DARBYITES, with Remarks on Heresy and Schism. London: Printed for private circulation. 1866.
- No. 22.—EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN: their Origin and Discipline. London: William Macintosh, 19 Paternoster Row.
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PREFACE.

THE controversy to which the following pages relate has given occasion to the writing of so many pamphlets, that we feel ourselves called upon to make some apology to the reader for adding one more to the number.

While acknowledging that of the facts hereinafter noticed by us, there are not many which may not be found somewhere or other among the dozens of pamphlets already in print on the subject; nevertheless, we feel assured that the following condensed outline of all the conspicuous aspects of the controversy will be regarded by many as a desirable addition to former publications.

In order to present the matter in the narrowest compass, we have adopted the style of a dialogue, and have generally confined ourselves to facts, avoiding reflections save such as are necessary to give point to inferences. The reader who wishes for more ample information on the subject is referred to numbers two and three of prefixed catalogue. In the former of these, *Darbyism*, by Henry Groves, price ninepence, he will find a very full detail of all the circumstances, including an unabridged copy of the *Letter of the Ten*.

P R E F A C E.

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Our use of the term "Brethren" throughout the following pages requires special remark. The name "Brethren" is a scriptural term for all believers, and as such it is understood by those who are commonly called "Brethren." They all concur in rejecting a more limited application of the term than that defined in Scripture; but, nevertheless, we are obliged of necessity to use some descriptive term, and so have adopted the name generally in use among those not professedly in communion with the "Brethren."

We elsewhere offer our excuses for the use we have made of the term "Darbyites."

A PHOTOGRAPH OF DARBYISM, PAST AND PRESENT.

ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES OF BRETHREN.

Who are the people called Darbyites or Exclusives?

They are a sect which arose in 1848 out of a schism among the Brethren, sometimes called the Plymouth Brethren and Christian Brethren.

Who are the people called Brethren, or Christian Brethren?

They are a number of unassociated Christians who about twenty years before that time began to meet in assemblies for worship in different places upon what they regarded as unsectarian principles.

Please define what these Christians regarded as unsectarian principles?

They thought it their duty to receive at the Lord's table all who truly were Christians, walking consistently with that profession.

Wherein do these principles of the Brethren differ from those of the sects into which Christians are commonly divided?

The difference is thus indicated. First and principally those called "Brethren" renounce any idea of a bond uniting them to one another except that bond of oneness in Christ by which they are also united to all Christians in all times and places: while, on the other hand, each of the sects and

systems has hedged its Communion Table or Ministry with some particular test, whereby true Christians are divided into sections, as Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, &c.; thus systematically separating true Christians from one another, whereas on Brethren's principles, true and consistent Christians (and such are to be found in each of these sects) would be received at the Lord's Table.

Can you make any quotations from the early writings of Brethren on this subject?

Yes. The author of No. 21 writes:—"We sought to meet, not as hostile to, but as embracing other Christians, and made no point of their renouncing their different sects in order to sit down at the Table of the Lord as our common privilege, theirs and ours." (See No. 21, p. 21.)

Mr. Groves writes:—"In fact, that as we received them for [or on account of] the life, we would not reject them for their systems." (See No. 21, p. 21.)

The original ostensible ground of fellowship Mr. Darby explains in letters written to a clergyman in 1839, as follows:—* "*Whenever the first great truth of redemption—in a word, whenever Christ has received a person, we would receive him.*" (See No. 2, p. 12.)

Did the Brethren continue to act up to the spirit of these original principles?

It cannot be maintained that they did. The exercise of Brethren's principles required largeness of heart, forbearance, and sympathy for others; in effect, that charity which St. Paul describes in the

* The *italics* here, and throughout this pamphlet, are our own, not those of the authors from whom we quote.

13th of 1st Corinthians. Wherever and so long as personal grace prevailed the principles of Brethren were acted upon.

But soon the justification of these principles began to be maintained in a spirit inconsistent with the principles themselves. Many of the leaders among Brethren became the most active antagonists of what they regarded as error among the sects.

When did these principles of declension which you describe become conspicuous among Brethren?

So early as the year 1836. Then the sectarian character of the Brethren was complained of by one of themselves, A. N. Groves, who, writing to Mr. Darby, expressed himself as follows:—"I feel it needs but a step or two more to advance, and *you will see* all the evils of the systems from which you profess to be separated, to spring up among yourselves. . Your union daily becoming one of doctrine and opinion more than life or love, your government will become—unseen, perhaps, and unexpressed, yet—one wherein, overwhelmingly, is felt the authority of men; you will be known more by what you witness *against*, than what you witness *for*, and, practically, this will prove that you witness *against all but yourselves*, as certainly as the Walkerites or Glassites; your Shibboleth may be different, but it will be as real." (See No. 2, p. 10.)

"I ever understood our principle of communion to be the possession of the common life or common blood of the family of God (for the life is in the blood); these were our early thoughts, and are my most matured ones. The transition your little bodies have undergone, in no longer standing forth the witnesses for the glorious and simple truth, so

“much as standing forth *witnesses against* all that they “judge error, *has lowered them in* my apprehension “*from heaven to earth* in their position of witnesses.” (See No. 2, p. 10.)

Were these forebodings of Mr. Groves’ verified in the result?

Yes. The evils he complained of continued to increase. Some of the sects became objects of particular condemnation by the leaders among the Brethren, and occasionally individuals among Brethren were overborne by the authority of leaders to such an extent, that they had either to cease their association with Brethren or subject themselves to the dictation of others.

What were the principles of Brethren with respect to churches and church association?

Mr. Darby taught (and the same was generally held among Brethren) that the visible Church had become apostate, and never would be restored until the coming of the Lord Jesus, when the Church, as the Bride of Christ, should be manifested in glory.

It was further taught among Brethren that every effort made among Christians to restore the Church was an additional manifestation of the apostasy, that there was no power to restore the Church after it had become apostate; and, moreover, no authority to make the attempt.

Under such circumstances, on what principle did the Brethren meet together in Assembly?

They met on the promise that where two or three believers are *assembled together* in the name of the Lord Jesus there He is in their midst. In such assemblies, whether of two or three, or two or three hundred, the Brethren maintained, that having the Holy Scriptures for their only rule of faith, and the

presence of Jesus as promised, they were "complete in Him," and under responsibility to act as a church or assembly, according to the teaching of the Word of God. Such assemblies were unconcerted in their gatherings, having in fact received no assistance or direction the one from the other.

What did the leaders of Brethren hold respecting discipline?

They held and taught, as Mr. Darby expresses it, that the "actual duty of a Church is to ascertain as far as it can that its members have the Spirit of Christ, that their belief and life are Christian." (*Ch. Wit.* vol. i. p. 349, 1834.)*

They maintained that the Church does not teach; that it learns and obeys the truth, but does not teach it—that men teach it. Mr. Darby writes:—"Now, *I deny that the Church teaches at all*; she holds the truth, has learned the truth, is sanctified by the truth; she teaches nothing. She is taught, and has learned. Ministers, whom God has sent for that purpose, teach." (See No. 5, p. 16.) They maintained that assembly action was limited to what is defined in the Scriptures, viz., that assemblies received true believers *among themselves*. That assemblies put out wicked persons from *among themselves*.

They taught that assemblies contributed funds for the relief of saints, and appointed certain persons to be their messengers in executing such charitable purposes. That assemblies commended

* This and several quotations which follow are from an article entitled "Separation from Apostasy not Schism." The names of authors of articles in the *Christian Witness* were not published, though generally known among Brethren, and this one was ascribed to Mr. Darby.

and sent forth certain persons to perform certain works of the ministry, &c.; but that an assembly did not decree anything, save as above.

They held that an assembly did not judge heretical tracts or epistles, but that *men did*, or might have done so, or might have exposed the evil of such tracts; thus instructing the assembly as to their obligation to exercise discipline, not upon tracts, but upon men, because of their heretical tracts or other evil deeds.

Was there any association of the assemblies of Brethren?

There was no association of these assemblies; each assembly, having been convened without the advice or direction of any other, acted on its own individual responsibility to Christ, and all assemblies acted alike under similar circumstances, in proportion as they were like-minded, and alike intelligent and in subjection to the teaching of the Word of God.

Did the teachers among Brethren protest against such associations?

Yes. The Brethren regarded the forming of assemblies into an association as a mark of the apostasy, there being neither authority nor precedent for it in the Scriptures. Besides, no association nor union of several assemblies not *gathered together* could be maintained without the enactment of some rule whereby uniformity of doctrine or worship should be produced: but the Brethren taught that "none but the apostles were ever authorized to make enactments for the Church of Christ." They (the Brethren) felt the necessity "of recurring to the Scriptures alone for everything relating to the ordering of the Church of God."

(*Ch. Wit.* vol. i. pp. 335, 336.) The theory of an association of assemblies consisting of one central and many subordinate assemblies was first suggested in 1838 by Mr. Wigram.

The adoption of any test other than the possession of life in Christ and consistency of walk, was regarded by the Brethren as marking the Baptists and other sects as guilty of schism.

Wherein did the Brethren condemn the Baptists and other sects as schismatical?

In an article of the *Christian Witness* of July 1834, Mr. Darby writes:—"Is Christ, then, divided? "Was it as Baptists, Independents, or Quakers, that "the Churches were originally united?" . . . They [the sects above named] "have greatly sinned also "in requiring from their members assent to terms of "communion which the Lord never enjoined, thus "shutting out many of the weaker brethren, and by "raising things of secondary consequence into the "same virtual importance with faith in the Atoning "Blood of the Lamb, each of which has been a "stumbling-block." (*Ch. Wit.* vol. i., p. 354.)

Were means in operation whereby uniformity was promoted among Brethren other than the influence of the Spirit of God working severally within their assemblies?

Yes. The leaders of Brethren used to publish numerous pamphlets. Some were criticisms upon Scripture texts and Christian doctrines, others were controversial. There was also a periodical called the *Christian Witness*, which for many years was continued to be published at Plymouth, under the editorship of Mr. Benjamin Wills Newton. The views of Brethren were enunciated and defended in these several publications, all of which found their

way to the several assemblies; whereby a very general uniformity of doctrine and manifested conduct was produced among Brethren.

Can you mention any other circumstance which tended to promote this uniformity?

Yes. There were periodical meetings of the leaders of the Brethren, in the promotion of which the late Lady Powerscourt took a prominent part.

The questions to be discussed at these meetings were previously submitted to all who were invited to attend, and the leaders being desirous of learning from one another, the result was that general uniformity of opinion was thereby greatly promoted.

What was the result of the uniformity thus produced?

The practical result was, that the people called Brethren exhibited themselves before the Christian world as very like a sect, or not very unlike other sects, for, although professing and defending the liberal principles set forth above, and agreeing to differ among themselves on some questions (infant baptism, for instance), they were so dogmatically united in opinion upon other points, that no Christian could happily associate with them unless he adopted many of their peculiar views.

Hostility to the Established Church first, and to other Christian denominations in different degrees, were for many years the conspicuous characteristics of Brethren. One of them wrote a pamphlet (popular among Brethren at the time), entitled, *The Notion of a Clergyman: the Sin against the Holy Ghost*. Another of them is said to have printed a placard announcing that at a certain time and place he would demonstrate the apostasy of the

Papists, the Established Church, and the Dissenters. Thus while logically maintaining that they were unsectarian, the Brethren were practically somewhat like Ishmael. Their hand was against every man.

Is this implied censure intended to apply to the whole body of assemblies called Brethren?

Certainly not. A large majority of the Brethren from 1828 to 1848 (the period to which we have been referring above), were in spirit true to the principles taught in Scripture, and were personally working for Christ, with singleness of heart, each in his own sphere, although sometimes from the influence of association they thoughtlessly acquiesced in conclusions which their more mature judgments on original principles would have led them to disapprove.

But such large-hearted Christians were not the most influential or conspicuous in the assemblies. When, however, the growing evil assumed a definite form in the year 1848, these "Brethren" defended the truth, and began boldly to act upon those sound principles which had withdrawn them from sects and systems.

ORIGIN OF THE DARBYITE SCHISM.

What circumstances led to the schism among Brethren from which Darbyism resulted?

From 1835, to 1845 Mr. John Darby and Mr. B. W. Newton were commonly regarded as the most influential leaders among Brethren. The writings of both were studied and approved of among all the assemblies; but as time advanced, it was perceived by many of the Brethren that antagonism was growing up between these leaders.

They at first differed in their views respecting unfulfilled prophecy, and afterwards Mr. Darby complained that "clericalism" was in exercise at the assembly at Plymouth, where Mr. Newton's influence was paramount. Mr. Darby was much better known at the other assemblies of Brethren (of which there were dozens), having been present, and having taught at almost every one of them. Thus the way was paved for a schism which was developed in the course of time.

From what time do you date the first act of schism?

From the last Sunday of 1845, when Mr. Darby separated his few followers from the congregation of Brethren at Plymouth, leaving Mr. Newton with four or five hundred Brethren to worship without him and them.

Were Mr. Newton and the Brethren so separated from *then* accused of false doctrine, or of not being Christians?

They were not charged with holding any erroneous doctrine, Mr. Darby having in his complaint (referred to above) used the words, "*not exactly unorthodox teaching*," and they were all acknowledged as Christians, such being testified by Mr. Wigram, one of those who joined Mr. Darby in the act of separation. Mr. Wigram writes of them: "They are all accredited as Christians, and I can accredit them as such without any question." (No. 2, p. 15.)

Has conduct, such as is here described, been condemned as schism in the early writings of the Brethren?

Yes. Mr. Darby wrote in 1834, "There would be schism in separating from a congregation of

“faithful men,” and such the Plymouth congregation was represented to be when the schism took place in 1845. Again, Mr. Darby wrote in 1838, describing a leader in an act of schism: “But when “once the mind is brought deliberately to take its “own way, and on any pretext to withdraw from “a visible Communion of Saints, the person so acting “stands as one who has rent the body of Christ; “and as one to be avoided, he being one who serves “not the Lord Jesus Christ, but his own lusts. “The general result is then stated. ‘By good words “and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the “simple,’ so that the schism of an individual is “usually followed by a wider rent than an individual could make.” (*Ch. Wit.*, vol. i. 342; and vol. v., p. 131.) Is not Darbyism a striking illustration of what is here described?

Your statement is thus far confined to what took place at Plymouth. How did the schism extend to other assemblies of Brethren?

In the efforts made by Mr. Darby and his followers to justify their act of separation they discovered false doctrine in pamphlets and articles written by Mr. Newton, some of which had been published about ten years before. These false doctrines were exposed, and Mr. Darby required that all the assemblies should judge Mr. Newton's tracts.

MR. NEWTON'S ERRORS AND CONFESSION OF ERRORS.

The alleged errors of Mr. Newton having led to the Darbyite controversy, is it possible to form a just estimate of the whole case without information as to his objectionable doctrines?

We think not, and therefore shall proceed to inform you of these doctrines.

When did Newton's first alleged false doctrines appear?

In April 1835, when Mr. Newton wrote an article in the *Christian Witness* exposing the evils of Irvingism, of which article a reprint with additions was published as a pamphlet. The erroneous doctrines were introduced in this reprint, in which form they were again published in the second edition of the *Christian Witness*. The false doctrine was not however discovered until about ten years after.

Was Mr. Newton ever accused of other erroneous writings?

Yes. The error traced in this early article was said to have more or less pervaded many of his subsequent publications.

Can you furnish any examples of Mr. Newton's false doctrine so discovered, and afterwards confessed as error?

Yes. Mr. Newton wrote as follows:—"The Lord Jesus was as free from indwelling sin as from actual transgressions; yet, nevertheless He was a member (so to speak) of the *exiled family*, and was therefore born subject to their penalties. But He was made under the law, and being essentially holy, He was able to fulfil the law, and so to rise above the penalties to which He had become subject on account of Adam's guilt." (See *Christian Witness*, April 1835, 2nd Edition, p. 113; also John Cox, Jun., Extracts B, p. 4, 1867.)

How did Mr. Newton treat this discovery of false doctrine?

He made an humble confession of the errors which had been pointed out to him. This he did in a document published in November 1847, en-

titled, *A Statement and Acknowledgment respecting certain Doctrinal Errors.*

Was this humble confession regarded as satisfactory among the Brethren?

No. It was generally regarded as unsatisfactory, for it contained statements of doctrines which were condemned by many of them.

Can you give the particulars of this confession?

Yes, of the material paragraphs. The document is out of print; but the following extracts from it are copied from the pamphlet of a Darbyite, Mr. Lucius Pilson (see No. 11, pp. 32-35).

The Acknowledgment will be seen to comprise a statement of doctrines which Mr. Newton still regarded to be right, and of others which he confessed as errors, and retracted. It contains besides, an apology or explanation of the manner in which he (Mr. Newton) had been led into error from assuming that Christ came under the federal headship of Adam instead of regarding Him, as he should have done according to Scripture, as "made of a woman." The confession or acknowledgment proceeds:—"In allowing that the Lord Jesus had a different body from that of Adam in paradise, I was right. I was right also in saying that inherent corruption is not the originating cause of mortality, but the one sin of Adam—'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.' I was right also in stating that the Lord Jesus partook of *certain consequences* of Adam's sin, of which the being possessed of a mortal body was one.

"It was this that first introduced Rom. v. into the controversy, as showing that death of the body resulted from that which one man had done;

“and if due care had been taken to discriminate
 “between the mode in which *the consequences of*
 “*Adam’s transgression reached mankind* through
 “federal headship, and the manner in which the
 “Lord *Jesus took certain of those consequences* upon
 “Himself, but *not* through federal headship, the
 “error which I have now to confess would have been
 “avoided.

“If I had watched this, I should have carefully
 “avoided the referring that part of Romans v. to
 “the Lord Jesus, and I should have stated that
 “*His connexion with these consequences* was in virtue
 “of His having been made of a woman, and thus
 “having brought Himself into association with a race
 “on whom *these penalties were resting*. In other
 “words, that when the Eternal Word became flesh,
 “He thereby voluntarily placed Himself in associa-
 “tion with those on whom *certain penalties*, such as
 “*loss of paradise, hunger, thirst, exhaustion, and pain,*
 “had come as consequences of the fall; and that
 “in virtue of such association, He partook of *those*
 “*consequences*, even all the consequences in which
 “He could share, unconnected with personal sin.

“My error in this resulted in my holding that
 “the Lord Jesus, while perfectly free from all, even
 “the slightest taint of sin, either original or actual,
 “yet was under Adam, as a federal head, and thus
 “was exposed by his position to the *imputation of*
 “*Adam’s guilt*, as is taught respecting mankind in
 “Romans v. I saw it to be distinctly revealed that
 “the Lord was subject to *hunger, thirst, weariness,*
 “*sorrow, &c.*, which things we know are conse-
 “quences of the fall; and I erred in attributing
 “His participation in *these afflictions* to a federal
 “relationship to Adam.

“Recent circumstances having necessitated a careful review of the whole subject, I have been led, as I have above stated, to see that *I was distinctly in error* in holding that the Lord Jesus came by birth *under any imputation of guilt, or the consequences of such imputation.*

“I see that results altogether contrary to Christian doctrine are involved in, and may fairly be deduced from, this error, which I now desire explicitly to renounce; and I desire to acknowledge my error in having thus held and taught on this subject; and I hereby withdraw all statements of mine, whether in print, or in any other form, in which this error or any of its fruits, may be found.”

“I desire to acknowledge it fully,* and to *acknowledge it as a sin.* It is my desire thus to confess it before God and His Church, and I desire that this may be considered as an expression of my *deep and unfeigned* grief and sorrow, especially by those who may have been grieved or injured by the false statement, or by any consequences thence resulting. I trust the Lord will not only *pardon*, but will graciously counteract any evil effects which may have arisen to any therefrom.

(Signed) “B. W. NEWTON.”

“PLYMOUTH, 26th November, 1847.”

How did the Darbyites treat this acknowledgment of error?

They appear to have been greatly disappointed

* This paragraph to the end, not being quoted by Mr. Pilson, we copy it from the *The Exclusive Brethren* (Catalogue No. 22, page 20).

at it, and to have become more hostile than ever to Mr. Newton. One of them denies that it is a retraction of false doctrine; and another of them says that in it Mr. Newton apparently acknowledges false doctrine, "but in reality repeats it in a more "aggravated form."

Please explain how such misstatements were attempted to be sustained?

By shamelessly misquoting Mr. Newton's Confession—substituting for his words others which he did not use, so as to alter the sense.

What Darbyites were guilty of such misconduct?

The first I shall name is a Darbyite who has assumed the *nom de plume* of ΦΙΛΑΛΗΘΗΣ (Philaletes, *a lover of truth*). He furnishes us with a summary of Mr. Newton's doctrines in or after 1857, in which, to prove Mr. Newton to be then a heretic, he quotes numerous passages from pamphlets written by Mr. Newton before he made the foregoing Confession of Error (in November 1847). Philaletes not only ignores the Confession itself, but denies what every reader must perceive to be an unquestionable truth—that the Acknowledgment is a renunciation of certain errors.

Philaletes writes: "Mr. Newton is said to have "renounced these doctrines, but this is not the case, "for his 'Acknowledgment' only admits that he "was mistaken in placing our Lord under Adam as "a federal head, but that is all." (See No. 16, "Is "there not a Cause?" by Philaletes, p. 32.)

What have you got to say respecting this statement of Philaletes?

That it appears to be untrue, and that such may be demonstrated by the exhibition of even one sentence from Mr. Newton's "Acknowledgment."

Please state that sentence.

In Mr. Newton's Confession, as above quoted, we read, "I was distinctly in error in holding that
 "the Lord Jesus *came by birth under any imputation*
 "of guilt or the consequences of such imputation .
 "and I desire to acknowledge my error in having
 "thus held and taught on the subject, &c." Compare this confession with the words of "Philalethes"—"His acknowledgment only admits that he
 "was mistaken in placing our Lord under Adam as
 "a federal head, BUT THAT IS ALL." It is more convenient to some people to assume the *nom de plume* of "Philalethes," which means a "lover of truth," than to sustain the character which the name implies.

How does Philalethes attempt to justify his statement that Mr. Newton's "Acknowledgment" is no more than an admission that he was mistaken in placing our Lord under Adam as a federal head?

Our author attempts to justify his misstatement by a quotation from the "Acknowledgment," but so little is he worthy of the name of "Philalethes" that he does not copy five lines without so misquoting Mr. Newton's words as completely to alter their meaning. Philalethes writes, "He [Mr. Newton],
 "says in it ['The Acknowledgment'] I should have
 "stated that *the connexion of the Lord Jesus with*
 "*the consequences of Adam's transgression* was in
 "virtue of His having been 'made of a woman,'
 "and thus having brought Himself into association
 "with a race on whom those penalties were resting."
 "(No. 16, p. 32.) The words in italics,
 "the connexion of the Lord Jesus with the consequences of Adam's transgression," are a misquotation. Mr. Newton's own words being, "His

“[the Lord Jesus] *connexion with these consequences*” referring to “*certain*” of the consequences of the fall which Jesus voluntarily took upon Himself. Mr. Newton enumerates them in the “Acknowledgment,” such as *hunger, thirst, weariness, sorrow*, and the being possessed of a mortal body.

Do you approve of Mr. Newton’s words in this quotation?

No. For our own part we make it as a rule not to make or adopt any statement about the person of our blessed Lord, the “Mystery of Godliness,” save in the words prescribed by the all sufficient Scriptures; but we cannot condemn any one as guilty of uttering false doctrine, however we may blame him for presumption or irreverence, without being able to assert the contrary of such doctrine on the authority of the Bible. Applying this rule we cannot assert that it is heretical to say that the weariness and sorrow our Saviour underwent during His pilgrimage of 33 years, were consequences of the fall. We read in Rom. viii. 2, of “God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”

What is the slanderous aspect of Philalethes’ misquotations?

The misquoted words, “*the consequences* of Adam’s transgression,” comprise *all the consequences of the fall*, which, as ascribed to the Lord Jesus, would amount to rank heresy, whereas Mr. Newton’s words, “*these consequences*,” referring to an antecedent “*certain consequences*,” comprise only such of the consequences of the fall as the author therein refers to or enumerates. The misquotation is material, and Philalethes (we know not who he is), will find it difficult to clear his character from suspicion of deliberate misrepresentation, for in quoting a

pamphlet which lay before him, he substitutes words which are unquestionably heretical, for other words which Mr. Newton had used.

Can you mention any other example of Darbyite misrepresentation respecting this Confession?

Yes. Mr. Pilson also comments on Mr. Newton's Confession. He tells us that Newton acknowledges "his error only to present the false doctrine in a shape more suitable to his purpose;" and again he says, "Which [false doctrine] he apparently acknowledges as error, but in reality repeats it in a more aggravated form."

Does Mr. Pilson attempt to justify these assertions?

Yes. He does just what has been done by Philalethes. He misquotes Mr. Newton's words so as to alter the author's meaning—substituting the words—"the consequences of Adam's fall," and "the penalties which were resting on a fallen race," for Mr. Newton's own words, "certain consequences". "certain of these consequences" and these "penalties" referring to those above enumerated by him. Mr. Pilson writes, "The only confession of error in the whole tract is what he states in page 5, attributing *the consequences of Adam's fall* to the blessed Lord, because of His federal relationship to Adam; but in page 4 *he ascribes all these consequences*, and even worse (certain penalties due to the fall), to His 'having been made of a woman,' and this he holds to be right. He thus merely shifts his ground from Adam to the woman, and what is the difference? What is the difference between saying that he is right in holding that Christ 'having been made of a woman,' came *under the penalties which were*

“*resting on a fallen race*, and saying that he was “wrong in holding that the Lord Jesus came by birth under any imputation of guilt, or the consequences of such imputation? What are penalties but consequences of guilt.”

What general inference do you draw from these misquotations?

We conclude that if the words of Mr. Pilson and Philalethes had been correct quotations from Mr. Newton, the latter would still remain guilty of the heresy with which he was charged in 1848; but however faulty Mr. Newton may still remain, these, his accusers, have sacrificed their characters for veracity in their efforts to make him appear worse than he is.

Has Mr. Newton, since the publication of his “*Acknowledgment*,” written any other confession or statement of faith?

Yes; several. But his doctrines, as they stand after these confessions and explanations, are regarded still as unsatisfactory.

Have you formed any opinion of Mr. Newton’s doctrines as corrected by his confessions?

Yes. We regard him as being still in error; but we consider that the amount and character of his errors should be estimated, not as the Darbyites do, from his erroneous compositions, dating before his “*Acknowledgment*,” in November 1847, which he withdrew, confessing them to contain error; but first, from his erroneous statements, which then remained unconfessed; second, from his statements of doctrine which he maintained to be right when confessing error in 1847; and third, from his works since published.

Can you point out the erroneous passages on

account of which Mr. Newton is still censurable?

Yes. In *Observations*, p. 26, Mr. Newton wrote:—"The exercises of soul which His elect, in their unconverted state, ought to have, and which they would have, if it were possible for them to know and feel everything rightly according to God, such exercises, yet without sin, Jesus had."

What is your opinion of this quotation?

We regard it as irreverent and very presumptuous of Mr. Newton to make any pretence of information as to what exercises of soul Jesus had, save so far as they are told us in the Scriptures. Both Mr. Newton and Mr. Darby have been led into errors of this character, and their presumptuous criticism on the nature and suffering of our Saviour have, in both instances, led to the uttering of false doctrine. Mr. Newton has confessed a great deal, but Mr. Darby has confessed nothing on the subject.

What have the Darbyites said on this quotation from Mr. Newton?

Mr. George Wigram, a great leader among the Darbyites, imagined he had found "awful blasphemy" in this sentence, but Mr. Darby more correctly designated it as "nonsense."

He points out, that to talk of unconverted elect knowing everything according to God, is a contradiction in terms, because if, as elect, they had such knowledge they would not be unconverted. (No. 10, p. 29.)

Do you refer to any other case of error for which Mr. Newton is still answerable?

Yes. The following extract is from Mr. Newton's *Confession of Error*, as quoted above, where he says:—"I was right also in stating that the Lord

“ Jesus partook of certain consequences of Adam’s sin, of which the being possessed of a mortal body was one.”

What error do you trace in this quotation ?

Mr. Newton in this extract asserts that our Saviour’s body was mortal, but we do not charge this as false doctrine, not being prepared to assert the contrary on the authority of Scripture. If we were to accuse Mr. Newton on this statement we should also charge the same against the Darbyites ; for one of their hymns, composed by Mr. Deck, and published in Mr. George Wigram’s collection for the poor of the flock, has the following verse :—

“ Such was Thy grace that for our sakes,
Thou didst from heaven come down,
Our *mortal flesh and blood partake*,
In all our misery one ! ”

Hymn 308.

Here mortal flesh and blood are attributed to our Lord.

What objection then do you make to Mr. Newton’s faith as professed above ?

His faith is manifestly objectionable, for he makes our Saviour’s being possessed of a mortal body, one of the “ consequences of Adam’s sin.” Connecting this with Mr. Newton’s statement in *Ancient Truths*, p. 8, that when “ Adam was first created “ in Paradise . . . although capable of becoming mortal, yet he was *not mortal*,” we trace in the whole a serious error ; but viewed in connexion with Mr. Newton’s definition of mortality they amount to mere nonsense. Mr. Newton defines the mortality which our Saviour derived from Adam’s sin to be “ a physical condition in which the vital “ conjunction of soul and body would, under certain

“supposed circumstances, such as the withdrawal
 “of nutrition, or external violence, necessarily cease
 “unless a miracle were wrought to prevent it.”

Again Mr. Newton writes in a dialogue:—

“Whether the body of Christ was mortal?

“If it were not, He would not have needed food
 “to preserve the vital union of His soul and body.
 “Absence of nutrition, or the stroke of Herod’s
 “sword would have destroyed that union (unless
 “indeed a miracle had been wrought to prevent it),
 “quite as much in Him as in us.” (See *Brief
 Statements*, &c., printed by Jenkin Thomas, 9 Corn-
 wall Street, Plymouth, 11th July 1848.) This
 amounts to saying, with respect to Adam in
 Paradise, who, according to Mr. Newton, was not
 mortal, that the vital conjunction of soul and body
 would, without any miracle being wrought, have
 subsisted in him to the present day, if he had not
 sinned, although since his creation he were deprived
 of food, and subjected to all sorts of external vio-
 lence, even to the extent of decapitation and dis-
 memberment. If the “not mortal” Adam had
 been dismembered with a sword such as Herod’s,
 in which fragment of his body (we may ask) would
 his indivisible soul have remained? Mr. Newton’s
 theory is utterly nonsensical, for it would have
 required a miracle, according to this theory, to pre-
 vent the death of the Lord Jesus in the supposed
 case of His being subjected to the stroke of Herod’s
 sword—because He had a mortal body; but no such
 miracle would be necessary in the case of sinless
 Adam under like circumstances—because he “was
 not mortal”!!!

St. Paul speaks of our “mortal bodies” (Rom.

viii. 11), and of our “mortal flesh” (2 Cor. iv. 11); but he also tells us “we shall not all sleep (die), “but we shall be changed” (1 Cor. xv. 51). A comparison of these Scriptures clearly proves the meaning of mortality to be, a possibility of dying under certain supposed circumstances—not a necessity of dying under all circumstances. Adam, in Paradise, was therefore mortal. He had not eaten of the “tree of life,” which would have ended his mortality, and he was warned of a circumstance (which might, and afterwards did occur), under which he should die. Adam’s Maker was Himself the supplier of food, and the guardian of Adam’s person from external violence, and under such guardianship Adam, if he had not sinned, would have remained secure from decapitation, starvation, and such other inflictions as physically would have caused his death, if subjected to any of them.

At what conclusion have you arrived respecting these statements of Mr. Newton’s on the subject of mortality?

That Mr. Newton is in error—first, in saying that the mortality of our Saviour’s body was one of the “consequences of Adam’s sin;” and, secondly, in teaching that Adam in Paradise was not mortal. These statements, regarded in the light of Mr Newton’s definition of mortality exhibit his theory as an absurdity, rather than an effort to establish any principle whatever of an heretical character.

Do you notice any other of Mr. Newton’s erroneous statements?

Yes, when under pressure from slander and persecution by the Darbyites after his confession of error, Mr. Newton proceeded—we think thoughtlessly and very inconsistently—to prove his own

orthodoxy by quotations from bishops whom he designates as "orthodox writers."

Why do you say that Newton acted "very inconsistently" in quoting from bishops?"

Because we remember the time when Mr. Newton (as well as Mr. Darby), would be supposed by the Brethren to be as likely to quote from the Koran in proof of orthodoxy as from a bishop of the Established Church.

Mr. Newton quotes from Bishop Goodwin: "The reasons are because Christ became debtor to the whole law, by voluntary suretyship; and thus was circumcised; *nor could the law free Him until He had sustained the whole weight of its curse and punishment.*" (*Christ our Suffering Surety*, page 18, a quotation from Goodwin).

What do you say respecting this quotation?

You will perceive that the words, "nor could the law free Him," amounts in substance to a statement that Christ *could not* free Himself from the law until He had sustained the whole weight of its curse and punishment.

Did not Mr. Newton adopt a quotation of a similar character from Bishop Pearson?

Yes; the following are his words, which Mr. Newton describes as one "of the excellent statements of Bishop Pearson on the Creed:"—

"He (Christ) had in His nature not only a possibility and aptitude, but even a necessity of dying." (See No. 12, p. 13.)

The doctrine contained in these two quotations is erroneous and plainly contradicted by the words of our Saviour, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels," &c.; and

again, "No man taketh it (life) from Me, I have power to lay it down."

Does Mr. Newton now hold the errors expressed in these quotations?

No; Mr. Newton qualifies these adopted, and very erroneous doctrines by an explanation of his own views given in his *Letter to a Friend*, No. 8 of Catalogue, page 5, wherein he writes: that Christ, by an act of His will, might at any moment "have arrested or changed that physical necessity [of dying] which could only continue a necessity so long as He was pleased that it should continue."

Please summarize Mr. Newton's errors as they now stand after his confessions and statements of faith.

We do so as follows: Firstly, he wrote irreverently and without Scriptural authority on the subject of the "exercises of the soul . . . which Jesus had." If an apostle had written on the subject we would be bound to accept his statements as having authority, just as we accept St. Paul's statement that God sent His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh;" but neither Mr. Newton nor Mr. Darby has authority to give us information on this subject. They have both, however, assayed to do so, and we reject the testimony of both as presumptuous, if not worse. Secondly, Mr. Newton wrote in substance that Jesus could not free Himself from the law until He had sustained its guilt and punishment; and again, that Jesus had a "necessity of dying," but that such necessity was not necessity, for it should continue a necessity only so long as He pleased. Which statement and apology or explanation, taken together, amount to nothing more or less than nonsense.

What, on the whole, is your opinion of Mr. Newton and his writings?

As an individual, we have already judged and condemned Mr. Newton's writings as above set forth. But we believe that (when fairly estimated with Christian charity, combined with faithfulness to the Lord), Mr. Newton's questionable writings (as they now exist), will be found to exhibit the errors of a well-intentioned man, who presumed to write upon a subject which was above human criticism. And again, the errors of an overstrained theologian, irritated at discovering his bitterest enemies among his former professed friends—the errors of one whose intellect as well as his years has passed its meridian—rather than the subtleties of an arch heretic and an enemy of Christ as the Darbyites describe him. Mr. Newton, when most popular among Brethren, as well as Mr. Darby, used to write (as we believe, most improperly and irreverently), on the experiences of Christ, and the productions of both exhibit false doctrine. But we are not prepared to say that either holds the errors which might be demonstrated from their writings respectively.

In truth, we regard Mr. Newton and his errors as only an accident of secondary importance in the whole case. If Mr. Newton had never written anything, or even if he never had been born, some other occasion would have been found for the development of the Darbyite schism. The minds of many among the Brethren were prepared for the evil which existed, wanting only something as an occasion for its development, and that “something” was speedily found in Mr. Newton and his errors, with his insufficient retractation. It will

soon be generally known that Mr. Newton's name has acquired a prominence in this controversy to which neither his error nor his influence entitled it.

It is your opinion that Mr. Newton should be received into communion as a Christian ?

This is a question such as no man should be required to answer, save when called upon to act in assembly. We doubt not (from the Christian spirit exhibited in Mr. Newton's confession) that if the errors noticed above were pointed out to him he would readily acknowledge himself corrected, and abandon them. If we might venture upon a comparison of errors, we should have no hesitation in concluding that the characteristic errors of Darbyite controversialists—the falsely accusing of exemplary Christians, and the casting of them out of the Church—are evils far more reprehensible in the sight of the Lord than any errors which can now justly be charged against Mr. Newton.

THE BETHESDA CONTROVERSY.

Who were the people referred to under the name of Bethesda, so often mentioned in this controversy ?

They were, and still are, a congregation of Brethren who meet in Bristol, at a chapel called Bethesda, the principal or best known minister among them being Mr. George Müller, of the great Orphan Asylum. At the time of the schism the Bethesda Brethren numbered about 600.

How did Bethesda become involved in the Darbyite controversy ?

From the end of 1845 (when the schism commenced at Plymouth), the congregation at Bethesda continued to receive Christians indiscriminately, as

well from the partisans of Mr. Darby, as from those who adhered to Mr. Newton, or the old congregation, exercising no other tests than those of faith and morals, such as were used in cases of ordinary applications for the privilege of communion. When, however, the errors of Mr. Newton were discovered and exposed, a careful examination was instituted in the case of every one coming from Mr. Newton's congregation, and thenceforth no one was ever received at Bethesda who was regarded as holding Mr. Newton's objectionable doctrines.

Can you make this statement on authority?

Yes. Lord Congleton wrote in June 1849 :—
 “It is manifest that persons known as holding Mr. Newton's errors have never been received in Bethesda. Four persons known as friends of Mr. Newton's, and as disallowing that he holds the doctrines laid to his charge, have been received, but never have any persons known as holding Mr. Newton's errors been received into communion.”
 (See *Bristol Case*, page 3 ; also, No. 2, *Darbyism*, by Henry Groves, page 29, 2nd Edition.)

Can you state the particulars respecting these four persons?

Yes. Their names are Colonel Woodfall, Mr. Woodfall, Mrs. Brown, and Miss Hill. The particulars respecting two of these I state on the authority of Henry Groves. (See No. 2, *Darbyism*, p. 28, 2nd Edition.)

He writes :—“In April 1848, Colonel and Mr. Woodfall arrived at Bristol, and, as usual, desired fellowship, having for years at different times broken bread at Bethesda whenever coming into the neighbourhood. Those acting with Mr. Darby objected to their being received, because

“they were known to be friends of Mr. Newton,
 “though holding none of his peculiar views.
 “Colonel W. was, however, ultimately received, as
 “he had been lately abroad, while the recent events
 “had been going on in Plymouth; but as the objec-
 “tions against Mr. Woodfall were stronger, it was
 “determined by the leading Brethren that he should
 “be visited, and that there might be no supposed
 “partiality in his favour, the three Brethren most
 “opposed to his reception were requested to call
 “and see him, so as to satisfy their minds as to the
 “soundness of his views. He was visited, and at
 “length received on the testimony of those Bre-
 “thren [Mr. Darby’s partisans], as they found no
 “scriptural ground for refusing him the right of
 “Christian fellowship.”

Of the other two, the ladies named above, Mrs.
 Brown and Miss Hill, the late Henry Bewley (who
 made particular inquiry of both Brethren and
 Darbyites before he wrote, and was not contradicted
 by either), writes :—

“Two others were received, one [Miss H.] vin-
 “dicating the tracts, but rejecting the construction
 “put upon them. She repudiated the errors, when
 “explained to her specifically, but denied that these
 “were the author’s views.

“The other [Mrs. B.] was a kind-hearted old
 “lady, who ‘almost idolized Mr. N.,’ and would
 “not believe he could advance any error. She left
 “the meeting at Bath, because Mr. N. was refused,
 “and was received at Bethesda. Her reception is
 “brought forward as one of the gravest charges
 “against Bethesda. We doubt the justice of this
 “censure, for, as to the old lady herself, she was,
 “we understand, wholly incompetent to form a just

“estimate of Mr. N.’s doctrines. Indeed, it was observed to us by one who knew her well, ‘She knew no more of his errors than the man in the moon,’ and by another, ‘She did not understand the question more than a child.’” (See *Basis of Peace*, pp. 24 and 25.)

What was the next step taken at Bethesda?

After the Woodfalls had been received, Mr. Alexander (one of the above-mentioned three partisans of Mr. Darby), required of the assembly at Bethesda that Newton’s tracts should be judged by the Church, and his demand not being complied with, he left the assembly, and printed and circulated a statement of his complaint.

The reasons assigned by Mr. Alexander for secession were: firstly, that many of the *Lord’s people may be excluded* from fellowship for conscience’ sake; secondly, that persons may come in from Plymouth holding these doctrines; and thirdly, there may be a suspicion of supporting a doctrine that dishonours Christ. *He thus withdraws, not on the ground of anything that had taken place, but because he feared one or all of these things might take place.* (See No. 2, *Groves*, p. 31.)

Thus Bethesda was excommunicated solely for refusing to pronounce a judgment of the Church upon the tracts. The Woodfalls had been received with the approbation of Mr. Darby’s partisans, while Miss H. and Mrs. B. were not received until after the excommunication had taken place, and therefore the reception of these subsequent to the excommunication could afford no justification for an antecedent act.

LETTER OF THE TEN.

Shortly after, ten of the Brethren at Bethesda wrote and read before the Church a document since known as the *Letter of the Ten*, as a reply to the circular which Mr. Alexander had addressed to the Brethren.

This Letter consisted (besides the introduction and concluding paragraphs) of nine reasons for non-compliance with Mr. Alexander's demand; from which we extract the following, as comprising all that is now regarded as material in the controversy:--

“We now proceed to state the grounds on which
 “we have felt *a difficulty in complying with the*
 “*request of our brother, Mr. Alexander*, that we
 “should formally investigate and give judgment on
 “certain errors which have been taught among
 “Christians meeting at Plymouth. . . .

“First. We considered from the beginning that
 “it would not be for the comfort or edification of
 “the saints here, nor for the glory of God, that we
 “in Bristol should get entangled in the controversy
 “connected with the doctrines referred to. We do
 “not feel that because errors may be taught at
 “Plymouth or elsewhere, therefore we, as a body,
 “are bound to investigate them.

“Sixth. Even supposing that those who inquired
 “into the matter had come to the same conclusion,
 “touching the amount of positive error therein
 “contained, this would not have guided us in our
 “decision respecting individuals coming from
 “Plymouth. *For, supposing the author of the*
 “*tracts were fundamentally heretical, this would*
 “*not warrant us in rejecting those who came from*
 “*under his teaching, until we were satisfied that*

“they had understood and imbibed views essentially subversive of foundation-truth; especially as those meeting at Ebrington Street, Plymouth, last January, put forth a statement, disclaiming the errors charged against the tracts.

“Seventh. The requirement that we should investigate and judge Mr. Newton’s tracts, appeared to some of us like *the introduction of a fresh test of communion*. It was demanded of us that in addition to a sound confession and a corresponding walk, we should *as a body come to a formal decision* about what many of us might be quite unable to understand.

“Ninth. We felt that the compliance with Mr. Alexander’s request would be *the introduction of an evil precedent*. If a brother has a right to demand our examining a work of fifty pages, he may require our investigating error said to be contained in one of much larger dimensions; so that all our time might be wasted in the examination of other people’s errors, instead of more important service.

CONSUMMATION OF THE SCHISM.

Shortly after the reading of the *Letter of the Ten* to the Church, Mr. Darby came again to Bristol, and had an interview with both Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik, in which he again urged the taking up of the tracts by Bethesda, and passing a *Church condemnation* on them.

Having failed to induce these Brethren to carry out his wishes, Mr. Darby went from one place to another denouncing the conduct of Bethesda.

On reaching Leeds, he issued his lithographic circular, bearing the post mark of August 26th,

1848, cutting off not only Bethesda, but all assemblies who received any one who went there. "I," he writes, "should neither go to Bethesda in its present state, nor while in that state go where persons from it were willingly admitted."

Has importance been attached to this document?

Yes. It was regarded as most important, for, backed up as it was by the action of Mr. Darby and his partisans, this circular was the consummation of the schism. The Darbyites thenceforth exhibited themselves as a sect organized into an association, and circumscribed by a TEST, which marks their one body as a member of the apostasy of Christendom as truly as that charge can be applied to any of the other sects which exist at the present day.

What occurred at Bethesda after the writing of the *Letter of the Ten*?

Mr. Newton's erroneous tracts, which in June 1848 were little known, became afterwards so talked about, that before the end of the year all at Bethesda had become more or less acquainted with them. This and other circumstances induced the Brethren at Bethesda to make the matter a subject of consideration at several Church meetings held for the purpose, between the 27th November and 11th December 1848.

The result of these deliberations was, that the following conclusion was arrived at:—"That no one defending, maintaining, or upholding Mr. Newton's views or tracts should be received into communion." Of this decision Lord Congleton writes:—"This conclusion was given out two or three times by the brethren Groves, Müller, and Craik."

What has Philalethes, *the lover of truth*, said respecting this "conclusion" of Bethesda?

He has boldly denied it to be anything more than the act of an individual. He writes (No. 16, p. 9):—"Mr. Müller did so, as an individual [condemn "Newton's doctrines], and declared that any one who "'maintained, upheld, and defended' them should "not be received. But the position of the assembly "has never been altered, *nor has it been allowed to "judge the errors in question.*" Philalethes sustains this statement by a quotation from a letter by Mr. Craik, who wrote:—"The judgment expressed in "the *Letter of the Ten* has never been repudiated, "so far as I am aware, by any of us." We are glad to learn this.

Can you mention any other important circumstances that took place at Bethesda in connexion with this schism?

The last material occurrence that need be noticed in connexion with this part of the subject, is the interview that took place between Mr. Müller and Mr. Darby in summer, 1849. (We quote from No. 2, p. 48.)

"The following is Mr. Müller's account of "what took place:—Mr. Darby called on him at the "New Orphan House, No. 1, ten minutes before one "o'clock, and Mr. Müller on entering the room where "he was, shook hands with him, and Mr. Darby said "to the following effect:—'As you have now "judged the tracts, the reason why we should not "be united no longer exists.' To this Mr. Müller "replied, 'I have only ten minutes now free, "having an engagement at one o'clock, and there- "fore I cannot now enter on this subject, for you "have acted so wickedly in this whole affair, that

“many things have to be looked into before we
 “could be really united again.’ On this Mr.
 “Darby rose and left, and thus ended their last
 “interview.”

To return to the subject of Mr. Darby’s lithographed letter of 26th August 1848. Do you mean to imply that Darbyism has since been sustained on the authority of the author of this letter?

Certainly not. There are few (if any) of the Darbyites who would acknowledge that their chief leader either possesses or exercises any authority more than the humblest individual of the sect; but, as a matter of fact, Mr. Darby has led them, and they have followed.

What was the practical effect of Mr. Darby’s lithographed letter of August 1848?

It was that almost every assembly of Brethren throughout the United Kingdom, as well as on the Continent, became divided into two sections; the one approved of Mr. Darby’s condemnation of Bethesda, and as a consequence separated themselves from the Brethren, while the latter recurred with redoubled energy to the original principles of Brethren, and received all believers (according to the Word of God) who were walking consistently with that profession.

What were the feelings of Brethren respecting this schism and its consequences?

They were deeply pained at the schism, which to them was very humiliating; for, at the beginning, the Darbyites who separated themselves were accustomed to “cut” the Brethren whom they forsook, refusing to exchange even the common courtesies of acquaintanceship with Christians whom for many years they had known and professed to

love and esteem as dear brethren in the Lord Jesus.

SLANDERS RESPECTING BETHESDA, MR. NEWTON,
AND OTHERS.

By what means has the Darbyite condemnation of Bethesda been attempted to be justified?

By means of slanders based on statements which are contrary to the facts.

The ordinary course among Darbyite controversialists is carefully to avoid the mention of any of the material facts as to what Bethesda did and said that was evil, or what evil doctrines Mr. Newton holds and teaches, but strongly-expressed misrepresentations of the supposed evil are in general terms substituted for the facts.

Can you refer to examples of this?

Yes. A pamphlet entitled, *Brethren and their Traducers*, has been written. "Mr. Kelly has therein denounced Mr. Newton's doctrines as 'deep, damnable, fundamental denial of Christ,' 'strange and poisonous doctrine about our Lord,' 'blasphemous and heretical statements;' and he is stigmatized as 'heretic,' 'teacher of blasphemy,' 'the false teacher,' 'the evil doer.'" (See No. 18, p. 13.)

Mr. Darby tells us he has "not the smallest doubt that Mr. Newton received his prophetic system by direct inspiration of Satan, analogous to the Irvingite delusion." (See No. 18, p. 3.) In Mr. Darby's lithographed letter of August 1848 he charges Bethesda with "diligently seeking to extenuate and palliate Mr. Newton's doctrine;" with "*admitting persons holding them;*" with "*receiving active and unceasing agents of Mr. Newton,*

“holding and justifying his views ;” and lastly, with having *“formally and deliberately admitted these doctrines.”* (No. 2, Groves, 2nd Edition, p. 43.)

Does not Mr. Darby refer elsewhere to Bethesda?

Yes. So recently as 1864, Mr. Darby describes Bethesda thus :—

“The evil at Bethesda is the most unprincipled admission of blasphemers against Christ, the coldest contempt for Him I ever came across. All their efforts to examine and hide it only make the matter worse ; all who do not *abhor the whole system and all connexion with it*, are already entangled and defiled. It is, I am satisfied, a mere net of Satan, though many Christians may be entangled in it.” (See No. 2, p. 67 ; copied from letter to Mr. Spur, of February 1864.)

The characters of Mr. Darby and Mr. Kelly stand far too high in the estimation of the sect to make its associates think it necessary to examine into facts after such condemnations are pronounced by these leaders. If a godly suspicion remains in the mind of one of the Darbyites that he ought to examine matters for himself, with the help of that in-dwelling spirit by which “he that is spiritual judgeth all things,” he is frightened by such denunciations as “all who do not *abhor the whole system [Bethesda] and all connected with it* are already entangled and defiled.”

Do you mention another case of slander ?

Yes. J. S. O. writes :—“In the year 1848, those meeting at Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, received into communion persons known to be in fellowship with Mr. N. ; and this was done in spite of the *entreaties and warnings of Brethren*

“both in Bristol and elsewhere, charging these persons with being implicated in the evil.”

Again he writes:—“The two Messrs. W., both charged upon the testimony of many witnesses with being accomplices in the evil, were also received.” (See *Bethesda Fellowship*, No. 15, p. 10.)

Thus, according to J. S. O., Darbyite entreaties and warnings, based upon opinions, are to be obeyed in defiance of facts, and of the teaching of the Word of God. But we shall proceed to something worse. Our author, J. S. O., writes:—

“The Bethesda party may say, Such persons are sound in the faith, and no leaven has been admitted into our midst. *God says they are ‘partakers of evil deeds;’* the Bethesda party have received them, do receive them, and a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

Again he writes:—“*Bethesda disregarded the warning of God’s Spirit about these persons, given by means of many Brethren. They sinned wilfully and not ignorantly, and to this day refusing to own that they have sinned, how can there be forgiveness? Moreover, the very principles upon which Bethesda wilfully acted then are the very principles upon which those who sympathize with Bethesda act now.*” (See No. 15, pp. 42, 45.)

It may be asked, Who is pretended to have been the mouthpiece of the Spirit of God upon this occasion? If not the very persons (Mr. Darby’s three supporters) who afterwards, notwithstanding their warning, agreed that there were no grounds upon which these persons should not be received into communion. Mr. Alexander was one, and

the principal of these, and we think he ought to repudiate the slander cast upon him by J. S. O., of warning by the Holy Spirit, and afterwards leading the Brethren by his advice (as one of the three examiners) to disobey the warning of the Holy Spirit.

It will be remembered that the only two persons named by J. S. O. (on account of whose reception he charges Bethesda with sinning wilfully, not ignorantly) are Colonel and Mr. Woodfall; of these Colonel Woodfall was received without objection, and Mr. Woodfall only after examination and approval of Mr. Alexander and two other partisans of Mr. Darby.

To what other slanders do you allude?

The next I shall mention is by Philalethes (a lover of truth). He wrote a pamphlet entitled, *Is there not a Cause?* He therein referred to the *Letter of the Ten* as a "treasonable declaration of indifference to the person of Christ; for," says he, "I can call it no less." (No. 16, p. 8.)

Again he wrote:—"This letter was a defence of what had been done in receiving into communion well-instructed followers of Mr. Newton, and propagators of his doctrines." (No. 16, p. 8.)

It may be asked, Who were these followers of Mr. Newton, and propagators of his doctrines? Was Mr. Woodfall referred to—he who had been received into communion after examination by three of Mr. Darby's partisans—or were the two old ladies, described above, the persons referred to?

What do you infer from these accusations and assumptions?

That the Darbyite controversialists appear to have closely followed the example of the Church of

Rome in one of its worst aspects. Both have endeavoured (and too successfully) to frighten nervous ladies and others with a pretention to infallibility (a very convenient substitute for truth, to be made use of in cases where facts and Scripture dare not be appealed to). Is it not blasphemy to make statements so contrary to truth as the above, and then to designate the expressed opinions of Darbyites as the voice of God? "God says they are partakers of evil deeds." "Bethesda disregarded the warning of God's Spirit, given by means of many Brethren." THEY SINNED WILFULLY, NOT IGNORANTLY." This is a charge against George Müller, Henry Craik, and hundreds of esteemed Brethren at Bethesda, the falsehood of which may be shown even upon the testimony of Darbyites.

Please particularize this testimony of Darbyites to which you refer?

Mr. Alexander, when withdrawing himself from communion at Bethesda, addressed a letter to the Brethren assembled there, to which we have referred above, assigning his reasons for such a step. It was printed, and a copy of it was sent to each member in fellowship, and in it he writes in reference to those from whom he separated: "I desire to state that I have met none here [at Bethesda] whom I do not love individually, and desire to love, and cannot be separated from as individuals, and some whom I must ever very highly esteem in love for their work's sake."

If Mr. Alexander had judged that George Müller and the Brethren at Bethesda had disregarded "the warning of God's Spirit," and that "they sinned wilfully, and not ignorantly" (a charge in which he himself is involved, as an actor in

receiving Mr. Woodfall), he could not have given his testimony as to their individual godliness as above expressed, and that he could not be separated from them individually. But Darbyism, like all other systems based on false principles, has taken time to develop itself, and the evils still in operation are daily increasing.

Do you refer to any other similar testimony?

Yes. We offer another testimony respecting the godliness of the Bethesda congregation. The late Mr. J. G. Bellet, a Darbyite, writing of Bethesda says—"Humble, upright, unwordly ways have long characterised her; services of singular praise to God are connected with her." (See No. 22, p. 23.)

This Darbyite testimony does not support the charge that Bethesda "sinned wilfully, and not ignorantly."

Has Philalethes commented upon the 9th Reason of the *Letter of the Ten*?

Yes. The 9th Reason, assigned in the *Letter of the Ten*, is as follows:—

"We felt that the compliance with Mr. Alexander's request *would be the introduction of an evil precedent. If a brother has a right to demand our examining a work of fifty pages, he may require our investigating error said to be contained in one of much larger dimensions; so that all our time might be wasted in the examination of other people's errors, instead of more important service.*"

Commenting on this, Philalethes, the *Lover of Truth*, writes:—"Thus, before God, His Church, and the elect angels, *this assembly has formally and publicly, and in the most offensive way, pro-*

“claimed its neutrality to the defamation of the person of the adorable Son of God; for the honour of His person is not of sufficient importance to them to induce the reading of fifty pages, lest it should be used as an evil precedent; weighed in this balance, the Son of God is not worth so much time and trouble!”

Here is a slander of the most unjustifiable character. The misnamed Lover of Truth accuses the Bethesda Brethren with regarding the Son of God as not worth so much time and trouble as the reading of fifty pages would involve. There is craft and ingenuity in the accusation calculated to deceive many simple-minded Christians; but an intelligent examination of it will expose the sophistry of the argument, and the wickedness of its authorship.

The Bethesda Ten had shown that their acknowledgment of the obligation to comply with Mr. Alexander's demand would involve a *breach of principle*; for, among other objections, it would be regarded by some of them as *“the introduction of a fresh test of communion.”* (See Reason No. 7, p. 41, above.)

This objection (on principle) to compliance with Mr. Alexander's demand is applicable equally to the investigation of ten lines, or ten thousand volumes.

Then comes in Reason No. 9, which commences with a very sound objection, that the compliance demanded *“would be the introduction of an evil precedent.”* Now to introduce an evil precedent is to *commit an evil action*. The avoiding of evil—not the saving of time and trouble—is the real objection of the Bethesda Ten. But the words of the *Letter of the Ten* are perverted by the “Lover

“of Truth.” He represents the objection to be “lest it should be used as an evil precedent.” How different is this representation of *possible* or contingent evil from the *positive evil* expressed in the *Letter of the Ten*. We felt . . . it “would be the introduction of an evil precedent.” What nonsense the complaint of Philalethes would appear, without this perversion of the quotation from the *Letter of the Ten*. The complaint would then, in substance, appear that the honour of Christ’s person is not of sufficient importance in the estimation of Bethesda to induce the reading of fifty pages, because Bethesda felt that to do so “would be the introduction of an evil precedent.” Or, in other words, that Bethesda refused to commit an evil action, although such evil action would promote the honour of Christ’s person—that they refuse to do evil that good might come. How ridiculous would such a complaint appear. Darbyism requires the use of such slanderous defamations as those of Philalethes and J. S. O. to sustain its pretensions.

The latter part of Answer No. 9 is merely an exhibition of the absurdity which compliance with Mr. Alexander’s demand would involve; for if a member in communion *has a right to demand* the judgment of *the Church* upon a sentence of ten lines he has an equal right to demand its judgment upon ten thousand volumes (if written by professing Christians), and these, including the “Thirty-nine Articles,” and the “Westminster Confession,” and the necessary action to be taken upon such decisions, would involve the making of the narrowest sect in Christendom; for, doctrines to be approved, as well as doctrines to be condemned, would arise in such investigations.

The duty prescribed to the Church, or to an assembly in Scripture is, not to judge tracts save as evidence respecting men under judgment, but *to judge men* by such evidence as may be forthcoming; and further, to judge only men within the assembly—those that are without God judgeth. “Let us not therefore judge one another any more.” (Rom. xiv. 13.) “The Spiritual Man judgeth all things, yet He Himself is judged of no man.” “He that judgeth me is the Lord.” (1 Cor. ii. 15, and iv. 4.)

If to answer Mr. Alexander’s demand (that a judgment of the Church should be pronounced upon Mr. Newton’s Tracts), were all that was intended by the *Letter of the Ten*, it would best have been done in a few sentences, such as, We regard it to be our duty (as Mr. Darby used to teach in 1834), to recur “to the Scriptures alone for everything relating to the ordering of the Church of God.” We hold it to be Divine truth that “none but the Apostles were ever authorized to make enactments for the Church of Christ, and all that was ever intrusted to the Church itself was to carry into effect those already made. . . .” “We deny” (continues Mr. Darby) “that there is anything not met by the Apostolic injunctions; or, that if it were not, that it could be according to them.” (See *C. W.*, Vol. I., pp. 335 and 336—“Separation from Apostasy, not Schism.”) Acting on this principle, the Brethren might say, We find neither command nor precedent in the apostolic injunctions to justify compliance with Mr. Alexander’s demand. This is our negative objection. Our positive objection is, that our acknowledging of the principle involved in Mr. Alexander’s demand, and our compliance with

it, would be to impose a fresh test of communion and to introduce an evil precedent. Therefore we refuse to comply with Mr. Alexander's demand.

Do not the Darbyites sometimes profess to exhibit the facts of this controversy?

Yes. The writer of *A Letter on Bethesda Fellowship*, J. S. O. (No. 15, 2nd edition), publishes his letter as a statement of the facts of the case. He writes in the Introduction, page 5, "The following
"is the substance of a letter which I wrote to one
"who *pressed me for facts and proofs*, in reference to
"certain statements which I made regarding the
"Separation," &c.

Then in the letter itself, page 7, he writes:—
"You say you want *facts*, that is, a true statement
"of past events. I will therefore try to give you
"them as simply and as shortly as I can, to enable
"you to judge how the division really arose. I
"begin with a short statement of Mr. N.'s doc-
"trines. Mr. N. taught," &c.

Then follows (after the manner of the Darbyites)—not a series of quotations from Mr. Newton, as should have been supplied in performance of what J. S. O. proposed to do, but—a fanciful and most untruthful paraphrase of Mr. Newton's doctrines. We say, "untruthful," because J. S. O. exhibits as Mr. Newton's doctrines in 1865, certain errors which he (Mr. N.) had confessed and retracted in 1847, thus ignoring Mr. Newton's retraction, to which, however, he refers, and comments on.

J. S. O. proceeds to exhibit his so-called facts and proofs by a quotation from some other Darbyite writer, adopted as his own by J. S. O.—a ridiculous misrepresentation of Mr. Newton's doctrines—from which he wishes us to believe that, according to

Mr. Newton, Christ was disqualified "for becoming our Surety, our Sacrifice, and our Saviour."

J. S. O. proceeds with his own representation of Mr. Newton's doctrines. "All that He (Christ) could render to the last moment of His life, all that He could offer up in death, was needed by Him for Himself, and for His own deliverance! But then what becomes of the blessed doctrines of grace? What becomes of the glorious gospel of God's salvation? What becomes of the Church? What becomes of us individually? *We have lost Christ!*

"I have been blamed," says J. S. O., "for calling such fearful doctrines '*blasphemy against Christ,*' as being too strong language. . . But Mr. N.'s blasphemies are directed against the Blessed One upon whom all resurrection from the dead depends. (1'Cor. xv. 12-23.) I find a false Christ in a false position, the result of carnal reasonings about His birth, presented to souls."

Now the substituting of such sentimental fictions as these, for facts and proofs is nothing less than preposterous.

The reader has before him an impartial statement of Mr. Newton's errors, so far as we could collect them, and is in a position to judge for himself. Of one thing the reader may be confidently assured, that no pamphlet on the controversy hitherto written by a Darbyite will supply him with a truthful and ingenuous representation of the facts. If any one will supply us with such a statement we shall be very thankful, and read it with all respect, as a truly exceptional publication. But the rule among Darbyites is to avoid particulars as to facts,

substituting untruthful paraphrases, and filling up deficient testimony with pretence to infallibility.

The only plausible item of proof to which our author refers us on this point, is contained in a footnote.

“For verbatim quotations from Mr. N.’s writings, “see *Is there a Cause?* by Philalethes. G. Morrish, “24 Warwick Lane.”

This is the same Philalethes, the *lover of truth*, whose misstatements and misquotations we have noticed above.

But you have stated that J. S. O. refers to Mr. Newton’s retractation. How so?

He does so as follows:—He writes (p. 13): First, “I will notice the statement that Mr. N. published “a retractation. This document has been so “thoroughly examined, and so thoroughly exposed “by others, that I need say but little about it.”

It has indeed been not only reviewed, but misquoted and misrepresented by Philalethes and Mr. Pilson, as noticed by us above.

J. S. O. proceeds:—“In the retractation which “Mr. N. published, some of the doctrines were confessed to be wrong, some were re-asserted, and “others were withdrawn for reconsideration, only to “re-appear in later papers on the same subject.”

It would not suit J. S. O.’s purpose to distinguish Newton’s errors, “confessed to be wrong,” from those which he still holds; but if he really desired to enlighten his readers, such should have been done.

J. S. O. proceeds:—“Further, Mr. N. has himself “since stated that there was *no heresy*, nor anything “approaching to heresy, in the accused tracts.”

It would have been a material fact if J. S. O. had

supplied some more reliable evidence than his own word for this assertion. We ask when, where, how, or to whom was this statement made? We suspect J. S. O. would find it inconvenient to answer us.

J. S. O. proceeds:—"In a paper published in June 1864, entitled, '*Fifteen Propositions for the solemn consideration of Christians*,' by B. W. Newton, abundant evidence may be found to show that Mr. N. is still engaged in the same course which he commenced at Plymouth before the discovery of the doctrines. I believe few that have seen the paper will deny that he seeks to deny almost all the *distinctive* truths of the present dispensation which the Lord has graciously *recovered* for the comfort and edification of the Church of God in these last days."

We hope sincerely, for his own sake, that Mr. Newton denies the Darbyite "*distinctive*" and "*recovered*" truth, or rather theory, about the UNITY OF THE BODY. To quote from Mr. Newton's words might be a very inconvenient appeal to facts, therefore such an appeal is carefully avoided by J. S. O.

There is throughout the pamphlet of J. S. O. a pretence to the exhibition of facts going hand in hand, with a careful avoidance of all material facts. He writes to one who had *pressed him for facts and proofs*:—"I will, therefore, try to give you them." And again (p. 19), "To complete the facts up to the present time." Again, (p. 38,) "You cannot get rid of facts." We have seen that his pretended facts as to Newton are sentimental fictions, and those respecting Bethesda begin and end in untruthful statements, sustained by a pretence to infallibility. Combining the

different aspects of this pamphlet, we regard it as a studied effort to conceal the truth. The pamphlet of J. S. O., *A Letter on Bethesda Fellowship*, is, on the whole, a very remarkable one, and we recommend it to the careful examination of every reader who desires to see an example of all the evils of Darbyism combined within the narrow limits of 84 pages.

Do you offer any other remarks upon the pamphlet of J. S. O.?

Yes. We submit one more quotation, illustrating a principle conspicuous among Darbyite controversialists, that the evil of any statement is not determined by them from what is said, but by whom it is said.

To what do you particularly refer?

J. S. O. informs us of a correspondence between himself and Lord C., from which we extract the following (see No. 15, p. 20):—

“The question I asked was the following:—

“‘Would persons *coming* from Bethesda (Bristol), or those who go and *hear* Mr. N., be allowed to sit down at the Lord’s table with the simple statement that they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, without reference to their walk or where they come from?’

“The answer I received was as follows:—‘Every *dear child of God* that is walking *consistently* with such a profession, come he from whatever quarter he may, would be received.’

“Now,” continues J.S.O., “here I find that *the ground taken by Bethesda in 1848 is fully maintained*, and professed in unmistakable terms in 1864.

“Lord C. is anxious to be clear that there is *no*

“*objection to intercommunion and fellowship with an assembly where FALSE teachers, in every sense of the word FALSE, are allowed, and where false doctrine is held and unjudged. I say intercommunion and fellowship; for saints are to be allowed to go without restraint from the one meeting to the other, and vice versa. The answer to my question, although indirect, is not to be mistaken. ‘Come he from whatever quarter he may’ clearly includes Mr. N. and Bethesda, and is an endeavour to make it appear that there is nothing inconsistent in fellowship with persons who have held, taught, and never repudiated, evil blasphemies.*”

To what in this quotation do you draw attention?

You will perceive that J. S. O. charges Lord C.’s very brief and doubtless orthodox sentence as being a most wicked production. “Every dear child of God that is walking consistently with such profession, come he from whatever quarter he may, ‘would be received.’” Such are Lord C.’s words. J. S. O. charges these words with containing the expression of three distinct errors each of an excommunicable character. First, with the maintaining of the principle on account of which six hundred Christians at *Bethesda were excommunicated* in 1848; second, with defending the principle of *intercommunion with an excommunicable assembly*; and third, with an endeavour to make it appear that there is nothing inconsistent in *fellowship with persons who held, taught, and never repudiated evil blasphemies.*

But before commenting on these monstrous accusations, we copy from the same writer his statement of the Darbyite rule as to receiving Christians at the Lord’s Table. (See No. 15, p. 67.)

We place both in parallel columns so that they may be the more readily compared:—

B.

BRETHREN'S RULE OF COMMUNION, AS DEFINED BY LORD C.:—

“Every dear child of God that is walking consistently with such a profession, come he from whatever quarter he may, would be received.”

D.

DARBYITE RULE OF COMMUNION, AS DEFINED BY J. S. O.:—

“Christians in the sects were allowed to break bread as members of Christ, whenever testimony as to their godliness was forthcoming.”

We distinguish these two quotations (for the purpose of reference) with the letters B and D. If B is, as J. S. O. describes it, in his third accusation, “an endeavour to make it appear that there is nothing inconsistent in fellowship with persons who have held, taught, and never repudiated evil blasphemies”—what is D? Will J. S. O., as the author of D, admit that he himself is guilty of the like misconduct? If he will not, can he and will he point out the essential difference between his own words (D), and Lord C.’s words (B), upon which the accusation is grounded? If this cannot be done, will J. S. O., as a repentant Christian, candidly confess (what every intelligent reader must perceive), that he (J. S. O.) has been convicted on his own testimony of falsely accusing his neighbour.

We may perceive from J. S. O.’s first accusation on what frivolous grounds the Bethesda congregation was excommunicated; for, according to J. S. O., “the ground taken by Bethesda in 1848 is fully maintained and professed in unmistakable terms”

in Lord C.'s short sentence, "Every dear child of God that is walking consistently with such profession, come he from whatever quarter he may, would be received."

But J. S. O. exclaims—"Come he from whatever quarter he may, clearly includes Mr. N. [Newton] and Bethesda." We reply, It equally includes a gaming table, a betting ring, or anything worse, for if a dear child of God is condemned as a wrongdoer, because of his coming from any of these places, he would be excluded (according to Lord C.'s definition of Brethren's principles) as one not walking consistently with the profession of a dear child of God.

Having disposed of slanders Nos. 1 and 3, what do you say respecting slander No. 2, that, according to Lord C., there is no objection to *intercommunion* and fellowship *with an assembly* where false doctrine is held and unjudged?

To this we reply, that J. S. O.'s statement is an unwarrantable assumption that Lord C., as well as himself, has adopted the unscriptural theory of communion of assemblies. This theory exhibited in the Darbyite confederation, with its test respecting the unity of the body, as understood among themselves, marks Darbyism as schismatical more distinctly than all the false assertions, misquotations, and other evil doings which we notice throughout these pages. The false writings are merely the faults of individuals whose errors therein ought to be condemned by all right-minded Christians; but the confederation, with its test, is indeed the source of all the other evils, and marks the whole system as unmitigated schism, according to Mr. Darby's definition of that term.

That such is the case, we learn not only from Scriptures, but from the close reasoning of *Mr. Darby* while he was with the Brethren.

You have drawn attention to misstatements by Philalethes and J. S. O. What general remarks do you offer respecting them?

We conclude that the misstatements are the personal misdeed of those who uttered them. And we notice them, not to bring censure on the writers, but because of the far greater evil demonstrated through them. The pamphlets of Philalethes and J. S. O. have for many years been popular handbooks of the controversy, and in high repute among the Darbyites, and to this day are sold in their exclusive tract shops where nothing is supposed to be had save *pure theology—precious truth*. We condemn the authorship of these pamphlets; but what terms of disapprobation are sufficiently strong to describe the system which cannot be attempted to be defended without the use of such pamphlets.

COMMUNION TESTS OF BRETHREN.

What were the principles of Brethren respecting tests of communion?

The principle popular among Christians, whereby the Brethren became so numerous between 1828 and 1834 was, that all true believers should be received at the Lord's Table without any other tests than those of soundness of faith and consistency of walk. In 1834 the leaders of Brethren taught and *Mr. Darby* wrote:—"I repeat that the ground of
"the common salvation is the only one which is
"sanctioned by Christ." And again—"Any union
"which has not this principle as its basis, which is
"brought together upon a point of secondary im-

“portance (and all else is secondary), or which enjoins “anything which might prove a stumbling-block to “the conscience of the weak, is contrary to the “mind of Christ, and is inevitably schism.” (*Ch. Wit.*, vol. i., p. 345.) They taught that “any addition to the requirements of Christ which may, in “the smallest degree, affect the conscience of another, “is a deep sin against the Spirit of God.” (See *Ch. Wit.*, vol. i., p. 346, an article entitled, “Separation from Apostasy not Schism,” attributed to Mr. John Darby.)

How did the teachers among Brethren apply these principles?

On such principles as these the teachers among Brethren condemned the Baptists, Independents, Quakers, and other sects as guilty of the sin of schism; not on account of erroneous doctrines, but because each of them, in its own system, superadded to the proper text (consistent Christianity), some doctrine or opinion as a test, whereby weak believers were cut off.

Can you mention an example illustrating what you mean to convey?

Yes. Take the case of the Baptists. Although the majority of the early Brethren were Baptists in doctrine and baptized as adults, the teachers of Brethren condemned the Baptists as schismatical for using the question of baptism as a test of communion. John Bunyan, though a Baptist, was one of the Brethren in spirit; for in his day he strongly protested against his co-religionists for making even what he himself regarded as the true doctrine of baptism, a test of communion; whereby many whom Christ would and did receive were in effect excommunicated.

Was it required that all who were received into communion among Brethren should hold these principles of Brethren?

Certainly not. Brethren would to-day receive Baptists, Quakers, Darbyites, and Episcopalians if not individually disqualified according to Scripture.

We could name the case of a beneficed clergyman still living, who, while preparing for his ordination at Trinity College, Dublin, was a regular attendant at the breaking of bread among the Brethren, notwithstanding that his intended future course was generally known among them. He was there instructed in Divine truth better, as he thought, than he might be elsewhere, and he regarded the meeting of Brethren as common ground where Christians might meet without abandoning their conscientious convictions respecting questions of secondary importance. We believe that thus far he took a sound view of Brethren's principles.

We could also name cases of members of the Church of England who sometimes went to the communion among Brethren without ever entertaining a thought of leaving the Established Church.

If Brethren's principles were enjoined upon all in communion, the Brethren would thereby be exhibited as a sect, and as truly schismatical as the Baptists or Darbyites.

The Lord's Table at the assemblies of Brethren is open to all true Christians. If Darbyites and Baptists absent themselves from it, their doing so is of their own choice, for they are not excluded by any rule of Brethren unless individually guilty of misconduct, for which the Bible prescribes excommunication. We shall presently show that so

much cannot truly be said for the Darbyite communion table, although it is pretended to be so.

THE THREE DARBYITE TESTS OF COMMUNION.

Wherein and when did the Darbyites abandon the principles of Brethren by the adoption of unscriptural tests of communion?

They did so in 1848. Evil principles had long before that time been in exercise among them, but in 1848 they consummated the schism of Darbyism by the introduction of three new and unscriptural tests of communion which, however, so merge into one another that they may now be regarded as one test, viz., *the acknowledgment of the unity of the body*; but for the present we must treat of them separately.

Which is the first of these tests?

The first Darbyite test imposed in 1848 was that all assemblies of Brethren should *pronounce a judgment of the Church upon Mr. Newton's heretical tracts*. This test was applied to Bethesda and refused, for the reasons stated in the *Letter of the Ten*. Bethesda having thus refused the first test was excommunicated. Thenceforth Bethesda became the primary object of Darbyite hostility. The original test—the judging of Mr. Newton's tracts, on which Bethesda had been condemned—has been merged in what is called the “Bethesda Test,” which latter is still rigorously enforced, and means, in substance, that every Christian joining the Darbyite association or any of its assemblies, shall admit, or be brought to admit, that Bethesda is excommunicable, and that all assemblies of Brethren who receive any one coming from Bethesda are excommunicable; that is to say, “outside the Church of God on

“earth;” and further, that every other assembly who shall receive any one coming from any of the assemblies thus excommunicated, is for so doing, itself excommunicable. And so on *ad infinitum*. This is the test which is first applied to persons coming into communion with Darbyites.

What objection do you make to the first Darbyite test?

We object to the TEST upon which Bethesda was declared to be excommunicated; that is, for refusing to pronounce *a judgment of the Church* upon Mr. Newton's tracts. There is neither command nor precedent in the Bible to justify such a demand, and on this ground alone the demand should be condemned. The Scripture direction and command is, that the Church, when gathered together, should judge men, and of these only such as are within the assembly. The only punishment which a Church, when gathered together, is commissioned to inflict upon an evil doer amounts to the putting out of such a one from among themselves. None can be thus punished save those within the assembly when gathered together. It is impossible that one not present could be put out from among themselves by an assembly when gathered together. A man can avoid such formal act of excommunication (as Mr. Newton did) by cutting himself off. St. Paul writes, “Would that they which unsettle you would even “cut themselves off.” (Gal. v. 12, Alford.) Such an one leaves the Church (collectively) nothing to do, while as individuals, every saint is instructed in Scripture as to the manner in which he ought to act towards an evil doer. The person who places himself “without” is subjected to the judgment of God. “Those that are without God judgeth.”

If Mr. Newton were to come to Bethesda to claim the privilege of communion as a Christian, it would be the duty of the Church to judge him—not to judge his tracts but himself (the man)—and to do so not only by his acts and words but also by his books and tracts, and such other evidence as, according to Scripture, might be forthcoming.

If Mr. Newton had been righteously put out of an assembly at Plymouth it would become the duty of Bethesda to refuse to receive him—not because of the authority of the decree of expulsion pronounced at Plymouth, but because Mr. Newton, as an evildoer, deserved to be so treated.

Do the Darbyites object to this argument?

Yes. They say it “reduces every assembly to an “independent congregation.” We answer, Why not an independent congregation, so far as human authority outside itself is concerned. Is not a rightly-constituted assembly of even two or three Christians with the Scriptures to instruct them and Christ Himself in their midst, authorized to obey the Lord’s commands as to receiving “one another,” and putting out evildoers from among themselves without waiting for instructions from the centre of Darbyite authority at the Priory, Islington?

We trace the wisdom of God in confining the exercise of discipline and the regulating of its own internal affairs to every several assembly of Christians *gathered together*, with Christ in their midst, independently of all other assemblies. If the issuing of decrees of excommunication (such as have emanated from the Council of Trent and the Priory in London) had the authority of Scripture to sustain it, there would have been no possibility of escape left for a faithful remnant when the

apostasy of Christendom had set in, for the remnant would in such case, as subordinate assemblies, be compelled, on the authority of Scripture, to submit to the direction of the visible Church, or central assembly, whether at the Vatican or the Priory. Whereas now, if there were only one faithful assembly of Christians in the world, having the power of the Lord Jesus present with them, they are fully authorized and under responsibility to obey all Scripture commands without any apprehensions on account of the censures and excommunications which the so-called "Church of God on earth" might fulminate against them on account of "self will" or "independency."

Do not Darbyites, in controversy, now assign another reason for their excommunication than Bethesda's refusal to judge Mr. Newton's tracts?

They certainly do. But it is not the less true that the excommunication of Bethesda took place because of their refusal to judge the tracts. It soon, however, became apparent that the *test* about Newton's tracts required to be subsidised in order to make it effective.

Wherein did the Darbyites subsidise their first test?

They promulgated statements respecting Bethesda which every one acquainted with the facts must know to be untrue. For example, that the *Letter of the Ten* "was a defence of what had been done in receiving into communion well-instructed followers of Mr. Newton, and propagators of his doctrines, after the remonstrance and entreaty of many that they would forbear to do so," &c. (See No. 16, p. 8.)

Again, it was stated that Bethesda formally

and deliberately admitted the doctrine of Mr. Newton (see above, page 46), and that Bethesda "sinned wilfully and not ignorantly" (see above, p. 47).

These barefaced departures from truth have been used to seduce hundreds of devoted Christians to join the schismatical system of Darbyism. Christians who never would have joined the Darbyites, and who would not now remain supporters of their principles for an hour, if they knew the facts, and believed them to be facts. Lord Congleton's statement that no one holding any of Mr. Newton's heretical doctrines has ever knowingly been received at Bethesda, has been reiterated, and has never been contradicted by an appeal to facts. The Darbyite controversialists always avoid facts; but, like the Church of Rome, they substitute a pretence to infallibility for facts. "God says they are partakers of evil deeds." "Bethesda disregarded the warnings of God's Spirit about these persons, given by means of many persons." It is by such means as these that false religion has ever been made to appear plausible before mankind.

Mr. Darby remarks respecting a defence of the Church of Rome, that nowhere is the truth given as a mark of the true Church. We may say the same of the defenders of Darbyism, though in a different sense. We confess that we never understood how the system of Popery could have grown out of the apostasy of apostolic Christianity until we became acquainted with modern Darbyism.

Is the Bethesda test, as described above, still in exercise among the Darbyites?

Yes. Every individual, on joining their communion, is required to "judge the question," and

in addition to being a Christian he must know and learn that Bethesda and all who would receive from Bethesda are excommunicable, "outside the Church of God on earth."

Have you any written evidence to corroborate this statement?

Yes, and we shall refer to it presently. The Darbyite *modus operandi* is to receive any true Christian who may be recommended by *some one in communion* as a hopeful proselyte to Darbyism. If the person so received be not previously instructed respecting the supposed evils of Bethesda, he is speedily informed on the subject, and instructed, by means of pamphlets, such as those of PHILALETES and J. S. O., which for this purpose are in high repute among the Darbyites, and have been so for the past ten years.

The work of making proselytes to Darbyism is generally done in conversations; but occasionally, though rarely, by letter-writing.

To what written testimony do you allude?

One of the leaders wrote to a Christian who, though not a Darbyite, was received once into their communion. The letter runs thus:—

"DEAR FRIEND IN CHRIST,—As you have now "united with us in breaking bread, I desire to "carry out that word which was given us at the "meeting that we should wash one another's feet, "and to place before you those matters in which "truth has been departed from by many who "gather in the name of Jesus." Then follows an epitome of Darbyism, mingled with untruthful statements respecting those whom the Darbyites had excommunicated. For example, the writer says:—"I would hold no fellowship with one who

“was in knowing fellowship with an evil-doer
 “[‘evil such as God has commanded to be put out’],
 “though sound and otherwise walking obediently
 “himself. The principle of Brunswick Street would
 “admit such.”

The writer proceeds to explain that if a person coming among them be of the sects or systems, “the
 “only responsibility that can be *pressed* on the
 “*conscience* is the *obligation* to leave them; but
 “once recognise your liberty to *gather to the Lord*,
 “independent of names and sects [that is, to become
 “a Darbyite], and you *cannot escape your responsibility to all others so gathered*,” &c.

Thus they offer you liberty that they may bring you into bondage to all the Darbyites throughout the world, or more properly, to that central ruling power in London, through which Darbyite uniformity is maintained. You will observe that the Darbyite interpretations of being *gathered to the Lord*, independent of names and sects, is, not being brought to Jesus by a saving knowledge of the Gospel, but being added as a member to the Darbyite *one body*; for to this body alone, of all the Christians in the world, the Darbyites acknowledge any responsibility. But being once gathered into the Darbyite association, “you cannot escape your
 “responsibility to all other so gathered.”

Now we, as individuals, know that we have been
 “gathered to the Lord independent of names and
 “sects,” yet we do not acknowledge any responsibility to any sect or leader.

Our obedience is due to the Lord Jesus only, and if obedient to His commands, we shall be found to be doing our duty by our brethren in Christ everywhere.

Do you refer to other quotations illustrating the Darbyite theory, as to the receiving of Christians as such?

Yes. J. S. O. writes :—

“ Christians in the sects were allowed to break bread, as members of Christ, whenever *testimony* as to their godliness was forthcoming.” (See No. 15, p. 67.)

Again he writes :—“ but the children of God in the sects found always a warm welcome to the Table of the Lord when they came there with adequate *testimony* to their godliness” (p. 77).

And again, “ though individuals from the sects are allowed to break bread on competent *testimony* being given to their godliness *by any in communion*” (p. 76).

Is not the principle expressed in these quotations exactly the same as that maintained by the Brethren, as expressed by Lord C :—“ *Every dear child of God that is walking consistently with such profession, come he from whatever quarter he may, would be received?*” (No. 15, p. 20.)

At first sight it would appear to be so, and the Darbyites wish that it should be thought that the Table of the Lord among them is open to godly Christians of the sects ; for such a notion greatly helps to draw Christians of the sects into the Darbyite party ; but a close examination will show that this appearance of liberality is only a pretence. If you examine these three quotations you will perceive that in each of them “ *testimony*” to godliness is required. The possession of the abstract quality of godliness itself will not do without “ *testimony*,” and in the last quotation it must be testimony by one “ in communion.” Now this saving clause

enables the Darbyites never to receive any Christian who is not an expected proselyte to Darbyism. And such a person can be received only once, for on being received the practice, "that we should wash one another's feet," is exercised upon him; that is to say, he is instructed respecting the evils of Bethesda, and if of any other of the sects or systems, the "*obligation to leave them*" is "*pressed on the conscience*." If the neophyte is not convinced of these evils respectively, he must leave the Darbyites for ever; for they will not continue to receive him unless he adopts the *Bethesda test*. Elsewhere J. S. O. writes more candidly about the Darbyite practice of receiving Christians outside their own confederation. He says:—"We must not receive persons into fellowship simply because they profess to believe in Christ, nor even because they are known to be Christians. We must know where they come from, with whom they are in fellowship, whether they are *tainted* with false doctrines, or are in fellowship with those who *countenance* them" (See No. 15, p. 58).

Here are "traditions of men" employed to effect the rejection of the commandment of God—"Receive ye one another." The Scriptures instruct us as to the putting out of heretics and evil doers, to which the human "tradition" of Darbyism has added as excommunicable the pretended crimes of being "*tainted* with false doctrine," though not holding such, and of being in fellowship with those who *countenance* false doctrine, though not in fellowship with any holder or defender of such. The principles of Darbyism are manifestly unscriptural, for they involve the excommunication of saints sound in doctrine, holy in walk, and consistent in

conversation, because of their imaginary association with evil doctrine, which they hate as much as do those who excommunicate them.

Thus you perceive the Darbyites rigorously maintain the *Bethesda test*, and none save Darbyites can remain among them in communion, and when the neophyte is sent away for refusing the Bethesda test, he is accused of being in "*wilful connexion with evil dishonouring to Christ.*"

J. S. O. writes (p. 78):—"and this ground [Christ and His cross] is broad enough to embrace *all the children of God everywhere*, and *none are excluded* except by their own choice or by their *wilful connexion with evil dishonouring to Christ* and condemned in His cross."

Another Darbyite, the author of *Communion of Saints*, writes:—"The ignorant, therefore, while ignorant are clean, but no longer." And again,—

"You would receive the ignorant then?"

"Yes, if honestly so, they are not defiled; but I should be careful to know that the ignorance was really ignorance, for experience has unhappily shown that so many have professed ignorance who knew all about it," &c. (See No. 14, pp. 16 & 21.)

Thus the slander that Bethesda sinned wilfully and not ignorantly, is extended to the thousands outside Bethesda, whom the Darbyites refuse to receive, for they profess to refuse only those who are in "*wilful connexion with evil dishonouring to Christ.*"

THE UNITY OF THE BODY.—THE THIRD DARBYITE TEST.

You referred above to a third Darbyite test of communion. Can you state what it is?

Yes, the third Darbyite test is the acknowledg-

ment of the *Unity of the Body*. But as the second or Bethesda test comprehends the first (respecting the judging of Newton's tracts), so the third comprises the other two ; for to refuse to judge Mr. Newton's tracts, or to decline to pronounce Bethesda and all connected with it excommunicable, is, in the Darbyite sense, a denial of the unity of the body. But the third test comprises more than the others, for two whole assemblies of Darbyites who had adopted the first two tests were each put outside the so-called " Church of God on earth," as having virtually denied the unity of the body by receiving a Christian into communion who was pronounced excommunicated, but unrighteously so, as these assemblies respectively regarded the matter. We allude to the cases of Peckham and Sheffield, to the details of which we shall again refer. The Darbyite tests are thus reduced to one, viz., *the acknowledgment of THE UNITY OF THE BODY*.

What do the Darbyites mean by *the Unity of the Body* ?

They mean a confederation of Christian assemblies "owning one another in the unity of the body," and to this confederation exclusively they appropriate the titles of "The Assembly of God" and "The Church of God on earth." They always require the individuals of the assemblies to *acknowledge the unity of the body*, by which is to be understood the unity of the Darbyite confederation, and the practical illustration of this unity is that every excommunication pronounced by the central or influential assembly in London shall take effect and be adopted as a dogma, without inquiry or examination, by every assembly of Darbyites all over the world. To question the propriety of an excommunication

pronounced by the central assembly in London, would be "to ignore the discipline of the assembly "in London," and would be regarded as a virtual denial of the "unity of the body." The effect of forming a united confederation out of numerous assemblies once independent of each other, was to concentrate the excommunicating power of the Darbyite assemblies in a few individuals, whereby a Christian man, or even an assembly of a thousand Christians, residing in Melbourne, might, according to this theory, be placed outside "*the Church of God "on earth"*" by the decree of half a dozen individuals met at the Priory in London.

Is this excommunicating power supposed to be confined to the central assembly in London?

Certainly not. In theory, any "rightly gathered" assembly can excommunicate any individual of the Darbyite association, or even a whole assembly of 1000 individuals, although he or they were a thousand miles away. But this is only a theory. In point of fact, all material or monster excommunications hitherto pronounced by the Darbyites have emanated from the London assembly, or were directed by emissaries from that centre of the association.

When did the tendency to form the assemblies of Brethren into confederation exhibit itself?

Not, as we know, before 1838. The germ of the evil existed long before among the Brethren, some of whom were vain of the great increase in numbers, influence, and biblical knowledge of the Christians, so-called. In 1838, however, Mr. George Wigram (now a leader among Darbyites, and one of the London Priory associates), wrote a letter, of which the following is an extract (see No. 2, 2nd Ed., p. 11):—

“Would it be for the glory of the Lord and the increase of testimony to have *one central meeting*, the common responsibility of all within reach, and as many *meetings subordinate to it* as grace might vouchsafe? or to hold it to be better to *allow the meetings to grow up as they may without connexion and dependent upon the energy of individuals only?*”

In this quotation we see two principles exhibited—First, that held by Brethren, that meetings should be allowed to grow up without connexion; and second, that of Darbyism, that there should be “one central meeting,” and “many meetings subordinate to it.” This latter theory has, by means of Darbyism, become an accomplished fact. The Priory at Islington, London, is the central one to which all others are subordinate. The inferior assemblies of Darbyites follow submissively, for to resist would be “to ignore the discipline of the assembly in London,” and practically “to set aside discipline everywhere as it virtually *denies the unity of the body.*” (See No. 3, p. 37.) This quotation is from a decree of “the Church of God on earth” excommunicating a whole assembly of Christians—that at Sheffield. The decree illustrates what is meant by the UNITY OF THE BODY.

But the subordinate assemblies generally follow the Priory, not only submissively but willingly; for Darbyite influence commences by subjugating the minds of those within their assemblies. Feelings and credulity amounting to weakness, rather than sound judgment, enlightened by the indwelling spirit, characterize the best class of proselytes to Darbyism. When the mere assertions of Darbyites, though contrary to the truth, are represented as

the "testimony of the Holy Ghost," it requires more force of character than is possessed by ordinary men and women, though Christians, to resist the pretensions of leaders after the first false step of joining the sect without the exercise of intelligent inquiry has been taken.

PECKHAM AND SHEFFIELD CASE.

Is there any case in which the operation of the Darbyite test of the *unity of the body* is illustrated?

Yes; the case of Peckham and Sheffield, above referred to.

Can you mention the particulars of this case?

Yes; but as an introduction to it we would draw attention to the rule among Darbyites as to ministry in the Church. A Darbyite leader writes:—

"Why set up human authority, in any shape or form, in the house of God? . . . To set up man to keep order in God's assembly is sheer unbelief, and an open insult to the Divine Presence. . . It is, in our judgment, impossible to recognise Christ as the centre and sovereign ruler in the assembly, and continue to sanction the setting up of man.

"If Jesus is in our midst, why should we think of setting up a human president? Why not unanimously and heartily *allow* Him [Christ] to take the *president's seat*, and bow to Him in all things?" (See No. 6, pp. 24 and 30.) (Compare this teaching with the instructions contained in Heb. xiii. 7-17, 24; also Titus i. 11.)

The practical result of this theory is exhibited by the same Darbyite author. He writes, pages 29 and 30:—

"Alas! alas! we often see men on their feet in

"our assemblies, whom common sense, to say
 "nothing of spirituality, would keep in their seats.
 "We have often sat and gazed in astonishment at
 "some whom we have heard attempting to minister
 "in the assembly. We have often thought that
 "the assembly has been looked upon by a certain
 "class of ignorant men, fond of hearing themselves
 "talk, as a sphere in which they might easily
 "figure without the pains of school or college work.
 ". . . And hence, if an assembly be troubled by
 "the intrusion of ignorant and foolish men, men
 "who have never yet measured themselves in the
 "presence of God; men who boldly overleap the
 "wide domain over which common sense, good
 "taste and moral propriety preside, and then vainly
 "talk of being led by the Holy Ghost; restless
 "men who will be at something, and who keep the
 "assembly in a continual state of nervous apprehen-
 "sion, not knowing what's to come next. Should
 "any assembly be thus grievously afflicted, what
 "should they do?"

Peckham's case supplies us with a substantial answer to this last question.

Please inform us of this case?

In the year 1863, Mr. A. Stewart, a Darbyite, was
 charged by the leaders at the Priory, Islington,
 with having "grievously violated the Lord's pre-
 "sence at His Table, and the conscience of the
 "saints, by forcing his ministry;" and in "having
 "declared he had nothing to confess." On the
 above subject the leaders stated to their Brethren
 of the one assembly of God in London, that they
 can no longer have communion with him at the
 Table of the Lord. Mr. Stewart being thus put
 outside "the Church of God on earth," went to

Walworth, another meeting of Darbyites, and stated his case. On this the Walworth Assembly asked of the Priory meeting, "What sin or sins, according to Scripture, of an excommunicable character," he had committed. The reply was, we are told, to the effect that they were "of a character not needing to be determined by Scripture." This answer not satisfying the saints at Walworth, they received Mr. Stewart, for which act (added to their "self-will" in changing their place of meeting from Walworth to Peckham without the permission of the central assembly) they were excommunicated by the Priory, who made a communication to them of which the following is an extract: "Those associated with the Peckham meeting cannot be accredited at the Lord's Table till they are humbled for their course." Thus Mr. Wigram's theory of one *central* and many *subordinate* assemblies was developed in the TEST called the UNITY OF THE BODY. The subordinate assembly of Peckham, with all the members composing it, was put outside "the Church of God on earth" by the Priory gathering—that central meeting in whose act of excommunication Mr. Darby took a part.

"Mr Goodal, a member of the Peckham meeting, went to Sheffield on 22nd November 1863. The Brethren composing the meeting in that place, considering he had been unrighteously put out of fellowship by the Priory, received him." (See No. 2, p. 65.)

"Aware that this would be reported in an adverse spirit at the neighbouring meeting at Rotherham on the following Sunday, they wrote during the week, requesting their Brethren there to suspend their judgment till they should hear

“ their own account of the matter, and the reasons
 “ that had influenced them. The following is the
 “ reply which this request elicited :—

“ ‘ROTHERHAM, *Nov. 29th*, 1863.

“ ‘Dear Brother,

“ ‘I duly received your letter of yesterday,
 “ and read it to the saints assembled this morning
 “ around the Table of the Lord.

“ ‘I am requested to say, that inasmuch as you
 “ have now placed yourselves in the same position
 “ as Mr. G., viz., outside *the communion of saints*
 “ gathered together in the name of Christ in Lon-
 “ don, the *gathering* in Rotherham being in *fellowship*
 “ with those in London, *cannot possibly receive any*
 “ *statement* of the particulars of the matter, *either*
 “ *written or by word of mouth*. To do so they feel
 “ would be to ignore the *discipline of the assembly*
 “ *in London*, and practically to set aside discipline
 “ everywhere ; as it *virtually denies the unity of the*
 “ *body*, and reduces every assembly to an indepen-
 “ dent congregation.” (See No. 3, p. 37.)

Thus another large assembly of Darbyites (as they then were) is put outside the “ Church of God on earth ” by the assembly at Rotherham, but only in exercise of the discipline enjoined by the central assembly at the Priory, and their crime is defined as the *virtual denial of the unity of the body*. This excommunication was a deliberate act, as appears from a letter subsequently written by Mr. Darby, from the south of France, on 19th February 1864, to Mr. Spur, of Sheffield, in which he says :—

“ I understand the breach arose between you and
 “ Rotherham by reason of your reception of Goodal.
 “ With the main facts of his case I am acquainted,

“for I took part in what passed, and now allow me
 “to put the case as it stands as to him.” Then
 follows Mr. Darby’s remarks upon the case, after
 which he proceeds:—“I take part in this act, and
 “hold him to be outside the Church of God on
 “earth, being outside (in either case) what repre-
 “sents it in London; I am bound by Scripture to
 “count them so. I come to Sheffield; there he
 “breaks bread, and is—in what? Not in the
 “Church of God on earth, for he is out of it in
 “London, and there are not two Churches on
 “earth, cannot be, so as to be in one and out of
 “another.”

The case of Peckham and Sheffield is a practical example of the working of the Darbyite TEST called the “Unity of the Body.” These monstrous proceedings of the assembly at the Priory are perfectly consistent with Darbyism, but entirely inconsistent with the doctrine taught in the Scripture.

BRETHREN’S OPINIONS RESPECTING A CONFEDERATION OF ASSEMBLIES.

What is the principle of Brethren as exhibited in your last quotation from Mr. Wigram’s letter? (See p. 77, above.)

This principle, as contrasted with the Darbyite “unity of the body,” is one still held, and which they held when Mr. Wigram wrote in 1838. It is “to allow the meetings to grow up, as they may [and as they had been doing] without connexion, “and dependent upon the energy of individuals “only,” that is to say, of individuals qualified by God for the work of the ministry within the assembly.

How did the Brethren in general regard sugges-

tions such as Mr. Wigram's, to form a confederation of assemblies ?

Such suggestions were boldly opposed, and the evils of them were ably exposed by Mr. Darby, who in 1841 wrote a pamphlet on the subject, entitled *Reflections on the Ruined Condition of the Church*, from which we quote the following:—He tells us that “He writes these pages because the *“project of making Churches* is really the hindrance *“in the way of the accomplishment of what all* *“desire, viz., the union of the saints in one body”* (see No. 9, p. 2).

“The Church is in a state of ruin, immersed and *“buried in the world—invisible, if you will have it* *“so—while it ought to be a candle, and a candle-* *“stick, the light of God. . . If it be, then confess* *“this ruin, this apostacy, this departure from its* *“primitive standing”* (see p. 11). *“I press this* *“argument on those who are endeavouring to* *“organize Churches. If Churches exist, such* *“persons are not called on to make them. If, as* *“they say, they did exist at the beginning, but* *“have ceased to exist, in that case the dispensation* *“is in ruins, and in a condition of apostacy from its* *“original standing. They are undertaking, in con-* *“sequence thereof, to set it up again. This attempt* *“is what they have to justify, otherwise the attempt* *“is without anything to warrant it.”* (See No. 9, p. 12.)

Elsewhere he says:—“But if you go on to tell me *“that you have organized a Church, or combined* *“together with others to do so, that you have chosen* *“a president or a pastor, and that having done this,* *“you are the Church of God, of the place you inhabit.* *“I put this question, ‘My dear friends, who has*

“commissioned you to do this?” . Even
 “according to your principle of imitation, although
 “to imitate power is an absurdity. Your order
 “being constituted by the will of man, will soon be
 “seen to be disorder in the sight of God.”
 (Pages 20 and 21.) “You must, moreover, make
 “it clear to me, that you have been so commis-
 “sioned and gifted by God to gather together
 “believers, that you can rightfully treat those who
 “refuse to answer your call as schismatics, self-
 “condemned, and strangers to God’s Church.” (See
 p. 9.)

He says, “I know that those who esteem these
 “little organized associations to be the Church of
 “God, see nothing but mere meetings of men in
 “every other gathering of God’s children. [Such
 are now the views of Darbyites.] “There is a
 “very simple answer on this matter,” says Mr.
 Darby: “such brethren have no promise, authoriz-
 “ing them to again set up the Churches of God when
 “they have fallen, *whilst there is a positive promise*
 “*that where two or three are gathered together in the*
 “*name of Jesus He is in their midst.* Thus, there is
 “no promise in favour of the system which organizes
 “Churches, whilst there is a promise for that
 “assembling together which the children of God
 “despise. And what do we see to be the conse-
 “quence of the pretensions of these bodies? Pride
 “is nurtured in their presidents and their mem-
 “bers, and *those who contrast these pretensions with the*
 “*reality are disgusted and repelled*; and thus the de-
 “sired object is hindered, namely, the union of God’s
 “children. Here and there the pastors’ gifts may pro-
 “duce much effect. . . But the same thing would
 “have resulted though there should have been no

“pretension whatever to be the Church of God.” (See p. 24.) “To acknowledge the world to be the Church, or to pretend to again set up the Church, are two things equally condemned and unauthorized by the word.” (See No. 9, p. 22.)

Writing on 5th February 1846, Mr. Darby says: “If men set up to imitate the administration of the body it will be Popery, or dissent at once.” (See No. 2, p. 16.)

These extracts from Mr. Darby are in direct contradiction to all the pretentious claims of modern Darbyism.

There has been a new issue of the pamphlet from which we have been quoting. It has been thoroughly mutilated; whole passages have been struck out and others introduced, which better accord with the excommunicating principles of Darbyites.

The apostasy of the Church is several times referred to in the original issue; but Mr. Darby having elsewhere demonstrated that there is no such thing as recovery from “apostasy,” that term, as applied to the Church, past or present, is carefully obliterated in the new issue.

The very title of the pamphlet is changed from “*Reflections on the Ruined Condition of the Church*,” to “*Reflections on the Present Ruin of the Church*,” that is to imply, ruin in 1841, but not in 1872.

The revising of this short pamphlet for re-issue must have given Mr. Darby much trouble so as to make it in any respect consistent, with his altered views.

Can you refer to any other evidence respecting the opinions of Brethren on the subject of the Church of God, and Primitive Churches?

Yes; Mr. Darby wrote in 1834 :—" For, what is
 " a Church? the Church of God. Scripture tes-
 " tifies of what it once was—a gathering together of
 " believers upon the ground of the common salva-
 " tion (for this was the simple bond of union which
 " knit them together), and ordered by the power of
 " the Holy Ghost. The Churches at Corinth,
 " Thessalonica, and in Asia, whatsoever the special
 " need of rebuke might have been for each, were
 " thus distinct from the ungodliness around them,
 " and were in a position where Christ could exercise
 " His administrative power." (*C. W.*, I., 339.)

According to the Darbyite theory of modern times, a Church is a union—not of believers "ga-
 " thered together" upon the ground of the "common
 " salvation"—but a confederation of several assem-
 " blies of believers who have never been gathered
 " together, and who, instead of meeting on the
 " ground of the common salvation, meet *"on the
 " ground of the one body"*—the unity of the body
 " being the test on which Peckham and Sheffield
 " assemblies were put outside the "Church of God
 " on earth." Mr. Darby, in 1834, recognised what
 " the Scriptures teach, that the Churches at Corinth,
 " Thessalonica, and in Asia, were so constituted that
 " Christ could rule in each of them, He being in their
 " midst to exercise His administrative power." But
 " since the Darbyites have set up their test respecting
 " *the unity of the body* matters are changed. It is not
 " now enough that the assembly at Sheffield should
 " have Christ in their midst to "exercise His ad-
 " ministrative power," which one of Darbyites
 " describes as occupying *"the President's seat"*—
 " something else is required by Darbyism—namely,
 " subjection to the assembly at the Priory. This

being refused the assembly at Sheffield, which, according to the Darbyite theory (and we do not deny it), had Christ in their midst on one Sunday—is on the following Sunday (by the decree of Rotherham, acting in subjection to the Priory) placed outside the Church of God on earth. This act, interpreted by the two Darbyite theories combined, appears like excommunicating Christ with the Church of Sheffield, in order to maintain the supremacy of the Priory assembly in London, unless it be pretended that Christ took Himself away from the assembly at Sheffield the moment they presumed to question the propriety of the decree of the Priory, and to ask for an explanation of the matter.

One of the subordinate assemblies with Christ in its midst, dare not now change its place of meeting from Walworth to Peckham, without the permission of the Priory, otherwise it might be excommunicated for the crime of “self will.”

The contrast between the principles of Darbyism and those of the primitive Church is remarkable, and illustrates the words of Mr. Darby, “the moment power in the spirit is gone, power in the flesh comes in.” The Priory is now to Darbyism what the Vatican is to Popery—each being the centre of an unscriptural ecclesiastical government.

Do you refer to any other early writings of Mr. Darby’s which exhibit Brethren’s views respecting the Church?

Yes; in the *Christian Witness* for July 1834, he wrote, “Doubtless the rending of Christ’s body is a deep sin; but where is that body now so as to be recognised? They who maintain the charge of schism, must first prove that they are the true

“ Church, and the *onus probandi* lies upon them . . . ”
 “ There would be schism in separation ‘ from a
 “ congregation of faithful men ’ . . . Time was
 “ when it could be said of the visible Church, stand-
 “ ing, as it did, as God’s witness in the world—the
 “ first-fruits to His name—‘ There is one body,’ &c.
 “ . . . A sevenfold *unity which appertains indeed*
 “ *to all the children of God scattered throughout the*
 “ *world*, in virtue of their union in the heavenly
 “ places in Christ, *a unity which was not hidden as it*
 “ *now is, but visible* and open union manifested in
 “ meeting as members of that body into which they
 “ were all baptized by *One spirit; a fellowship of*
 “ *which no forms of outward union can make us par-*
 “ *takers. But this was speedily lost,*” &c. (See *C.*
W., Vol. i., pp. 341, 342, 344.)

We might comment upon every line of these quotations as exhibiting the fact that the modern Darbyite theory respecting their “ Church of God “ on earth ” was regarded as schism by Mr. Darby in 1834.

There is no living man whose works exhibit stronger arguments against the principles of Darbyites than do those of Mr. John Darby himself. He perceived the evil principles which began to grow up among Brethren when they became numerous and influential, such as efforts to restore the Church. He wrote with great power, exposing these principles as serious evils. Witness his tract on the *Ruined Condition of the Church*, 1st Edition, quoted above—not the mutilated reprint which he brought out after he became a Darbyite. The trying time came in 1848, when Mr. Darby abandoned the principles he had long laboured to defend, and he has since been the recognised leader of the

most pretentious and unscriptural sect that has arisen in modern times. His history affords a very striking illustration of St. Paul's words, "If I build again the things which I destroyed I make myself a transgressor." Mr. Darby has, from 1848 to the present time, been building up a system on principles which, from 1833 to 1845, he had been labouring to resist.

The Darbyites should not persist in deceiving thousands by calling themselves the "Brethren"; for it is notorious that "Brethren" and "Darbyites" are commonly confounded among those Christians who are not in communion with either. And they (the Darbyites) should have altered their designation when they changed their principles in 1848?

SCRIPTURE AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATE RESPONSIBILITY OF ASSEMBLIES, AND DARBYITE COMMENTS THEREON,

On what Scriptures did the assemblies of Brethren base their opinions as to the separate responsibility of each to God independently of all human authority?

First, on the promise of the Lord Jesus—"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). *Second*, on the instructions of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "When ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved. . Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. v. 4, 5, 13). *Third*, on the commendation by the Lord Jesus of the Church of Ephesus for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which He also hated (Rev. ii. 6). *Fourth*, on the reproof by our

Lord of the Church of Pergamos, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. ii. 15).

Wherein did the Darbyites depart from the instruction contained in these four Scriptures respecting the separate responsibility of every rightly constituted assembly of Christians?

After the excommunication of Bethesda in 1848, the Darbyites, so far as their own sect was concerned, changed the system of "little bodies" of Brethren into one large confederation of Churches or assemblies; thenceforth, according to the Darbyite theory, the numerous assemblies of this confederation constituted the one and only Church—"the Assembly of God"—"the Church of God on earth."

Please quote from Darbyite authorities some proof of this change of principles.

One of the anonymous Darbyite expositions—the author of *Communion of Saints*, writes, "A member of Christ's body at Ephesus is a member of Christ's body at Corinth. . . . It is plain that it is no matter in which of the local assemblies the leaven is allowed, for if it is allowed in one, it is allowed in all who hold themselves in communion with that one." (See No. 14, p. 10.)

Is not this theory contradicted by the conduct of our Lord in commending the Church of Ephesus for hating the Nicolaitanes while reproving the Church of Pergamos for having among them those who held the hated doctrines of this sect?

It certainly is. If these Scriptures were made consistent with the Darbyite theory, they should represent our Lord as reproving the Church of Ephesus for the fact that the Church of Pergamos

had Nicolaitanes among them, and reproving the Church of Pergamos on account of Ephesus having left its first love; for, according to the Darbyite theory, it would be “no matter in which of the local “assemblies,” Ephesus or Pergamos, the leaven were allowed—“for if allowed in one it is allowed “in all, &c.”

How do the Darbyites attempt to get over the testimony of the Epistles to the Churches to which you refer (Rev. ii. and iii.)?

They make light of these Scriptures by rejecting them altogether, so far as they were designed for instruction as to assembly responsibility. The Darbyite, J. S. O., writes, pp. 63, 64:—“It has been “also said that the *Epistles to the assemblies in the “Revelation* show that they were all acknowledged, “though evil was there unjudged. *But the subject “there is not communion, nor confidence in an “assembly to commend and receive saints, but the “responsibility of assemblies standing professedly “and as to privilege in assembly position in the “world. . . The state of Christendom is described “in Revelation ii. and iii., the present state more “especially in chapter iii., and Christendom is “responsible as having assembly privileges.”*

Such trifling with Scripture is one of the most mischievous fruits of this melancholy schism. Neither Scripture nor fact is to be allowed to stand in the way of a Darbyite theory. “But the subject “there (says our author) is not communion.” What else but communion is referred to in the reproof, “So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of “the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.” Where, we may ask, had the Church of Pergamos these Nicolaitanes so as to deserve reproof if not within

their assembly, in communion? But the Darbyites would take us away from the substance to the shadow, from practical instruction and reproof to speculations respecting unfulfilled prophecy. "The state of Christendom is described in Revelations ii, and iii., the present state more especially in chapter iii." It would not be convenient to give them any other meaning, or an application to particular assemblies, for, in doing so, the whole Darbyite theory of Churches would collapse.

THE THEORY OF DARBYITE UNION ILLUSTRATED.

Please explain more fully the principles of this Darbyite union or confederation in contrast with the New Testament doctrine of Churches?

The Darbyite author of *Communion of Saints*, above quoted, exhibits a diagram, representing the several Churches, or assemblies of such an association; in order to show how leaven, allowed in one assembly (Corinth for instance), contaminates the whole circle. (See fig. A.) The author writes (p. 10):

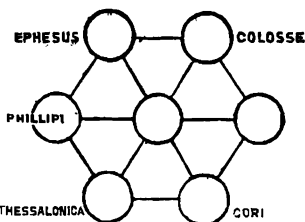


Fig. A.

"It is plain that it is *no* matter in which of the local assemblies the leaven is allowed, for if it is allowed in one, it is allowed in all who hold themselves in communion with that one; eating the same loaf with it, and with it professing to own and confess the one body. It is plain that it is no matter in which part of the 'lump' the leaven is introduced (1 Cor. xii. 12, &c.), but whether it is in the lump at all. There is one body, not many bodies. A member of Christ's body

“at Ephesus is a member of Christ’s body at
“Corinth.”

The theory here propounded is not inconsistent with the novel doctrines of Darbyites ; but is inconsistent with Scripture. You will perceive that the author begs the material question which we dispute. He assumes, without any proof, that his reader admits the theory of *communion of assemblies* “professing to own and confess the one body.” We utterly reject it, as there is not a word in the Scriptures to justify it. This theory, which practically is Metropolitanism, arose out of the apostasy of Christendom, was developed in Popery, and consummated as a doctrine to be received by true Christians in Darbyism.

We, as individuals composing an assembly of Christians, do not hold ourselves as being in communion, as an assembly, with any other assembly of Christians in the world, whether of Brethren or otherwise. All believers outside that one assembly, where for the time we happen to be *gathered together*, are to us simply Christians—members of “the one body”—“the body of “Christ,” united with us through the Head in heaven, whether they be Brethren, Darbyites, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, or of other sects, or whether they be near or far away.

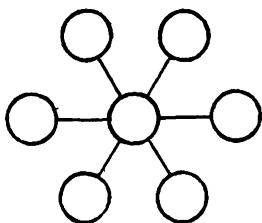


Fig. B.

Fig. B is the form in which a Christian should have exhibited a diagram representing several assemblies of members of the "One body." Christ, in the centre, being the Head, from which the whole body, and each assembly, receives nourishment, power, and vitality. There is no union, collectively, between the assemblies at Ephesus and Corinth, save through Christ, the Head, through whom no defilement or leaven can pass. An individual assembly has no power, and moreover, no commission, to exercise authority outside its own sphere. There is no system founded on Scripture whereby assemblies can act together, or against other assemblies, as such. Each Church is separately responsible to God for the putting out of fornicators, Nicolaitanes, &c., from among themselves. If the individuals composing several assemblies be gathered together into one place, they cease to be several, and become one assembly. There is no Scripture warrant for the lines in the Darbyite diagram which exhibit "the lump" as an association of assemblies, united otherwise than through Christ, the Head.

The author proceeds to illustrate his diagram. He writes:—"There is ONE BODY, not many bodies." We reply that truly there is only "one body," but there are many Churches or assemblies comprised in it, each of which is under separate responsibility. Again, he writes:—"Local distance does not divide 'Christ's body.'" We reply—Truly so; but local distance divides local assemblies, and separates the responsibility of each from that of all the others.

Again, he writes:—

"It is plain that it is no matter in which part of
 "'the lump' the leaven is introduced (1 Cor.

“v. 12, &c.), but whether it is in ‘the lump’ at ‘all.’”

According to the Darbyite theory, “the lump” is their own association of confederated Churches, to the exclusion of all other Christians and assemblies throughout the world. But the Apostle Paul confines the term “lump” in this case to one assembly, to the Church of Corinth alone, “Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye [not we] may be a new lump.” “When ye [not we] are *gathered together*.” “Put away from among yourselves [not ourselves] that wicked person.” It was to the Church of Corinth in assembly that St. Paul addressed his instruction—an example, no doubt, as to the manner in which other assemblies should act under similar circumstances, when gathered together, for the epistle is addressed, not to the Corinthians alone, but also to “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It would be absurd to interpret Paul’s use of the term “lump” in this case, as applicable to the whole Church of God, the body of Christ, for that body, known only to the Lord, never was in a position to obey St. Paul’s injunction—never was *gathered together*, save on the day of Pentecost, when all who believed were together, and had all things in common. It is the Lord alone who has ever added members to the One body, and no ecclesiastical excommunication that ever was pronounced has separated any member from it. There truly is a sense in which the term lump may be applied to the visible professing Church, which we are taught will ultimately as a whole become leavened (Mat. xiii. 33). But the injunction, “Purge out

“therefore the old leaven,” is not applicable to the “lump” in this sense.

The Darbyite theory has developed in miniature some of the worst principles of popery—first, a principle wherein the power of one man or one assembly is made to act on numerous other assemblies situated remotely from one another; and next, a principle wherein a pretence to the testimony of the Holy Ghost is used as a substitute for facts and truth.

DARBYITE HIGH CHURCH CLAIMS.

You referred above to certain designations assumed by Darbyites: Where do you find that of “God’s assembly” applied to them?

Mr. Kelly writes:—“What constitutes God’s assembly? Two or three gathered unto the Lord’s name.” (See No. 17, p. 5.)

Mr. Macintosh puts forth a similar claim. He writes:—“Where is this assembly of God now? We answer: Where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus. This is the assembly of God.” (See No. 6, p. 48.)

Where do they call themselves the “Body of Christ?”

J. S. O. writes (No. 6, p. 61):—“So with an assembly: if it acknowledges *only* God’s assembly, *that assembly is the body of Christ*, the Spirit of God having united all the members to the Head, and it is also God’s habitation by the Spirit.”

These statements are qualified by others which apply the terms, “God’s Assembly” and the “Body of Christ,” not to an individual Church, but to the whole body of the Darbyites, making

each gathering 'only "an expression" of God's assembly and of the body of Christ.

Where are they called the "Church of God on earth?"

Mr. Darby applies the title to his own sect. He writes respecting one whom they had excommunicated:—"I take part in this act, and hold him to be *outside the Church of God on earth, being outside* (in either case) *what represents it in London*; I am bound by Scripture to count them so. I come to Sheffield; there he breaks bread, and is—in what? *Not in the Church of God on earth, for he is out of it in London, and there are not two Churches on earth*, cannot be, so as to be in one and out of another." (See above, p. 82.)

Mr. Kelly of Jersey, a great leader among Darbyites, confirms as a Darbyite theory the doctrine that his sect is the "Body of Christ," to the exclusion of all other Christian assemblies.

What does he say respecting the "Body of Christ?"

Mr. Kelly counsels his friends thus:—"Never deny that they are members of the body of Christ; remind them of that very fact and of its gravity—that they are members of His body: why should they value any other body? If members of that 'one body,' why not own it, and own it always, and nothing else? If they belong to the unity of the Spirit, why not endeavour to keep it. God is now raising a question, not about Popery and Protestantism, but about Christendom's denial of His Church, Christ's body. Our business is not to originate a Church of the present or future, but to cleave to the Church God has made, and

“consequently to *confess the sins of all rivals, to repudiate them, and come out from them.*” (See No. 17, p. 9.)

What remarks have you to offer upon this quotation?

That it is an unmistakeable exhibition of incipient popery, not without a strong tincture of Jesuitry. It counsels believers to whom the lecture is addressed “never to deny that they are members of the body of Christ.” Remember that this is one of the designations of the Darbyite association. He says, “Why should they value any other body?” What Christian ever did value any other body in comparison with the body of Christ?—not in its Darbyite, but in its true sense. If a Christian were to value the Baptist’s Church, is it not as being composed of members of the body of Christ? He proceeds to counsel believers “to cleave to the Church that God has made; to repudiate rivals and “come out of them.” What does Mr. Kelly mean by the rivals to the Church which God has made, out of which Christians are to come. He unmistakably means the Brethren, the systems, and the sects. But where are these Christians to go when they come out, if not to the Church which God has made, that is, to the *Darbyite association*, presumptuously designated as the “Body of Christ,” and the “Church of God on earth.” But the worst feature in the above quotation from Mr. Kelly is that he directs his followers “to cleave to the Church,” whereas the Bible everywhere directs Christians to cleave to Christ, and nowhere to the Church. This is just what popery has done, and, therefore, Darbyism is popery in embryo.

Has Mr. Kelly said anything more about the Church?

Yes. His theory respecting that body being manifestly a novelty, he acknowledges it as such, and describes it as a mass of heavenly testimony, now recovered after it had been "despised, deserted, and forgotten."

He writes as follows:—"After *His people departed from the power, and even let slip the bare form of this great truth*, He has brought it before them *anew*. I cannot doubt that its *recovery* in any measure is vouchsafed of God in view of the Lord's speedy coming; else how do you account for it that *God* has been pleased to *recall the bride*, to put herself, as it were, in readiness for the bridegroom, signally bringing out *again* that mass of *heavenly testimony* which *had been despised, deserted, and forgotten*. Happy are they who not only bow and receive the grace of God in it, but keep the *treasure* faithfully." (See Mr. Kelly's *Lectures on the Church*, quoted from No. 17, p. 8.)

Here is another example of one of the Darbyite's most approved teachers exalting the Church of God (by which is meant their own association of assemblies) to the place which belongs only to Christ. He is the Christian's treasure, the "unspeakable gift" of God. But the treasure which the Darbyites are to keep is, that the mass of heavenly testimony—the great truth, which is now brought before them *anew*—brought out *again*, after it had been "*despised, deserted, and forgotten*," "and after His (God's) people departed from the power, and even let slip the bare form of this great truth." Here again is Popery in embryo—the exaltation of a Church into the place of Christ. But Mr.

Kelly proceeds to something worse. He dignifies the Church with the title of the "ONLY *solid divine rock*," and thus dishonours Christ. He writes:—"I call upon you all to beware lest Satan should, in any insidious way, lead you from the ONLY *solid divine rock* in the midst of the rising surges of apostacy. Fully do I admit that all who are brought into *this glorious place, the body of Christ*, ought to walk and carry themselves in a way suitable to such a position." (See Kelly's *Lectures on the Church*, pp. 32, 33; also No. 17, p. 8.)

Mr. Macintosh writes (we copy from Mr. Dorman, with his remarks. See No. 4, Letter 1, p. 11):—"The devil hates the very feeblest *expression** of the assembly of God. The Divine presence [in this Church] withers up everything of fleshly or worldly greatness, and levels all human pretension.' Then that 'the very intensity of the atmosphere drives out careless, carnal, worldly, self-exalting, money-loving, unprincipled persons.' 'We cannot but judge that numbers that have departed . . . have done so because their practical ways did not comport with the *purity of the place*.' Then it said, 'Finally, you cannot get on in the assembly [*what assembly?*] if you are living in secret sin.' Then 'the evangelist . . . should work, not only to *gather souls* to Christ, but also *into the assembly*, where *divinely-gifted pastors* might watch over them, and *divinely-gifted teachers* instruct them!'"

It is the assembly of God (the Darbyite Church),

* By the term "*expression*," the reader is to understand a local assembly of Darbyites. The term "*the assembly of God*" being understood to comprise the whole association of confederated assemblies of Darbyites—the Church of God on earth.

and the very feeblest expression of it “which the “devil hates.” It is the Divine presence *there* which drives out unprincipled persons. It is “the purity “of the *place*” which does not comport with the ways of those who have left them.

If the Darbyites have used strong language to sustain the pretensions of their own sect, they have used language equally strong in their disparagement of other assemblies of Christians outside themselves. Mr. Dorman writes of one of them who has not scrupled to brand the assemblies of all other Christians met together to remember the Saviour’s dying love as having only “the table of “devils.”

“Ignorant fanaticism at once rejoins—‘the apostle “ ‘speaks only of the Table of the Lord and the “ ‘table of devils, and we cannot admit them to “ ‘have the Table of the Lord, and there remains “ ‘only the table of devils.’

“The apostle (says Mr. Dorman) is speaking of “Christians and heathen idolaters, he only knows “ ‘the Table of the Lord,’ and ‘the table of “ ‘demons.’ But then this shows that it is Chris- “tians who have the ‘Table of the Lord,’ and the “idolaters only ‘the table of the devils.’” (See No. 4, Letter 1, pp. 15 and 16.)

Again, Mr. Kelly writes:—“What is the *unity of “the Spirit?* Where does it begin and end? What “is its nature and character? Scripture tells us “that He has established a unity amongst men, yet “apart from and above them. What is it? The “answer is, it is in *the Church, which God has made “the body of Christ.* What a comfort it is for a “believer, that he has simply to judge by the Word “of God *where the unity of the Spirit is.* But how?

"I come to a place, and I am at a loss to know *where to turn. Where shall I find the unity of the Spirit of God?* How do I know it? God has left landmarks; He has given us clear and distinct light in His Word. I search and see that *He is gathering together the children of God into one.* He gathers them unto the name of Christ, assuring them, that when they are *there*, He is in their midst." (See Mr. Kelly's *Lectures on the Church*, p. 30, quoted from No. 17, p. 6.)

Here is a laboured effort to inculcate an evil doctrine without the absolute assertion of it, viz., that the Darbyite Association, and it alone, is the unity of the Spirit.

"I come to a place," "where shall I find the unity of the Spirit," "God has left landmarks." "I search and see that He is gathering together the children of God into one, assuring them that when they are **THERE**. [Where?] He is in their midst." The only unity which Mr. Darby recognised as Scriptural in 1834, is, firstly, that of two or three or more believers gathered together in the name of Jesus, He being in their midst, as promised; and secondly, that "seven-fold unity which appertains indeed to all the children of God scattered throughout the world in virtue of their union in heavenly places in Christ, a unity which was not hidden [in the primitive Church] as it now is," &c.

"The evangelist," says Mr. Macintosh, "should work not only to gather souls to Christ, but also unto the assembly." This latter injunction is one which Darbyites are usually very earnest in fulfilling—"to gather Christians into the assembly"—is the great work of their lives; their energies are expended in promoting the interest of their own sect;

unlike the Brethren of old, one of whom, so early as 1828, wrote that "one who seeks the interest of any particular denomination is, so far, an enemy to the work of the Spirit of God." (*Ch. Wit.*, I., 19.)

FALSE DOCTRINE DEFENDED BY DARBYITES.

What has Mr. F. G. Patterson written on the subject of the one body—the Church in the world?

Mr. Patterson wrote as follows.—"Now this *body is in the world*, as the Holy Ghost, whose presence constitutes it. It is not in heaven, the Head is in heaven, and the members have a heavenly position by faith, while in actual fact they are in the world. *The body has been passing through the world in as perfect condition as the day in which the Holy Ghost formed it*. True that all that was committed to man's responsibility has, as ever, failed; but there was that in the world then, there was that through the dark middle ages, *there is that now in the world, which has remained all through the ruin of Christendom, as perfect as the Holy Ghost himself*, who by his presence and baptism constitutes it, and is as ever the unity of the body of Christ." (See Mr. Patterson's tract, *There is One Body and One Spirit*, p. 13, quoted in No. 7, p. 5.)

What is that to which Mr. Patterson here refers as now in the world, and which has remained as perfect as the Holy Ghost?

He calls that to which he refers the "unity of the body of Christ," meaning thereby the Church in the world.

How do you show that such is what he means?

Mr. Patterson compares two things which he represents as *equally* perfect. One is the Holy Ghost himself, the other is that unity of the body of Christ which is *constituted* by the *presence* and *baptism* of the Holy Ghost, for so he describes it. His words are, "as perfect as the Holy Ghost himself, who by his presence and baptism constitutes "it." Now nothing is constituted by the presence and baptism of the Holy Ghost save the "One body"—the Church. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized "into the one body." The "One body," the Church in the world, here called "the unity of the body of "Christ," is therefore that which Mr. Patterson tells us is "as perfect as the Holy Ghost himself."

Is not this false doctrine?

It is so beyond all doubt, and it is flatly contradicted by the teaching of Mr. Darby when among Brethren. Writing in *Notes on the Offering*, page 7, Mr. Darby points out that the Pentecostal Church is represented in the two wave loaves offered with leaven on the day of Pentecost. He says, "When "the Church is offered leaven is used" (see Lev. xxiii. 17). Mr. Darby explains to us that "the sin "offering is that which countervails the evil in the "Church, else it could not be accepted."

But has not Mr. Patterson issued a second edition of this pamphlet, in which some of the passages are altered?

He has published a second edition, in the preface of which he says, "The body of the tract [the "second edition] is the same as the first edition. "Sentences here and there have been touched, so as "to clear the sense; but *no change has been made* "in the doctrine." Therefore, if Mr. Patterson's doctrine (that the Church in the world is as perfect

as the Holy Ghost himself) be false, he is still answerable for it, as unconfessed and unretracted, and the Darbyites are all committed to the responsibility of countenancing a leader among them who teaches that the one body—that which is constituted by the presence and baptism of the Holy Ghost, is “as perfect as the Holy Ghost himself!” such responsibility being one of the dogmas of the sect.

Mr. C. H. M. writes (see No. 6, p. 42):—“Evil must be judged, for God cannot sanction it. If an assembly ‘cán, it is not God’s assembly at all, though composed of Christians, as we say. *To pretend to be an assembly of God, and not judge false doctrine and evil ways, would involve the blasphemy of saying that God and wickedness can dwell together.*”

It is part of the Darbyite theory of purity of association that if a doctrine be false, all in communion with the teacher of it are as guilty as the false teacher himself, and Mr. Patterson is in communion with all the Darbyites.

What does Mr. Patterson teach respecting the ground upon which Darbyites meet in communion as contrasted with the doctrine of Brethren?

The Darbyites, on establishing their new test as to the *unity of the body*, adopted also a new ground of assembly communion. They now meet *on the ground of the one body of Christ*, instead of, as formerly, among Brethren, *on the ground of the common salvation*. Mr. Patterson writes:—

“Now, if two or three Christians are gathered together, *on the ground of the one body of Christ*, by one spirit, to eat the Lord’s Supper, they are a perfect *expression* of the one body.”

In contrast with this, Mr. Darby wrote in 1834:—

“I repeat that this *ground of the common salvation* is
 “the only one which is sanctioned by Christ. .
 “Christians are bound to be united, and that is as
 “Christians, and Christians only. Any union which
 “has not this principle as its basis, which is brought
 “together upon a point of secondary importance
 “(and all else is secondary), or which enjoins any-
 “thing which might prove a stumbling-block to the
 “conscience of the weak, is contrary to the mind of
 “Christ, and is inevitably schism.” (*Ch. Wit.* I., 345;
 article, “Separation from Apostacy, not Schism.”)
 Modern Darbyism is therefore contrary to the mind
 of Christ, and is inevitably schism.

Have other false doctrines been traced in the
 writings of the Darbyites?

Yes; particularly in those of Mr. Darby.

What passages of Mr. Darby's do you notice?

We notice some passages from a pamphlet by Mr.
 Darby, *The Sufferings of Christ*, page 36.

On Psalm lxxix., Mr. Darby has the following
 remarks:—

“We read, verse 26—‘They persecute Him
 “whom thou hast smitten, and speak to the grief
 “of those whom thou hast wounded.’ Here we
 “have evidently more than man's persecutions.
 “They take advantage of God's hand upon the sor-
 “rowing one to add to His burden and grief. This
 “is *not atonement*, but there is sorrow and *smiting*
 “*from God*. But we have the clear proof that
 “that they are not atoning suffering. . . . When
 “men are wounded too, when Christ is the com-
 “panion with them—not a substitute for them—
 “then atonement is not wrought, nor the wrath of
 “condemnation endured. Yet God has smitten
 “and wounded.”

The same doctrine is unequivocally expressed in another of Mr. Darby's works, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, vol. ii., p. 219. On Psā. cii., Mr. Darby writes:—

“The time is the immediate approach of the cross, but was, we know, perhaps often anticipated in thought, as John xii. He looks to Jehovah who cast down Him whom He had called to the place of Messiah, but who now meets *indignation and wrath*. We are far, here, beyond looking at sufferings as coming from man. They did, and were felt, but men are not before Him in judgment, *nor is it His expiatory work*, though that which wrought it is here—the *indignation and wrath*.”

Observe here, Christ meets “indignation and wrath,” far here beyond sufferings as coming from man; “nor is it His expiatory work.” No one has condemned this doctrine more strongly than Mr. Darby himself, when he charged it against Mr. Newton, in 1847. He then defined it as “the pure unmitigated heresy of wrath on Christ which was not vicarious.”

How do the Darbyites regard such doctrines?

When these doctrines came to be known amongst Mr. Darby's brethren they caused much annoyance. Some remonstrated with him, and even entertained hopes that he would publish a retractation, but they were disappointed; for when he returned to London from the Continent, in 1866, rather than retract or alter anything he had written, he determined to leave his party, if necessary. This they could not allow. The result was that the whole question was hushed up, there was no examination, no retractation, and the doctrines in question virtually received the sanction of the leaders of the party, nine of whom,

including Mr. Wigram, wrote a letter of which the following is an extract:—

“*And we cannot be content to allow* our brother
“J. N. D. to withdraw himself from us under such
“plea, to us not true, in the place where we are.
“We know not of any consciences so troubled, nor
“is there anything in the writings referred to
“which has affected our own consciences.

“Signed for the Nine,*

“G. V. W. C.McA.”

What do you say of this *Letter of the Nine*?”

That it is in substance an adoption by the whole Darbyite confederation of Mr. Darby's doctrine, for their theory respecting purity of doctrine throughout the one body of the Darbyites obliges them either to defend every doctrine taught by any individual in communion as not being false, or else to excommunicate the false teacher.

We might multiply examples of false doctrines to be found throughout the writings of Darbyites, but these specimens are sufficient for our purpose.

Numerous other examples of false doctrine are noticed by Mr. Henry Groves in *Darbyism* (No. 2, prefixed catalogue), chap. 7, p. 66, to which the reader is referred.

SUMMARY OF ERRORS.

How do you account for these numerous departures from the truth by men who formerly understood the question so well?

* The following are the names of the nine:—E. Cronin, George Owen, C. M'Adam, Butler Stoney, Wm. Kelly, Sir Edward Denny, Andrew Miller, H. M'Carthy, and G. V. Wigram. See *Cause of Withdrawal*. Sold by Caswell, Birmingham. We copy these several particulars from No. 2, pp. 80-82.

It appears to us that these several departures of the Darbyites from the truth were necessary to each other, so as to give the whole system that plausible appearance by which so many devoted Christians have been deceived. The course of evil in Darbyism (like that of apostate Christianity) has been progressive. The FIRST FALSE STEP* of excommunicating the Church at Bethesda for refusing to judge Mr. Newton's tracts required to be subsidised by a SECOND FALSE STEP.† This was done by the use of unmeasured slander; but as no unity in the Spirit could be expected in such an evil course, a THIRD FALSE STEP was taken.‡ A unity in the flesh was devised, and the example of apostate Christendom was followed in forming numerous assemblies of Darbyites (each of which was supposed to have Jesus in their midst) into one association or metropolitan confederacy. But again, such a confederacy would fail to command respect among Christians without a further departure from truth, therefore the Darbyite leaders ventured upon a FOURTH FALSE STEP:§ they appropriated exclusively to their own association all that God has said of the true Church of God on earth, the unity of the Spirit, which, as Mr. Darby used to say, "appertains to all the children of God scattered throughout the world, in virtue of their unity in heavenly places in Christ." The Darbyite leaders call their association of assemblies "the Church of God on earth," "the assembly of God," "the Church that God has made," "the body of Christ," and the "One Body." These appellations belong, according to Scripture, to that

* See page 39 above.

† See page 45 above.

‡ See page 92 above.

§ See page 96 above.

body—the Bride of Christ—which shall be manifested as one in glory, and every true Christian now on the earth is a member of it. But the leaders not only appropriate these titles to their one body exclusively—they go farther, and take a **FIFTH FALSE STEP**.^{*} They assume for their “own Church of God on earth” the prerogative of decreeing by letter writing, the excommunication of supposed evil-doers and of whole assemblies of Christians far removed from the excommunicators; prerogatives which the Church of God on earth, as described in the Bible, never had, and never exercised. The Darbyite assumption is therefore a usurpation. What the Church of Corinth could not do until they were gathered together, and what the Apostles John and Paul would not do unless they were present (see 3 John, 10th verse, and 2 Cor. i. 23, and xiii. 2), Mr. Darby or the Priory can pretend to do with the stroke of a pen. Next we find a **SIXTH FALSE STEP**.[†] The Darbyite theory of association of assemblies being opposed to the doctrine taught in Revelations ii. and iii., these two chapters are virtually cut out of the Bible so far as their instruction as to assembly responsibility is concerned. Such is the Darbyite means of producing consistency between the Word of God and their theory. We can at once perceive how each of these six departures of Darbyism from Scripture was a prudential necessity; for if any of them was omitted the whole theory would fall to the ground.

Finally, as a **SEVENTH FALSE STEP**,[‡] and as a climax to the whole, the sect has given its countenance to

^{*} See page 80 above. [†] See page 91 above.

[‡] See page 103 above.

erroneous teaching more deserving of the name of false doctrine than anything that can justly be charged against Mr. Newton. For example, the doctrine respecting divine indignation and wrath upon our blessed Saviour otherwise than in atonement; and again, that the Church in the world is as perfect as the Holy Ghost.

While thus condemning as evil, the system of Darbyism, and the pamphlets of its controversialists, we desire it to be distinctly understood that in our censures we do not include the multitude of devoted Christians whom we know to be in communion with that sect. From one cause or another such Christians are ignorant of the evils with which they are associated, and ignorant of the mischief which such, their association entails. Being so they are innocent, and entitled to be esteemed in love for their works sake by all true Christians. But the godliness of such persons is no excuse for the evil doings of others, with whom they are associated.

How does Mr. Darby account for the apparently unconscious exercise of evil doing among real Christians?

He writes as follows: "There is another work often incomprehensible to one not under its influence, and that is an incapacity to discern right and wrong, an incapacity to see evil where even the mere natural conscience would discern, and an upright conscience reject at once. I speak of this incapacity in true saints; the truth is, the soul, when under this influence, is not at all in the presence of God, and sees everything in the light of the object that governs it. The influence of the enemy has supplanted and taken the place of

“conscience.” (*Narrative of Facts*, page 10, copied from No. 2, page 18, first edition).

“DARBYITES,” AN APPROPRIATE DESIGNATION OF THE
SECT SO CALLED.

Have the people whom you call Darbyites accepted that appellation?

No. They not only have not done so, but they regard the calling of them by that name a great crime, even the wholly ignoring of the “testimony of the Holy Ghost in and through them.”

Please state this quotation more fully.

The Darbyite J. S. O., writes (No. 15, p. 38):—
“That you disown those who have separated from
“evil in Christendom I fully own, and that you
“have *wholly ignored the testimony of the Holy Ghost*
“*in and through them* against fellowship with per-
“sons connected with this Newtonian heresy by
“calling it ‘Darbyism’ I also own.”

And you persist in designating this sect as Darbyites, notwithstanding their pretentious denunciation?

I do, for very good reason. They have no better right to the names of “The body of Christ” and “The Church of God on earth,” which they have appropriated exclusively to themselves, than the Jesuits, the Mormons, or the Irvingites have to the names by which they respectively wish to be recognised. The Jesuits call themselves “The Society of Jesus.” And although Mr. Darby might abhor the principles of Jesuits, he would not say that he abhors what truly is the society of Jesus.

What do you say of the Irvingites?

That while denouncing the Irvingites (who call themselves the Catholic and Apostolic Church) as

heretics, Mr. Darby might profess to love those who truly are members of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, namely, all true Christians.

What do you say of the Mormons?

Those now alive and converted to the Lord are, in truth, latter-day saints; but they are not of the sect of the Mormons who claim to themselves the designation of Latter-day Saints. Mr. Darby writes of Irvingites, Mormons, and Jesuits, not referring to them under the names by which they respectively designate themselves, because he regards such names as *misnomers*. We, on the same principle, refuse to designate the Darbyites by any of the *misnomers* which they have adopted for themselves. We call them Darbyites, the only name which, according to our judgment, can consistently be applied to them, as followers of Mr. Darby in an evil course. If they would call themselves by any appropriate designation, we should feel ourselves bound in courtesy to adopt it, and cease to call them Darbyites.

While naming Mormon, Irvingites, Jesuits, and Darbyites together, as illustrating one and the same principle, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not class them together as exhibiting evils of the same character or magnitude. On the contrary we are aware that devoted Christians have been and probably still are to be found in two of these denominations, and such are entitled to our personal respect. But as the four sects are equally disentitled to the designations which they have respectively appropriated exclusively to themselves, they should not object to being called by appropriate names by those who righteously object to the pretentious titles assumed by them respectively.

CONCLUSION.

What effect has Darbyism had on Missionary efforts?

We apprehend that its effect has been decidedly prejudicial to such efforts. The labours of their so-called "evangelists" are directed to the drawing of Christians into the Darbyite association. Members of this sect are frequently engaged in stigmatizing some of God's most remarkable works of the present day as the works of the evil one. Mr. Groves tells us that George Müller's "work in the Orphan Houses has been frequently termed by members of that party 'A WORK OF THE DEVIL.'" (See No. 2, p. 48.) The Darbyites are known to have discountenanced the great work of God in this country, in which Messrs. Moody and Sankey were, a short time since, engaged. A Christian family in Dublin asked their servant, a Roman Catholic, to go to the meetings of Moody and Sankey, and got the following reply from the servant:—"My sister lives with some of your people [Darbyites] and they don't approve of these meetings." Thus a poor sinner was hindered from hearing the Gospel of Christ. When the Dublin "Believers' meetings" were supposed to be brought to an end by the death of a beloved brother, a Darbyite accounted for it as "an answer to prayer"—the putting an end to an evil work. In such cases the Darbyites have followed the condemned example of the Apostle John. "We saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us." (See Luke ix. 49.)

Revivals in religion seem always to have been periodical. It is certain that every revival is an

exhibition of the abundant grace of God—first, in raising up His servants to preach His Gospel ; and, second, in opening the hearts of many of those who hear, thus causing them to attend to the things that are spoken. (Acts xvi. 14.) There is no such thing as sectarianism in a Christian just converted. The heart is ~~then~~ always enlarged towards everyone who belongs to Jesus. The decay of revivals is the result of failure of grace among Christians. Some whose Christian career commenced with genuine zeal for the Lord, have changed that object for zeal for a sect, and the ungodly world are discriminating enough to be repelled by the sectarian conduct of many real Christians; such repulsion results in men charging against Christianity itself the evils which are discernible among those who profess it. Thus the work of God in revivals is hindered.

The sectarianism of Darbyism is now one of the great hindrances to the work of revival. Jesus has said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Doubtless the Darbyite controversialists love one another, but "do not even the publicans the same." The unrighteous condemnation and slandering of Christians, better than themselves, by such men, bespeak feelings more akin to hatred than love ; the baneful effect of which is manifested in the prejudice of the children of this world against Christianity itself. The most conspicuous characteristic of Darbyism is a professed testimony against what they call evil ; but which they commonly exhibit in the slandering of good men. The whole system of Darbyism is a mystery.