

TO THOSE WHO HAVE READ LORD CONGLETON'S TRACT, ENTITLED "REASONS FOR LEAVING RAWSTORNE STREET," ETC., ETC.

Plymouth, 2nd April, 1847.

DEAR FRIENDS, — In this tract, Lord Congleton has referred you to me (p.17, 7th line from top) — [*" See a copy of this document in Mr. Wigram's possession"*]. "*This document*" is the statement which, he says, Sir A. Campbell prepared and signed, and which others countersigned. As he has publicly referred you to me, without informing me of his intention to do so, he cannot be surprised, if I state, as publicly and candidly, my reasons for declining to be his referee in this matter.

I object, then, to shewing the document to any applicant, for the following reasons: —

1st. It contains "*a judgment*" (given a year ago), by a certain party upon part of a case. The same evidence as was before that party, is now before you. If that judgment were sound, and still unquestioned, it *ought* to have no weight with you, apart from the *grounds* on which it is formed: those grounds it does not give. Read for yourselves the evidence* of the case prayerfully, humbly, and soberly; and God will, if you wait on Him, form in your souls a conclusion (of more value than the common consent of all the good men that have lived since the days of the apostles), because the result of *grace, faith, and prayer*.

Saints are not to be put, by those who own the lordship of Jesus and are guided by the Holy Ghost, upon the technicalities of human law. If a bill against Mr. Newton had been ignored, or if he had been tried and acquitted in

* Correspondence relating to Mr. Newton's refusal; and Account of Proceedings at Rawstorne-Street (I. II. III. IV.) will suffice as evidence.

the world, the question would be *at rest* for ever. But what self-constituted, or church-constituted, grand jury can, in the same way, ignore a charge of moral dishonesty in the church? And if the church *had* judged a case, and then questioned whether it has judged it rightly, surely it *ought* not to find rest; for it has to do with the present thoughts of the living God.

2ndly. The document came into my hands *irregularly* (i. e. not by gift of the author), but from another, under a pledge that I would not allow its contents to get abroad.

3rdly. I could not, consistently with what is lovely and of good report,—with what is honourable among men—show (save as a literary curiosity) a document bearing credentials of a secondary confirmatory character, when the parties themselves (so countersigning) have withdrawn their names. Lord Congleton, in my presence, **INSISTED** upon the cancelling of his signature. So did Rhind and Potter. Each had a right to do so, on any grounds he deemed adequate; so had Mr. Code, upon what grounds he pleased. Lord C. *may*, perhaps, without consideration, wish to revive the document now; Mr. Newton's friends **CERTAINLY** do: but Lord C. has no *power* to do it, any more than he had *power* to suppress it then, or had a **RIGHT** to tell the printer to stop the press (which he inconsiderately did), without Sir A. C.'s leave. He can publish, if he pleases, another paper like it, signed by himself and those who are now willing to sign it; but he cannot use the names of Campbell, Potter, Code, and Rhind, without their leave; so I judge: certainly I shall not give him assistance in any such work.

4thly. The *primary* signature of the document has been erased. Sir A. Campbell, the author of the paper, for reasons which he can state, cancelled his own name, and the paper became a nullity and a *fiction*. He has said, before 180 persons, that within three days of the suppression, he felt he could not sign it, and that his judgment is now opposed to its contents, and that he can be no party to its going forth at all.

Lord C. cannot be aware of the position he wants me to stand in, as his referee. It is to become the publisher. What would be the probable effects of my presenting, at his

banker's, a *bill*, with a counter-signature *erased*; or a check, with the signature cancelled; or of my presenting a legal document, similarly circumstanced, in any court in the world? And are liberty and character among men to be prized by me; and is the church of God to produce no respect in my soul? Let who will, try to **SET ASIDE** *legally executed documents*, or try to **REVIVE** *actually cancelled documents*; I trust grace will keep me from it.

5thly. The document (which has no more reality than an unsigned deed or bank note, or a patent of nobility without the name or rank being inserted) contains a **FALSEHOOD**; and if it had ever come into existence, I should, long ago, have said so. Sir A. C. drew up a paper, and the four countersigned it, in which they (as self-chosen representatives of ten persons) say so and so. What is stated there by Sir A. C. doubtless he thought to be the case; but by what right could he have sent forth a document *which I never heard of*, committing *me* to what I did not hold? God stopped the execution of it; and so he and the countersigners were saved from palming off upon the saints what, had it ever existed, would have been an untruth.

To explain this, Lord C. says (page 17), "1. When Mr. Darby says, '.....' he must, I suppose, know that the difficulty that arose at the close of the investigation was not whether Mr. Newton should be considered innocent of any intention of untruthfulness or dishonesty, because it was a clear case for charity to step in and claim the accused, even Mr. Wigram said, after hearing Mr. Newton's paper read, (5) '*I can receive it from Mr. Newton,*' alluding to the Clulow letter, Mr. Morris having proposed the same line of defence the previous Friday which Mr. Wigram was unable to receive from *him*. But the difficulty that arose was, whether we could give a *corporate* (4) testimony to his innocence or not; Mr. Wigram and Sir Alexander Campbell were chiefly opposed to it, and their arguments* prevailed, because (3) Mr. Newton and Mr. Darby had both met us, on the understanding that we were certain individuals seeking information, not a Court having authority to judge

* *Prevailed!* and yet a *corporate* testimony was given! (?)

and decide. But there was no question (2) as to whether Mr. Newton was to be reckoned innocent of the personal charges; (1) at all events, *it was not avowed.*" [The numbers, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, refer to the following remarks:—]

Let others speak for themselves: all I shall do is, for the sake of candour and truthfulness, to speak as to myself.

(1) I certainly avowed no *judgment*. I should have felt it out of place to have done so; because I distinctly understood I was at the meeting *to hear evidence*, for my own information, and not to give a judgment. (Who got up these meetings, I know not; I was asked, when the plan seemed maturing, if not matured, for them). But—

(2) There *was* a question in my mind, as to whether Mr. N. was innocent, as I shall state. It existed before the investigation; was lulled for *a few hours* during, but revived with ten-fold force before the close of, the investigation.

(3) I thought, and do think still, that there was an important difference between Mr. Darby's and Mr. Newton's understanding, in meeting us. I understood, that Mr. Darby was willing to meet and tell all he had to say to any one who could say, "that conscience, and not curiosity, made him desirous to hear"; and that he left each and every such party to do what he deemed right with the information—only he would NOT say a word, if persons understood that by his so doing, HE *pledged HIMSELF* to recognise them as a tribunal, in place of the congregated church. The double pledge, then, I thought I stood in to Mr. Darby was, that "conscience led me to inquire;" and that he "had not constituted me his judge, but still stood before the church." The pledge which I gave to Mr. Newton at Little Saltram, was, that I would not use the information he gave me, to settle consciences with, at Plymouth, one way or the other.

(4) Morris and others, at the commencement of the meeting, had insisted much that we were there, not as a court, but only as individuals, for our common and individual convenience. I understood Mr. Newton also to pledge the meeting, ere he read his defence, not to use the information given by him, to settle the consciences of Plymouth*

* Naylor writes me he understood so likewise.

saints. I did feel that it would be a shame, in *the world*, to any man, to have gathered information under a pledge given by him, and then to use that information contrary to his pledge. I remember using no arguments, however; and I do not think I did. My journal of the meeting helps my memory. When Lord C. did say, "*Well! all I have to say is, if we had found Mr. N. guilty, I am sure we should not separate without corporately saying so*" (as I understood, addressing himself to me, after my saying, I could not cooperate in a verdict). These thoughts struck me: "An ungenerous remark! but he did not mean it.—How little he knows my *desire* to cover over evil! but he shall not provoke me.—How strangely they seem to forget their honour; but we are amid delusion."*

I did say these words: "*I can receive it from Mr. Newton;*" but not exactly in the connection here (I have no doubt, by mistake, not intention) stated by Lord C. Mr. Morris had said, that the Clulow letter was in substance equivalent to Mr. Darby's account of the meeting in 1845. This I denied: and asked him how he could prove it. He took two sentences from different parts (as I thought) of the Clulow letter, and, putting them together, deduced what he said was equivalent to it (i.e. *Plymouth being made a focus of testimony against the views of brethren*, etc.). I said: "I cannot receive that;" I was then told, "This is what the paper means." I replied, "I cannot receive that from any one but the writer." Again, I did say, after Mr. Newton had repeated, in substance, Morris's remark: "I can receive it from Mr. Newton." But what could I receive? Why, simply that he *meant* to say in the Clulow letter what he had said at the meeting. But when I came leisurely to see and to weigh the two statements, could I say that ten shillings and a crown made a sovereign? No; I could only hold that, indeed and in truth, Mr. Newton did mean to propagate that *gloss*. It was within a few hours, when I had

* In writing to a friend at the time, I said, "The delusion is so strong here, and the spirit of misapprehension, that if you meet a friend in the town, and say, 'I am glad to see you,' you will be heard and reported as having said, 'I wish you were dead.' The observing this increased my natural taciturnity."

considered *the arithmetic*, that I felt his having said this was an additional proof of the evil. Lord Congleton says, p. 18, of the document of acquittal:—"But what is the truth? Why it stated that Mr. Newton had read a paper which '*entirely satisfied*' the investigating brethren,—that is, the *ten* brethren. This was signed by Sir A. Campbell. And then it further stated, that this account (Sir Alexander's) of the investigation met with the '*entire approbation*' of Code, Potter, Rhind, and myself, our four signatures being attached to this certificate."

I was one of the party; and I was not satisfied. The four *entire approvers* have escaped publishing a falsehood on paper; and also the "*entirely satisfied*" has escaped originating a false certificate. But they did escape, and have trespassed nothing, either against me, or others, in having *merely* drawn it up—nor against God, His church, and their own souls, as those of them whose judgment is now changed, must feel they would have done had they published it.*

* Mr. Tregelles, in his letter to Mr. Gough, p. 23, says, speaking of documents tendered in evidence at the meeting, Friday, December 11th:—

"III. A paper drawn up by Sir Alexander Campbell, and signed by him, and some other brethren, stating, that the two latter of Mr. Darby's charges had been met. This was accompanied by a letter, from Mr. Newton to Mr. F. Prideaux, in which he stated why he had not himself published and circulated the paper so drawn up.

"This last is the document which some have called the *suppressed verdict*; and this name has even been applied to it since it was *publicly* tendered, and peremptorily rejected. No one ought again to call it a suppressed document, unless he adds, that it was suppressed by this meeting, in Rawstorne Street, with Messrs. Darby, Wigram, and Dorman, present and concurring in the suppression."

This is not true. Neither the paper, nor the letter from Mr. Newton to Mr. Prideaux, were tendered or rejected. ("*Publicly* tendered, and peremptorily rejected," are the terms used above).

I am here again referred to; and I have only to say, that, if the document had been tendered, what I have said above, would have applied to the tender much more strongly; because, while Lord Congleton *indirectly* brings forward its contents (that is, merely as in proof of the inaccuracy of *the narrative*), such a tender would have been a *direct* pleading of its contents as evidence, which Lord C. does not. In this case, however, I must say more; and that is, that the *intention* being avowed that it was to have been done, I can only deplore the Ahitophelian counsel which could stand in the back-

I beg that particular notice may be taken of "*the how*" Lord Congleton came to refer to the document. It was by *accident*. It was, as I trust, in simplicity, while showing out what he considered an inaccuracy in a passage in "*The Narrative*;" which passage, as referring to *himself*, he had a full right to comment-upon. In doing this (as not being guarded enough), he has left himself exposed to a heavy charge; because he has *practically* brought into public his version (at all events) of a suppressed document, without even saying, that, properly speaking, it never had existence as a document, and now is cancelled. At Ebrington-street, they are glad enough to use him as their cat's-paw in this matter, and to drag out this document,—which, though rejected by Mr. Newton, and therefore at first cancelled, is found to be the best testimonial he ever had offered him. Lord Congleton has, *IN FACT*, done this for them; and his action in this (the more so, because he does not even give a protest against its being thought that he means to present the document *as a reality*) is injurious to the saints, and therefore I have commented upon it. The *INTENTION* of doing this, I dare not adjective: I do not charge him with it. I am sure my heart loves him too well *to be willing* to believe he had it. Others have avowed it. Mr. Tregelles, as will be seen, criminales Mr. Newton with it; and Mr. Newton himself committed himself to the same at Mr. Cronin's, before Mr. Howard, Mr. Dorman, and others.

In conclusion, I would only remark, that, while I have stated *freely* what I had to say, I am quite aware that, in the retrospect of one's mind at a period of a year ago, at a

ground, and propose to use an affectionate and inexperienced and honourable young man, in his innocency, to do a deed, which the standard of what is upright, neither in the army, navy, law, nor in the commercial world, would tolerate for a moment; and which, in civilised society or domestic relationship, would indelibly stain the intelligent and wilful doer of, with infamy. As a Christian, I have no desire to habituate my mind to such things—or, as a man, to lower my standard of right and wrong below that of the lowest of the low. The four—Clulow, Soltau, Batten, Dyer (as well as Mr. Newton)—have appealed *DIRECTLY* to the evidence of this document in *The Reasons*; and so has Mr. Tregelles, for himself, in Appendix B. And they must take the consequences.

time when (however the judgment had been previously forming, or the spiritual apprehension might be opening) the *heart* was rebelling against (as mine certainly was), and writhing under a certain conclusion (namely, that Mr. Newton was untruthful), it is hard to apprehend, and say ACCURATELY what was in one's mind: the more so, because the scene was such a one of excitement, delusion, and separation, as I never witnessed before. With the view I take of their appeal to this document, I can only suppose it to be part of the delusion of Satan. There is a moral foolishness in a steward referring to a testimonial which himself begged might be destroyed; from which the countersigners erased their names at the same time; from which the drawer cancelled his, and has declared, that, within three days he could not have signed it, now differs from it, and could be no party to its appearing now; and which, moreover, makes five men the representatives of others, as myself and Naylor, without our leave; all this (which is the case before us) is *delusion*. I beseech saints, however, to remember for themselves and others, that "evil communication" corrupts; and to keep clear of it all. And, further, I pray them to remember, that moral inability to detect evil is sinful, and needs our prayers. A strong delusion, that they may believe a lie, is the worst form of Satan's power: and part and parcel of it is, that levity and carelessness with which our souls talk about Satan and delusion without dread.

I may have misapprehended the circumstances through which I passed at the time: and the thoughts of my mind then may have been inconsistent, or crude. Here they are, however, to the best of my power. I pretend to no great accuracy or divine keeping in writing: let the saints judge them and me. I feel persuaded, that the statement of them may help, and cannot hinder, others in the forming a correct judgment of the case. I do not give them as vindicating myself, or as criminating any one; but, as I judge, for the sake of candour and ingenuousness.

Yours, dear Friends,

In the Lord,

G. V. W.