

TO THE GATHERINGS OF BRETHREN, MEETING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD,
AT LEEDS AND OTLEY IN YORKSHIRE.

I received a few days since a letter signed "*Leeds, J.W.,*" and "*Otley, W. T.,*" which, from the peculiarity of the signature, is, I suppose, to be understood, not merely as the private judgment of our brothers Willams and Trotter, but as expressing the decision of the Leeds and Otley gatherings. I am too weak in body to write much; but as the Lord's servant, I feel bound, for your sakes as much as my own, to attempt at least a few lines in answer.

You say that "*you are forced—(you do not say who forces you)—to separate from any gathering of brethren in which persons from Bethesda are received,*" and further, that "*you decline communion with all or any coming from thence or from such places,*" except in certain "*cases of ignorance of what has passed,*" which you say "*would require to be differently dealt with;*" that is, you not only refuse to receive any brother or sister from Bethesda, or to go where persons from Bethesda are received; but you also refuse, except in "*cases of ignorance of what has passed,*" to receive any brother or sister from any gathering which receives brethren from Bethesda. If therefore, after your warning, we are willing to admit here a brother or sister from Bethesda, we are in a body and as individuals, to be rejected by you as unworthy of communion.

Such is your determination. In reply, I have only to say that though you have been "*forced*" thus to reject brethren, I am not, as yet prepared to be "*forced*" also. I will not, God helping me, be "*forced*" either before or against my conscience, to reject a brother or sister for their lack of ecclesiastical intelligence or because they are yet tied by names or systems. I believe that George Muller and other beloved brethren at Bristol have, in a trying case of ecclesiastical discipline, been lacking in energy. But my judgment respecting their lack of perception and energy in a matter of ecclesiastical discipline is no reason for my rejecting them from the Lord's table; much less is the error of the rulers of the Bristol gathering a reason for your excommunicating me and brethren like me, because we will not be "*forced*" to reject all whom you have been "*forced to separate from.*" I cannot, I have never dared, in the present state of the Church, to "*decline communion*" with any godly brother or sister from out of any sect or party. Even a clergyman, who receives any one, and

who does so, as the clergy of this Town, after my repeated testimony against the evil they are countenancing, — even such an one would be welcome to the table of the Lord, if as a brother, he felt willing or free to come. I do not make his intelligence on ecclesiastical matters, or his submission to brethren's testimony, the term of communion. Why am I to make George Muller's ecclesiastical intelligence or his submission to brethren's testimony the terms of my communion with him? Hitherto, we have always recognized the distinction between receiving a brother out of a sect and countenancing the evil of the sect out of which he comes. Why is this distinction now to be abandoned? Why now are we to change our course, and judge want of intelligence or weakness as willful sin?

I openly avow that, in the fear of God, and as feeling myself bound to receive those whom He receives, I cannot "*decline communion*" with a godly brother

or sister, just because they happen to come from Bethesda. Having said this, as bound by the truth to express my mind, I now anxiously await your answer and decision about me, whether I am to be henceforth, as heretofore, your brother and servant, or a heathen man and a publican to you.

I am, dear Brethren,

Yours, with much Christian love,

ANDREW JUKES.

Hull, Nov. 14, 1848.

SECOND LETTER TO THE GATHERINGS OF BRETHERN AT LEEDS AND
OTLEY,
IN REFERENCE TO A CIRCULAR LATELY PUT FORTH BY THEM.

My Dear Brethren,

For the truth's sake, I must again make a few remarks in answer to your letter of the 22nd inst. I grieve to have to do this, but my sorrow may perhaps keep me, while writing to you, nearer to my proper place. I long for rest; yet I would not shrink from any work which appears as this to be set before me.

I turn at once to your letter. Will you pardon me if I say that it is no reply to what I wrote you? I wrote to you a letter, the greater part of which was occupied in stating the principles on which we have always hitherto received brethren, and in shewing how the rejection of George Muller, and other godly brethren, would be an open rejection of those principles. In your reply, you say not one word in answer to these principles, or in support of the course which you seem bent to follow. Instead of this you prefer - first, to give me your own estimate of your original circular and my answer to it; then to tell me of the danger of Mr. Newton's views; and lastly, with a brief remark (not answer) respecting a question which I had put to you, to conclude with a declaration of your resolution to persist in your present course.

Under these circumstances, I think it right to address you again. And as a means, if possible, of making the truth plain to you, I am content to follow you through your reply, before I again recur to the true question at issue between us. By this means, perhaps, I may be able to point out the difference between two things which you are confounding, but which are indeed different, namely, the danger of the doctrine which Mr. Newton holds, and the course you purpose taking in consequence of this evil respecting other brethren.

And first, as to your own estimate and description of your own letter and mine. You sum up the contrast in these words - "Our circular is about the evil we have to grapple with. Yours is about the consequences of so dealing with it. Is this faith?" I reply - Is this truth? The antithesis certainly strikes the ear well, but would not your words, by losing their antithetical point, be more true to fact. I feel satisfied that were I to cut down your letter and mine to this description of them you might say, and say truly, that I had mutilated both. Your letter, if I understand it, is not so much "about the evil," as the enunciation of your purpose of separation from brethren who will receive Muller; while mine, so far from being at all "about the consequences of dealing with evil," is for the most part, a statement of

the principles on which we have hitherto received brethren. To these principles, there is not one single word of reply, but a misrepresentation of my letter. Why is this? Is it because you are unable to justify that step to which my letter contains the answer and remonstrance?

You next speak of Mr. Newton's views. Here I am quite at one with you, as to their evil, and that they should be judged. Where I differ with you, is not as to the evil of those views, but as to the mode of judgment which you would apply to certain other brethren. Your language here, if I may express the thought it suggested to me, seems to point out the error of your course, quite as much as of Mr. Newton's doctrine.

For instance, you say - "The wolf as at the door." As I read this, I could not but sadly say, Is there not more than one wolf at the door troubling us? Is there not one nearer you than you perhaps think? By the Good Shepherd's words, I judge that there is. He says - "The wolf cometh, and scattereth the sheep." (John 10: 12) Such a wolf may, and probably will, "come in sheep's clothing" "as an angel of light," yea "transforming himself into Christ's apostle;" (II Cor. 11: 13) professing great zeal in word, for the person of Christ, while he is tearing the body of Christ to pieces; with loud boastings of his care for the flock of God, while he is rending the members of the Lamb. How are we to discern such? The Shepherd bids us, - "Know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7: 16): by this fruit especially - "the wolf scattereth the sheep." Who, I ask, has scattered the sheep in Yorkshire? Is it Mr. Newton and his views? Nay, verily, for as you know, we are fully agreed upon these points. The thing which is now dividing and here scattering the sheep of Christ, is something very different from Mr. Newton's views. It is your requirement that godly brethren shall, to hold communion with you, give up their conscience respecting receiving those who God receives. This is the evil spirit now scattering the sheep; and it boots little for you, while this is at our doors, to ignore anything of this, and to attempt to make us believe that the one evil we have to guard against is Mr. Newton's doctrine.

But I am not to be so misled, for I have seen this wolf before. Six years ago, I was met by the self-same spirit under the self-same guise; a guise, indeed, then as now, of zeal for God, and for the discipline and purity of the Church: yet requiring me to separate from godly brethren, and to reject the holy as profane. I was then, as a clergyman, asked, (just as you have asked me), as the term of my ministerial connection with the Establishment here, - whether I would receive Christians out of certain sects. My answer, then as now, was simply this, Those whom Christ receives, I cannot reject. For this, I was then judged by what calls itself The Church. For the same answer I am now judged by you. Both these judgments I must bear; but God helping me, while the Word bids me receive brethren, I must receive them.

But let me take your cry of wolf in the sense you meant it, that we are threatened by Mr. Newton's views. Granting this, the true question still recurs, by what authority do you confound the wolf with brethren? I have before me this Word: - "Thus saith the Lord, if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth; let them return unto thee, but return not thou to them" (Jer. 15: 19-20). God helping me, I will "take forth the precious from the vile" and not judge both alike. God helping me, I will not "devour souls, putting no difference between the holy and profane" (Eze.

22: 25-26). I ask, where do you learn that godly brethren, when the wolf threatens them, are to be separated from and judged as the wolf?

I might make similar remarks on what you say of "leprosy". Here too, the evil may be nearer, and other than you think. I repeat, I do not question the evil of Mr. Newton's views, though I believe that "leprosy", being a breaking out of the flesh, is not the correct term for evil doctrine. But without quarreling with your term, which is, at least, intelligible, I ask - Is there no other leprosy which is now threatening us? Leprosy was, as you know, of many sorts, but one and all represented the outbreaks of the flesh. Now, I find that the New Testament includes among those "workings of the flesh which are manifest", and for which saints should be put under discipline, not only "murder and adulteries," but "variance and strifes, seditions, heresies, and such like" (Gal. 5: 19-21). Is there "variance and strife and schism" among Yorkshire brethren? The facts are that as brethren, we cannot meet. Why cannot we meet? Because you have chosen to make the rejection of certain brethren, who are untouched themselves by leprosy, the terms of fellowship. Is not this "strife and variance and schism"? If so, is it not a manifested working of the flesh; in a word, is it not leprosy?

But I pass on to the third and last portion of your letter, viz., the answer you give to my enquiry, whether (because I cannot reject George Muller from communion), I am to be a heathen man and a publican to you. Your reply to this is in keeping with the rest. You say - "The question before us is not the one to which you so anxiously await our reply, namely, in what relationship you are to stand with us at Leeds." I ask, is this the voice of a wolf or lamb? A brother points out to you that your present step excommunicates many godly brethren, against whom you have no charge, save that they will not be "forced" to separate from some from whom you have separated. He says to you, with a heavy but yearning heart, remembering the happy days he has had among you, that he "anxiously waits" to know your purpose, and whether you will reject him because "he followeth not with you." You answer that "this is not the question before you." Then I say surely it should be before you; for surely it is before Him, the Great Shepherd, who prayed that all His flock should be one.

So much for your letter. I now return more immediately to the real question, which your present letter throughout studiously avoids. That question is not, as you would lead us to suppose, either the character of Mr. Newton's views - or the respective merits of our former letters - nor is it whether I am, or am not, anxiously awaiting an answer from you. The question is simply this, viz., UPON WHAT GROUNDS DO YOU REQUIRE US TO REJECT GEORGE MULLER? Let us assume that he has admitted improper persons to communion; and further, that he has done this, as you say, after warning. How does it follow from this, that while he is himself neither leprous nor a wolf, I am to refuse communion with him? The godly clergymen here, would receive not only Miss Hill, and others, but Mr. Newton himself, and indeed any body. They do this against my protest; yet you have always professed that you could admit such men or any saints out of their congregations. And yet you require me to reject George Muller, and with him I know not how many more, because (supposing your charge to be true) he has acted as every clergyman must act. I can quite understand how you

might object to go to Bethesda, if he receives there ungodly and evil men; just as I can understand how you object to go to the table in the Establishment, because it is open to receive any one. But I cannot - after what I have heard again and again from you own lips, of the difference of receiving a brother out of a sect, and countenancing the evil of the sect, and of our bounded duty to receive all brethren - understand how you justify your course towards George Muller. It seems to me - forgive my saying it - sectarian in the extreme. You first constitute George Muller one of a sect against his will, and then you exclude him from that sect because he does not think as they do.

But there may be against George Muller some charge I know not. That this charge may be fully stated, I now request you to give a plain answer to the three following very plain questions:

1. What is the particular sin for which George Muller is to be rejected? Is it evil doctrine - or an evil walk? Or is it lack of intelligence or energy in a question of Church discipline? Or, if none of these, what is it?

2. What are the Scriptures on which you act in cutting off Muller? Be so kind as not only to refer to certain verses, but to shew their particular application to this case. For instance, if you refer to II John 10, respecting some who might "come and not bring the doctrine of Christ" be kind enough to shew how this requires me to reject George Muller, who does bring that doctrine. So again, if you press against George Muller the latter part of this verse, - "he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds," bring proof that George Muller has "bidden God speed" to those bringing lying doctrine.

3. Having done this, it will only remain for you to state those Scriptures, which require you to "decline communion, save in cases of ignorance of what has passed, with all or any coming from those places, at which persons from Bethesda are received." In other words, you have only to shew why my receiving George Muller, while he is himself confessedly clear of false doctrines, or how my receiving any godly brother or sister from Bethesda, requires you to excommunicate me with Mr. Newton.

These are the points which want an answer: to them I claim one, both as a debt of grace and truth.

In conclusion, I do beseech beloved brethren in this matter, not to be led away by names or men. I fear I see such a leading in your own confession of what influences you in your present step. You say, - "We are forced to separate, unless we would nullify all that has been done previously." (From Leeds circular) Now, I do beseech you, Walk not by "all that has been done"; walk simply by God's holy Word; it is the safer path; - and if as sheep, you must needs follow, be content to follow the Lamb. "Obey them indeed that are your guides," (Heb. 13: 7 margin) but "follow their faith", not their errors. Men have ever failed, even the best, and too often in the very truth committed to them. Gideon was raised up a deliverer, but he made an ephod, and all Israel went a whoring after it (Judges 8: 27). God's witness too, against Bethel failed, almost as soon as he had uttered faithfully the message which he was sent to bear (I Kings 13). Even after the Holy Ghost was sent to abide and dwell in the Church, a chief Apostle openly failed in the very truth committed to him (Compare Gal. 2: 11-12 and Acts 10: 28).

And brethren too, if I mistake not, had a witness given them, - a witness of the oneness, though ruin, of the Church; and they testified that each brother should receive his brother, not upon the ground of knowledge or strength, but as one in Christ. But if your advice is to be followed, all this is to be set aside. It is this, and this alone, which makes me write. I view this whole matter, as involving principles connected with our testimony for God, and to His whole Church. I have no personal feeling in it. George Muller, I have never seen, nor have I ever been at any of the Bristol meetings; while to you, I am bound by many ties, of personal favours as well as grace. But I know "the faith" of many of the Bristol saints, that it is "spoken of throughout the whole world." (Rom. 1: 8) And I see not how or why, while personally they are pure, I am to judge them, or to be judged for willingness to receive them. I may add more another time. I now commend you to God, and to the word of His grace.

I am, dear brethren, Yours, with much Christian love,

Andrew Jukes

Hull, 27th November, 1848.

Note: I was asked by the late Archbishop of York, whether I would communicate with dissenters from the Establishment. I said I would, for I felt bound to receive all true Christians as brethren, - that, therefore, I would willingly receive the Lord's Supper, both with and from non-episcopally ordained Christians. For this answer, I was forbidden to preach. Strange that Ministers of a system, which receives any or all, should reject me for saying I would meet with some. Such is man's consistency. But the Holy Ghost is the one Person who is restricted, or turned out as a brawler, in the Established Church.