

At such a moment it is well to remember that "God has  
HIS ASSEMBLY, and that is not Plymouth Brethren, or a  
section of them."

J. A. Von Poseck, on  
"J. H. Darby", "Recovery of Truth", & "Inside History!"

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Extracts from the inside history of the  
Ecclesiastical troubles and divisions  
in England; with the grounds upon  
which Abbot's Hall was disfellowshipped  
and Guildford Hall accepted by Park St.  
as the true representative of the Church of  
God at Ramsgate, translated from  
Mr. J. A. v. Poseck's German Tract—  
"Christus oder Park Street, Gottes Wort  
oder Menschenwort."

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## II.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE INSIDE HISTORY OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL TROUBLES AND DIVISIONS IN ENGLAND.

*(Translated from the German.)*

In order to give the reader of these pages the key to a fuller intelligence of and a deeper insight into the secret causes of these sad divisions, I add yet a few explanatory remarks.

These ecclesiastical divisions are the result of a deeply laid plan of a few gifted disciples of the late Mr. J. N. Darby, who had accepted the unscriptural views on baptism of this highly gifted servant of the Lord. And as that view not being grounded on the Word of God is untrue as such, it consequently carries in itself the germ of destruction. And it generally happens as the history of the Church of all times shows us, that those who have imbibed such unsound doctrines go far beyond their teacher in zeal, and thereby give his teaching an import and extension, which the teacher himself had never thought to give it, or of which he was not aware. Thus the unsound seed lying on the ground is allowed to germinate, and in time to bring forth its sad fruit : false doctrines, schools of thought, parties, divisions, &c. The higher the teacher's gifts are, and the more distinguished his personality, the greater also, is the danger and the more disastrous the consequences as soon as he becomes the head, and at the same time the tool of a party, especially where that party is large and influential. This is the history of the origin of every sect. . . . Satan's motto has ever been: *Divide et impera* (divide and rule). He succeeded only too well in Corinth. He used the names of the greatest apostles, and that of one of the greatest teachers in the Church, yea even the name of

Christ to set aside the only blessed name of Jesus (which Satan hates above everything else, and unto which the whole assembly in Corinth had been gathered by the Holy Spirit), and to inscribe those four names on the four party banners.

What was the Holy Spirit's answer to "Paul," "Cephas" and "Apollos?" In each of the first ten verses of the epistle (the 5th excepted), the Holy Spirit who glorified Jesus (and not men) introduces the name of Jesus Christ, and in the 2d verse twice. In the 2d verse also, the apostolic salutation is not only addressed to the Corinthians, but to all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ their Lord and ours. In contrast to the exclusive and narrow sectarianism in Corinth, the Holy Spirit embraces the whole world wherever believers call on the name of Jesus, and are gathered to that blessed name and unto none other.

And what did Paul the Apostle answer to "Paul?" "*Who is Paul?*" and "*who is Apollos?*" Has Paul been crucified for you, or have you been baptized in the name of Paul? Mighty word for the conscience and heart of these foolish Corinthians and all sect makers.

Then let nobody glory in men, says the Apostle to them; for all is yours; be it Paul or Apollos or Cephas, be it the world or life or death, or the present or the future, all is yours, but you are Christ's and Christ is God's (1 Corinth. iii, v. 21-23).

The history of the church like the history of the world, repeats itself continually. So does Satan the prince and the god of this world. What the enemy wrought in the narrow sphere of the Church in Corinth, he has since succeeded to do in the widest sphere, as the history of the church in all times teaches us. But never, let it be said to our shame, has his triumph been greater and fuller than in these last days in the wide sphere of the Christian body of believers, generally known by the religious world under the designation of Plymouth Brethren. These had left the various sects of Christendom on the plea that these were contrary to the Word of God. They had gone outside of the camp to bear the shame of Christ, professing to worship God in Spirit and in truth, and to have their place of worship not in an earthly Jewish temple, but above in the heavenly sanctuary, within the veil. They had gone outside the camp in order to serve one another in the peaceful and loving fellowship of the Holy Spirit, as members of One body, and to edify one another on the foundation of their most holy faith as the living stones of the House of God in spirit. What charac-

terized them was their holding fast to the Word of God. "It is written": (The Sword of the Spirit against the temptations of Satan).

They rejected in the things of God the authority of human names; recognizing as their sole head, the Lord Jesus Christ, who had once glorified God on the earth, and who is now in heaven crowned by God with glory and honor; and they acknowledged the Holy Spirit sent by Him, as the only and sole leader of the members of Christ's body gathered by that same Spirit.

For the attainment of his aim the wicked enemy made use of the same means among "Brethren" in England that he had employed in the Assembly of Corinth. He sought to magnify so unduly the feeling of regard towards some distinguished servants of the Lord (feelings right enough in a proper measure), that little by little the regard with which their name and writings were invested, had for result to push into the background the reverence *due* to the name of Jesus and to the Scriptures. That I do not exaggerate has been only too plainly demonstrated by the sad fruits come to light since.\*

Satan's next step was comparatively easy to take: that is, to arouse jealousy—this paltry passion of great men—among some of the leaders, and of the more highly gifted brothers.

The natural result was that parties were formed within the individual meetings. Each party inscribed on its banners the name and the peculiar tenets (often unscriptural) of its leader, and surrounded with clouds of incense the idol of their choice, and this served to dull that idol's spiritual perception and discernment.

In fact there is nothing which so much unfits the spiritual eye for perceiving and discerning the enemy's designs as religious flattery, of all flatteries the most dangerous, especially that kind of refined flattery tolled by their admirers to so many eminent servants of the Lord.

For many years none of those servants stood higher in the universal esteem of all the brethren who knew him personally or through his writings, than the late Mr. J. N. Darby, who fell asleep in April, 1882. The grave has hardly closed† over this highly gifted

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\* This bad germ has for long time been in activity under the surface. It is now about fourteen years ago that a lady in fellowship with us, and who passed among brethren for gifted and spiritually minded, said to me: I follow Mr. Darby wherever he may go. And when I replied: Would you do so in the case he should fall off from sound doctrine? I received for answer, I follow Mr. Darby wherever he goes. This was the opinion of many!!

† This article was written in 1882.—*Translator's Note.*



servant of the Lord, and it is a relief and a satisfaction for the heart to offer to his memory this tribute of gratitude and regard, due to him in the Lord, without incurring the suspicion of personal flattery.

Mr. J. N. Darby was, as well as his old friend and fellow-laborer, Dr. E. Cronin, the oldest witness of the simple scriptural truths which the Lord had more than fifty years ago brought again into light, out of the heaps of rubbish of human traditions and systems. Just as the Priest Hiliiah of old, in the days of King Josiah, Mr. Darby found among the rubbish *a book*, the contents of which he made known to God's people. And, just as in the days of Josiah, there was a rending, not only of clothes, but of hearts; so it also happened in England, when Mr. Darby brought again into light the treasures of His Word which had lain so long buried. For Laodiceæ it was the twilight, but the morning-dawn for Philadelphia, that is, for all true Christian believers whom the Lord is about to take up to Himself, into His glorious home, to shine as His heavenly New Jerusalem, in the light of God and in the glory of the Lamb, while Laodiceæ, left behind in the dark scene of the world, and spewed out of the Lord's mouth, disappears in Babylon the great, to share in its terrible judgment.

Mr. Darby's numerous writings, edited by Mr. W. Kelly—"The Synopsis" especially—evinced what profound insight into, and what comprehensiveness of view over the immense field of God's truth, from the first to the last chapter of God's Word, had been entrusted by the Lord to His distinguished servant. It was shown in the presentation of the simple way of salvation, in a gospel such as was only known in part to the Reformers themselves. Likewise in the almost entirely unknown subject of the nature, place, calling, and hope of the Church of God. Also in the coming of the Lord Jesus to take up the Church. And, finally, by the mode and manner in which the Spirit of God used him to scatter the old muddled theological systems and errors about the earthly people of God, and their relations to God in an earthly calling, earthly blessings, earthly hopes, and earthly worship, and to exhibit them in the light of the New Testament.

The writer of these lines is perhaps better able than many others, like him knowing Mr. Darby, of testifying to the latter's high gifts and profound knowledge of the Word of God. He had, indeed, not only the pleasure of an acquaintance with him of over thirty years' standing, which was only ruffled by the ecclesiastical troubles

of the last three years, but for the space of six months he assisted him in his small measure, in the translation of the New Testament into the German language, and thus had daily opportunity to remark J. N. Darby's profound insight in the unfathomable depths of God's Word.

No one could be many minutes in his company without feeling that one was in the presence of a great man, and of one of the greatest servants of God. How mighty were, even in his old age, his personal presence and his spiritual influence, can be better appreciated by the fact that Mr. Darby's simple veto sufficed to send to the waste-basket that childish and presumptuous first declaration of the Park Street party, in the Cheapside Saturday evening meeting of August, 1879.

God used him visibly on that memorable evening as a means of restoring, at least for a while, peace in the Assembly. The way and manner, however, by which Mr. Darby effected that result showed his sad consciousness of the almost hopeless state of things.

But just in this mighty and influential personality lay the greatest danger for himself and for others. Mr. Darby was not, like his favorite apostle, "feeble in presence and strong in letters"; he was strong in both, and there lay, as I say, the greatest danger for himself and for us all.

Our almighty God who gave His greatest servant such a feeble personality and a thorn in the flesh, knew better than we poor earth-worms why the Apostle of the glory and of the revealed "mystery" needed more than Mr. Darby this thorn in the flesh and this personality made *insignificant* through it, that he might learn that the grace of Jesus was sufficient and that his strength was made perfect in weakness. And often have I admired the grace of God in Mr. John Darby that had known how to keep him in a sound spiritual simplicity for so many years in the very midst of the increasing clouds of incense of human homages.

Mr. Darby, like many men of great intellect, had a very strong and unbending natural will and an unflagging energy. These qualities which the great Apostle of the Church possessed in common with him, and in a still greater measure, were in Paul, through the thorn given him, kept down in proper subjection to the will of God and the superior energy of the Holy Spirit. At the same time this thorn made his personal appearance and his mode of presenting the truth contemptible in the eyes of such Christians as the Corinthians were, and served thereby to keep him from that sweet

but intoxicating incense of human flattery. It was different with Mr. Darby, who had often been compared to that Apostle by his particular admirers, both on account of his lofty intellect and of his having brought again into light the Pauline truths. And in fact he had been for the believers connected with the present half-Jewish Christendom what Paul was for so many of his Jewish and Gentile contemporaries.

This was the man that God had raised as the greatest witness of the divine truths laid down in God's Word during those perilous times and "last days." And as the Lord had of old led Israel like a flock by the hands of Moses and Aaron through the perils of the wilderness up to the very borders of the promised land, so He had likewise for more than fifty years been using this foremost champion of His truth to conduct through him and other teachers, taught and established by him, His own flock under the supreme guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures, throughout the perils of a greater and more dangerous wilderness, up to the fulfillment of our glorious heavenly hope.

Moses of old, after a faithful service of forty years, having failed just before reaching the goal because he did not sanctify God before the eyes of the people, was for that reason recalled ere the people entered Canaan. In a like manner it was not granted to this aged servant of the Lord to see the realization of his frequently expressed hope—not to die in the wilderness. He had expected to enter the heavenly Canaan in a changed body together with the whole Church, "the House of the living God" (which church he had faithfully served for more than forty years) at the mighty call of his heavenly Head and ours, in a moment, at the sound of the last trumpet.

Just like Moses he also failed, but his failure in its consequences had been fraught with far more disaster to the people of God than the failure of Moses had been.

Our God is a jealous God and He will not give His honor to any man. Jealousy, this attribute paltry in great men, is a great and holy attribute of God. It belongs to Him because He is God, the source of all light, life and blessing. He has a holy right to be jealous for His honor, for all honor is due to Him. Therefore in His incomparable grace and wisdom, God has taken care in His Word to remind us that even the best and the greatest of His servants like Abraham, Moses, Elijah, John or Paul were men of like passions with ourselves and were liable to fall into the same faults,

views. The foremost of them was Mr. J. Butler Stoney. This brother was much beloved among brethren on account of his pleasing manners, his spiritual gifts, and his obliging disposition. But, besides many amiable qualities the same brother had a dangerous foible.

Instead of bringing out of his treasure things new and old, he had, as it appears, an almost irresistible disposition of always saying something new and interesting, and of taking up a certain side of the truth, often called "the higher life," which he pressed and brought to the foregronnd, at the expense of other even more important christian doctrine. He began in 1867, I think, a small monthly magazine under the title of : "Voice to the faithful," which very likely was meant to remind of the voice of one calling in the wilderness, (but which in fact reminded one very little of it). This magazine sought by its tone and contents to give such a prominent place to the legitimate heavenly longings and strivings of the new man, that through its perusal the inexperienced reader's feelings became little by little bent on attaining perfection by its own efforts, and was taken up to such spiritual heights that he began looking down upon other less spiritual christians,\* who he thought stood on an inferior plane of spirituality. So one soon came to different schools, planes and classes, which as experience teaches us, is the most direct road to the most dangerous of all spiritual diseases—spiritual pride. It is very possible, nay probable, Mr. J. Butler Stoney was hardly conscious himself of the effects of his interesting but dangerous articles, both in this magazine and in another quarterly published later by him, and entitled "Food for the Flock." He yielded to his whim of always saying and writing something new and interesting, and as Mr. Darby once remarked about him : "He did not know what he was doing." And as such a novel way of writing and speaking always finds adherents, who would not remain behind others in the understanding of such deep teachings, delivered like oracles, there was soon formed a J. Butler Stoney's school, the result of which was at last the "New Lump" doctrine, which Mr. Jull and his partizans had learnt, and put together out of the above two publications of Mr. J. B. Stoney.

Mr. J. B. Stoney, however, could not keep quiet. Out of Infant Baptism as held by Mr. Darby he made up a so called "Household Baptism," that is, he said to every head of a christian family, as he expressed it to me : "Give me your entire household, believers and unbelievers, adults and children, male and female servants that I

may christen them." I replied to him, that if this were true and right, and at the same time universally carried out, it would be necessary to erase the 16th verse of the 16th chapter of Mark's gospel. This verse would then no longer be true, but it would have to be changed into, "Who is baptized and believes shall be saved," instead of "Who believes and is baptized shall be saved." Of course, he could not answer me anything to the point.

I will relate here that when Mr. Stoney tried to convert me to Infant Baptism through the means of an artificial construction of sophistry, I replied to him: there are four words which would knock down your artificial fabric. He asked what these four words were, and I answered: "It is not written!" "Never in my life have I seen such a man," exclaimed Mr. B. Stoney, "who wants the Word of God for everything!" I asked him whether it was probable God should expect from the simple and the unlearned among His children that they should know anything to be His will, which they would have to guess through an artificial construction of logical conclusions (so called). If it were His will that infants should be baptized, would he not have said it in His Word. The many props you need to keep your system upright, only show that it must be a tottering fabric, for otherwise you should have need of no other props than the three words: "It is written." Thereupon he replied to me by another long chain of artificial conclusions, continuing without awaiting my answer and hastily adding: Are you floored now? Where is my taper? Good night.

The conversation had commenced about Mr. B. Stoney's favorite topic, "The life of the new man," but had soon drifted into Infant Baptism, and as his last effort seeking to frighten me, he said: I have myself heard Mr. Darby say that, "anybody who cannot understand Infant Baptism must be either a *rogue* or a *fool*." A sister who was present asked him then, whether it was the old man or the new man in Mr. Darby who had made use of those words: Mr. Stoney agreed that it must have been "the old man" in Mr. Darby which had uttered those words. However, as our object here is not the refutation of false doctrine, but the exhibition of facts, I must go on with my sad narrative, which is all the more needful for you.

The Household Baptism which Mr. J. B. Stoney had developed out of Infant Baptism soon led to other new doctrines, which were not only unsound (since not founded on God's Word), but which touched the very foundations of the gospel, and of the scriptural

truth about the church. In order to give you, beloved brothers and sisters, a slight conception of the new doctrines, current now among the followers of that party in England, (and probably already on the continent also), it will be sufficient to give you a few extracts from a magazine published by our brother John L. Kraushaar, entitled "The Occasional Magazine." It reads as follows :

"Even such as *openly reject* Christ ought to be baptized, if they belong to the household; and all willing to submit to baptism, yea, even *drunkards*, for indeed the Holy Spirit dwells and works inside the circle of the *Baptized*, and all outside that circle are on the devil's grounds."

An aged and honored brother had baptized a servant-girl of 12 or 13 years of age, and other baptisms of *unconverted adults* followed. I wrote to the lady who had to do with the girl's baptism. My questions and the answers I received were as follows :

*Question*—On what ground has baptism been conferred on that girl ?

*Answer*.—Because I, the mistress, as head of the household, am responsible to God. I do not believe in the so-called "Infant Baptism," but I baptize my child as a member of my household, to which this servant-girl equally belongs.

*Question*.—What is, according to your meaning, that girl's present relationship (that is, after her baptism) to the Lord Jesus, to the Church of God, and to the world ?

*Answer*.—The Scriptures tell me, that she is now in the Church, outside of the world, and is subject to the Lordship of Christ. (No Scripture quoted).

*Question*.—What is your duty and responsibility in regard to other servants, in case they should enter your service without having been baptized ?

*Answer*.—I would not have in my household any unconverted servant who should refuse to be taught by me about Christ and no one has a right to be thus taught unless he is baptized. Baptism is the way through which God takes us into His school (Matt., xxviii, 18, 19). "Make disciples all nations, *baptize them*," and then follows "teaching them." And never has there been a better rule for admission to a school, for it makes nothing of the scholar and everything of the teacher.

"Desiring," continues Brother Kraushaar, "to know the views of a few laboring brothers, at the time of that baptism, I begged them to give me their opinion of it. Two of them confessed the fullest fellowship with it. Of one of them I asked the following question:



*Question.*—Seeing that in the first times those standing inside were called ‘Saints,’ and ‘Brethren,’ and those found outside ‘Unrighteous,’ and ‘Unbelievers,’ how would you now call that girl after her baptism ?

*Answer.*—You ask me how I should call her ? Neither a sister nor a saint; nor would I treat her as forming part of the body of Christ until the Holy Spirit plainly shows that she forms part of it. But I would teach her the truth of God in regard to her need of salvation, and I believe the entire incapacity of the old man, as exhibited in Baptism, would be of service to me. Briefly, Baptism would give her all the privileges of the House, because she is in it, but none of the privileges of the Body, because she does not belong to it.

To my new question, in what respect the privileges of the House were different from those of the Body, no direct answer was vouchsafed to me. The following was said in regard to an ‘unbeliever,’ if he was christened :

‘His place is this, that he has put on Christ. He has been baptized unto Christ, as the Children of Israel were unto Moses (1 Cor., x). The question is : Will he fall in the wilderness, as many of them did ?’

‘Further, such a one is illumined ; he tastes the heavenly gift, is partaker of the Holy Spirit. In baptism he has been sanctified through the blood of the covenant; for we know baptism is a type of death.’”

“These are,” continues Mr. Kraushaar, “a few of the privileges that those that baptized that girl think they have loaned her, privileges shared of course by the countless multitude of *all the baptized.*”

Another of these teachers of Christianity says: “I certainly believe in the operation of the Spirit in the soul, and that without it there is no salvation, and I seek to stir them to reflect whether they, through their faith, get salvation (*ut supra*); but I cannot declare the people to be ‘unbelievers.’ God does not give the Holy Spirit to unbelievers, and I find no ground for doubting that some one finds himself in position to receive the Holy Ghost when he has believed where the question ‘*whether he has had life*’ does not come for consideration.”

“In the xix chapter of Acts, I find a few who were disciples and believers, but had not ‘received the Holy Ghost until they were baptized.’ Scripture does not say, that any body receives the Holy

Spirit, because of his having experienced the working of the Holy Spirit, but because he has believed."

Mr. Kraushaar continues: "I cannot help thinking of the terrible responsibility of those who make christians of their unconverted servants, through an outward profession, as the Holy Spirit has connected the glorying of God with that name. But, if anybody suffers as a christian let him not be ashamed of it, but let him glorify God, in this name.

"Every outward profession must either be genuine or false. If genuine there is no difficulty. If false there must be one or the other of those two cases. Either the professor has been deceived, or he is a deceiver or an hypocrite. Alas! who can count the names of the deceived dying and going into hell? Who does not shed tears on thinking of them? Having been taught they had been made christians through baptism, and they are *within* the Church of God, they easily believe what they wish to be true, in order to quiet their consciences. What do these understand about the distinction made by men between the '*house*' and the '*body*.'

"Such a poor girl had been present at a Bible class, when this manufacture of christians through baptism was taught. An elderly sister very much grieved about the girl's state of soul, having spoken to her on that subject, the girl said to her: I am as good a christian as you are. Mr. ——— has told us in the Bible class: 'Every one who is christened is a christian. Therefore, you need not feel anxious about me.'

"Alas! these poor souls believe what is told them, and they quiet their troubled consciences with that flattering salve. And they go into eternity with that lie in their right hand."

I have quoted, beloved brethren, these few extracts out of Mr. Kraushaar's writings, in order to give you, at least, some conception of the extent and height to which this apparently small weed (Infant Baptist) has grown up, and in order to warn of Park Street, and its dangerous atmosphere before it is too late. A little leaven leavens up the whole lump (Galat. v. 9). But I must hasten to come to the conclusion of my sad relation, so discouraging for all of us, as I am afraid of wearying you.

Mr. Darby began to find himself in a very uncomfortable position among these various currents and under currents. He was too highly gifted and possessed too deep an insight in the Word of God not to reject the extravagant and unsound tendency of B. Stoney and of his adherents. But that party supported his Infant Baptism,



and many of his most zealous followers belonged to it. On the other hand his relations to Mr. W. Kelly and to his old friend Dr. Cronin, became cooler and cooler. The public refutation by Mr. Kelly of the above mentioned scandalous tract in defence of Infant Baptism had of course not helped making Mr. Darby more friendly towards Mr. W. Kelly. Mr. Darby's old friend, Dr. Cronin very decided on the subject of Scriptural Baptism, moved by the Pedobaptists' propaganda, commenced with his characteristic warmth and decision presenting Scriptural Baptism, in perhaps too strong a light, as he saw the danger threatening the Church of God from the unscriptural doctrines of Mr. Darby's overzealous followers.

Thus Mr. Darby found himself, so to say, between two fires. On one side Mr. J. B. Stoney with his extravagant doctrine of the "higher christian life," which finally ended in the "New Lump Doctrine," and on the other side Dr. Cronin, in his equally decided opposition to Pedobaptism. Both sides took every day a more decided stand against each other. The Friday evening meeting held for many years in Dr. Cronin's house, and which Mr. Darby, when not absent from London, was in the habit of attending, was visited by Mr. Kelly, after his removal to London, whenever Mr. Darby happened to be on the Continent, which was often the case, and therefore, Mr. Kelly took little by little Mr. Darby's place in Dr. Cronin's house. At Mr. Darby's on the contrary there was every Tuesday evening a reading meeting taking place whenever Mr. Darby was in London, and which was almost exclusively attended by the partizans of Infant Baptism, and of Mr. J. B. Stoney.

Thus both lines of doctrine diverged more and more widely from one another. Dr. Cronin baptized adults at his own house, and Mr. Darby christened babies from house to house. Nevertheless, as Dr. Cronin's gifts and place in the wider circle of the church were only insignificant in comparison with Mr. Darby's, the former found himself, like Mr. Darby, through continual occupation with Baptism (though with less danger than the latter brother), at the head of a party, and the wisdom or the propriety of weekly baptismal ministrations may well be questioned.

It was different with Mr. Kelly, who on account of his high gifts was conceded among brethren in England, a place only second to Mr. Darby's. Mr. Kelly had (with the exception of the necessary case above mentioned) wisely held himself aloof from all strifes about baptism, and the happy result was, that everywhere the door was open to him for the exercise of the gifts confided to him. His

## III.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE LATE DIVISION  
IN ENGLAND, DRAWN FROM A LETTER OF DR. T. NEATBY,  
OF HAMPSTEAD, LONDON (N. W.)

*Haverstock Room, October 23d, 1885.*

To the Saints at Toronto, gathered solely to the name of the Lord  
Jesus:

Dear Brethren—In answer to your brotherly letter of 18th ult., one of us has selected a few of the printed papers, which he thinks best suited to give you the facts as to the sorrowful and shameful division which has taken place in England. We can only in a letter like the present touch upon facts which you will learn in detail from the "Epitome," and the "Expose." . . . . The real cause of our trouble was the condition into which, alas! we had gradually sunk. This we name first of all, in faithfulness to the truth and to God. May He give us all to be before Him in the spirit of the 9th of Daniel.

For years before our late brother Dr. E. Cronin went to Ryde, party spirit, ministerial jealousies and worldliness, had wrought general declension. We have no doubt that all that has happened since has been chastening from our God to lead us to repentance. He would not have the precious place He had given us around His Son the Lord Jesus Christ turned into an arena of strife as to who should be the greatest among those whom He had called to feed the flock of God which He had purchased with the blood of His own Son. He would not have spiritual apathy and a low and worldly walk coupled with high professions of heavenly truth. It is His hand which is upon us.

Some five or six years ago, troubles long existing at Ryde, Isle of Wight, England, culminated in a division. The larger part of the meeting left because the others, they said, refused to judge moral evil. Neither side inspired general confidence, but the smaller part (left on the gravest grounds by the majority) continued formally in fellowship, although many brethren refused to commend to them or to go to them. It is well known that after the secession, Mr. Darby repeatedly called Ryde "rotten," and said he would on no account go there. Mr. Kelly was as strong in his judgment, and many godly and instructed ones shared their convictions.

Yet months passed, nay, some two years, as nearly as we remember, and nothing was done. No meeting for humiliation or prayer. No corporate owning of the Lord as to this matter. No mourning before Him for the dishonor done to Him. Spiritual paralysis in the mass—party activity in the few.

At length came Dr. Cronin's act, condemned from first to last by all men of weight among us. All sober brethren, whatever side they subsequently took, were united in blaming the Doctor. But every fair person will own that from the first the matter was taken up in party spirit. There have been similar mistakes and faults committed before. Notably the case of Newton Abbott (Devonshire) where there was a second table set up in party spirit. That table was owned by Mr. McAdam. In spite of his support, however, brethren never owned it. Yet no one thought of declaring Mr. McAdam out of fellowship. When, however, Dr. Cronin's case was brought for consideration, some brethren asked that we might have a meeting for humiliation and prayer with regard to so trying and sad a case. This was at once and peremptorily refused by the party which really was bent on division. Mr. McAdam himself, who had formerly so grievously erred, was the first publicly to pronounce the word "division," and this almost at the commencement of the trouble.

Kennington, the meeting with which Dr. Cronin was connected, agreed unanimously, and believing themselves under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, that Dr. Cronin should be solemnly rebuked before all, throughout London. This was considered by all fair men to be an adequate discipline in such a case, seeing that the meeting he had helped to set up had never been owned by any meeting whatever. It was not thought enough, however, by the party bent on division. The decision of Kennington was refused, and refused by the very party which has since insisted that the decision of Park Street being an assembly one, is binding upon all.

You will find, in the papers referred to on the cover of this pamphlet, of the desire for division in the party there mentioned—a party active in very many places and notably at Ramsgate (Kent). This party did its best to cause a division in 1879, and it would have succeeded but for Mr. Darby, who required that the first Park Street notice should be withdrawn, and that the final notice from Kennington declaring Dr. Cronin out of fellowship should be accepted. (It should be remarked that this last notice from Kennington was only the work of a doubtful majority, and not

like the former—the serious work of the whole assembly). The details of the Ramsgate division, which was the work of the same party as produced the first Park Street notice, you will gather from the papers referred to. We would ask your special attention to the evidence in some of them that there was a party disposed to separate. This desire is sharply rebuked by Mr. Darby's letters to Mr. Jull.\* It had wrought sad havoc even before Mr. Jull and his party seceded from brethren and took a position outside, as they did in August, 1879. This is the party which was acknowledged in Park Street in the spring of 1881, to the exclusion of those who would not leave brethren with the others. It is for the decision which accredited this factious company that unquestioning submission is now claimed all the world over.

We beg you to ponder well the following considerations :

(1). Park Street was only a twenty-sixth part of London. It has always been held† that even in the matter of receiving and putting away of individuals one part of London cannot act without the rest. When any such act was contemplated a local gathering "proposed" the action. If all agreed, the action was taken by all at the same time. The only time previously that any meeting had acted in independency (without proposing the action to the rest) was in the case of the first Park Street declaration, which came to naught. But now once again they have acted in independency. Not that they thought that their action would bind others, for they expected the other meetings in London to take up the action each one for itself, hoping that thus the decision which they feared could not be carried in a meeting representing the whole of London, might be carried by taking one place at a time. Hence the meetings at Park Street were declared to be for Park Street only. More than one brother not locally connected with that gathering was challenged when they attempted to speak, and the action taken was specifically limited to Park Street. When the notice was supposed to be accepted by the meeting (for it was drawn up long before) it was publicly stated that it bound no one but Park Street, and that it was only put on the London papers "for the information of others." This, too, with the understanding that other meetings would have their notices put upon the paper whether they were in accordance with the views of Park Street or not.

\* These letters are found in the preceding chapter, page 24th, in the note.

† And is still held both by the Park Street party in London and by the meetings which have remained on the original ground.

(2). All the meetings in London, with the exception of William Street, *did* take up the matter each for itself, reading the correspondence and sifting the question. NOT A SINGLE *meeting accepted the decision of Park Street*. All sent notices of their own except William Street. Here at Haverstock Room four meetings were held, and the question\* argued before it was even pretended that a decision was arrived at. The majority rejected Abbot's Hill and owned Guilford Hall (most acting through fear of being "cut off"), but no one even suggested† that we were bound by the decision of Park Street.

(3). Matthew xviii., 18, which is constantly quoted, supposes the assembly to act in the sphere of its own responsibility to the Lord, and to be truly subject to Him to guide by the Spirit. But in no way was Park Street called to decide about a question at Ramsgate, without the gatherings in the neighborhood, and without the other parts of the "one assembly," which they themselves had always maintained London to be.‡

As to subjection to Christ, more than one of us were present at Park Street, and we are quite sure that all was decided by leaders beforehand, and that there was no such thought as seeking the Lord to give His mind to or by the assembly; but only the determination to cover with the forms of an assembly judgment a decision irrevocably formed beforehand. Moreover, two godly and senior brethren *belonging to Park Street* publicly objected in the meeting to the object proposed, and two others said also publicly that they had not yet been able to come to a judgment. These brethren represented many in the gathering who were of the same mind. But these objectors were ignored. No meeting for prayer, not any delay to wait on the Lord to give them one mind and one

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\* As to Abbot's Hill.

† It is urged by some that when any assembly has decided any question, all other assemblies are bound by that decision, and that Park Street having decided the question of Abbot's Hill and Guilford Hall, no assembly can raise the question without "sinning against the Holy Spirit." Yet Park Street was itself guilty of the very thing thus condemned as sin, in raising the question of Abbot's Hill AFTER the Hazelville meeting had decided it. Did Park Street "sin against the Holy Ghost?" And a decision which is the fruit of that sin is so binding that to go into the same question is to "sin against the Holy Ghost!" What confusion! what violence to Scripture and to the spirit of a sound mind!

‡ It is well known that Mr. Grant's tract condemns the Park Street party in London for having returned to the former unity which, for party purposes alone they had temporarily abandoned, and yet united action in the city (London) was being carried out at that very moment about every *other* assembly matter; why was it *not* done about *that* on which hung issues so serious for the Lord's name, so heart-breaking for all the gathered saints on earth?—(Note of the compiler).

judgment! The majority said in effect to the minority, "I have no need of thee."

(4). If it is claimed that this party decision thus forced was binding, what about the previous (and in that case unanimous) decision of Kennington in regard to Dr. Cronin, which nevertheless was refused? And what about the meetings in London which, invited to take up the matters for themselves, came to the opposite judgment to that of Park Street? It is surely monstrous to claim absolute and universal authority for such a decision.

But (5) *the Assembly must be subject to the Word*. We have appealed to the Word as deciding unmistakably against Guilford Hall. We still appeal to it, and we beg you earnestly to weigh their actions in the light of the Word.

Our position locally is this: We protested against the cutting off of Abbot's Hill on grounds utterly inadequate according to Scripture.\* We protested still more against the owning of the independent and sectarian table at Guilford Hall, for there was really no excuse for such a course. But *we waited* till "London" had in some way decided, and we committed the matter to the Lord. By and by a paper was sent to us and other local meetings in London (from Clarendon Room) which, if we had accepted it, would have committed us to the cutting off of all our brethren in London who could not accept the party action of owning Guilford Hall. We said we could not agree to that — that it was in fact making a "new test of fellowship." Thereupon a large part of the meeting left us. A fortnight later they set up a new table here, which table was owned by the Park Street party to the disowning of the table which remained what it had always been — the local expression of the Church of God.

If you, beloved brethren, will weigh all this in the light of the Word and in the fear of God, we doubt not that you will come to a judgment which shall be according to God, and for His glory and your blessing. To Him, and to the Word of His grace, we commend you.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Signed :	F. W.	I. H. T.
	J. P.	J. G.
	G. W.	E. W. D.
	T. N.	

For themselves and others† gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus at Haverstock Hill, London (England).

\*In the next chapter the details of those grounds will be given in the words of our brother J. A. VON POSECK, who was personally present at all the Park Street meetings.

† More than fifty.



## IV.

GROUNDS UPON WHICH ABBOT'S HILL WAS DISFELLOWSHIPED  
 AND GUILFORD HALL ACCEPTED AS THE TRUE REPRESENTATIVE  
 OF THE CHURCH OF GOD AT RAMSGATE.

*(Translated from the German of J. A. VON POSECK).*

The grounds for which the Park Street meeting would no longer recognize the saints gathered in Abbot's Hill as an assembly of God, were, as far as I know, the following :

(a). Because on the 24th of August, 1879, they did not break bread.\* I think I have shown that Mr. Darby himself was not able

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\* On Lord's day morning (August 24th, 1879), there stood in the street before the door of the Ramsgate Room, for the purpose of breaking bread as usual, from twenty to twenty-five brothers or sisters belonging to the assembly at Ramsgate including some few visitors from the neighborhood. They found the door locked. The brother who was charged with the opening of the door belonged to Mr. Jull's party, (and was at that time with that party breaking bread at Almorah Villa in the house of a sister). Thus the door remained locked ; those who were thus left standing out went back to their respective homes, and there was consequently no breaking of bread. Mr. Pettman (a local leader who had remained in the Assembly after Mr. Jull and party had left it, the Friday before) was gone to a place distant about thirty miles, where his family then was visiting, and where he had promised to preach the Gospel in the evening, and as there is no afternoon train from Ramsgate to that place, he had to pass the whole Sunday there. Dr. H. Smith (another local leader) had gone to another place in the neighborhood to visit a patient. He thought it was all over with the assembly in Ramsgate, and that he would find there nobody ready to break bread with him except his wife. This shows in what state of helpless confusion several in Ramsgate found themselves at that critical moment. I believe that both the above named brothers were very wrong to absent themselves from their post on that important morning. Both ought to have remained at Ramsgate on every consideration. But blameable and regrettable as their absence on that morning may seem, yet I am unable to see how that absence could touch the character of the assembly at Ramsgate as an assembly of God. Is brother Pettman the assembly, or Dr. Smith ? Who were the assembly on that Sunday morning ? Without doubt those twenty or twenty-five, who stood on the sidewalk before the closed door, and who wished to announce the death of their Lord and Saviour through the breaking of bread in remembrance of Him ; from which they were prevented by a *material* obstacle—the closed door—and not by a spiritual obstacle—a closed heart.

Where is the passage of the Word of God, I ask, which authorizes us to say, that the assembly at Abbot's Hill, Ramsgate, ceased on that morning to be an assembly, because on that morning it failed to break bread ? Such a view would be quite as absurd as it is cruel and heartless.

On the second meeting of the Park Street assembly (April 28th, 1881), in which the assembly at Abbot's Hill was disfellowshipped—it had previously met at Guilford Hall, which hall had to be given up to Mr. Jull's party, since the proprietor was a follower of Mr. Jull—I asked publicly Mr. J. N. Darby : "Whether he believed that an assembly ceases to be such, when it omits for one Sunday to break bread." Mr. Darby replied : "Yes, it ceases to be such, when it *deliberately* omits to break bread." I answered : "But Mr. Darby, Mr. Jull and his friends confess themselves in the printed Ramsgate correspondence, that there is no passage in the Scripture in justification of such a view." "I

Street meeting, came from Guilford Hall and not from Abbot's Hill? The brother asking that question was a well known evangelist from Barnet, a meeting near London, but not belonging to London. Mr. Darby, answering him, "Do you not belong to Barnet?"—cut him short and imposed silence. I was an eye-witness myself, and yet some have not blushed to pretend that there was full freedom of speech in those meetings.

To come back to our point (c), that is, the confession of Mr. Jull and Guilford Hall, I can as eye and ear witness, only testify that both Mr. Jull and the brethren of Abbot's Hill appeared in Park Street to be repentant while they confessed their faults. (The brethren of Abbot's Hill had not been summoned nor invited by Park Street, and they appeared there simply like other brethren who were present there). Mr. Jull said that: "the first step that he and his friends had taken having been wrong, consequently all the subsequent steps were likewise wrong, and that he and his friends were ashamed on that account;" he further added that "the censure of Park Street was not in the least too hard." Briefly the whole demeanor of Mr. Jull made upon most, if not on all present at that evening, the impression of the confession of a man who repents.

Was then all that real or apparent? Let the following facts furnish the answer.

No sooner had Mr. Jull and the other brethren (on both sides) returned to Ramsgate, than a few brethren of Abbot's Hill called on him for the purpose of reunion and reconciliation. What did Mr. Jull do? Instead of receiving these brethren in the spirit of love and gentleness as any body who had witnessed his very humble confession would have been led to expect, he put himself on his dignity, and imposed conditions which no godly christian could accept. He required the brethren of Abbot's Hill to confess individually that their *position* had been *false*, their "*course*" *wicked*, and their table "*wickedness and unrighteousness*!"

Hence it clearly follows that Mr. Jull proposed conditions he knew no conscientious christian could accept. And when others asked him whether there were no hope of reunion, he replied: None whatever.\*

\* By the bye we must not forget that Mr. Jull, in all he says and writes, assumes to be the oracle of the saints connected with him in Guilford Hall, for writing to Mr. S. Oliphant, he says: The saints in Guilford Hall leave me full liberty to express my opinion which is also theirs.



Nothing, however, furnishes such a complete and consequently such a melancholy proof how hollow and untrue Mr. Jull's confession had been in the Park Street meetings, as the fact, *that he now denies having ever confessed and admitted anything beyond haste and error of judgment.* He further denies, having ever acted in *independency*, and maintains that the first Park Street decision of the 19th April, 1879, *was right*, and that "London" (under Mr. Darby's guidance) *did wrong* to reject it, and that further Park Street *did wrong* to declare that they took back their first decision.

Mr. Jull further maintains that "London" has done wrong to accept Kennington's notice, that was no longer considered as in fellowship there. He maintains, that if he and those of the same mind with him had remained where they were (that is in Guilford Hall on the 22d of August, 1879), things would be in the same condition as they are now.

Hence it clearly follows, that Mr. Jull's views and sentiments are exactly the same they were in August, 1879, and therefore, it is not difficult to judge after what has been said above, the true value of his confession in the Park Street assembly meeting.

I believe I have shown that the grounds, on which Park Street has recognized Guilford Hall as an assembly of God, are fully without foundation, and in consequence rotten and entirely indefensible. And yet supposing these grounds had been defensible, I cannot help asking :

What business had a meeting situated like Park Street at seventy or eighty miles from Ramsgate to meddle in the affairs of this meeting, and to take the direction of them? What would become of the order and the peace of the Church of God, if other assemblies followed Park Street's example. Where is the least ground for such a course to be found in the Word of God? And if such a course cannot be justified by the Word of God, then it is nothing else but an ungodly, rebellious human presumption. What would have been the consequences if, for instance, the assembly in Philippi, (which was, as we may well assume, not inferior in spirituality to Park Street), had felt itself called to restore the order in the disorderly church of Corinth, the state of which was not better than that of the assembly at Ramsgate, and to take the decision of their disputes in its own hand?

And even, if some wanted, as it has been tried, to fall upon the 15th chapter of Acts, in order to find a parallel, or at least, a similarity of position between the one assembly in London, and that of

Jerusalem in regard to the assemblies in Judæa, and the other provinces of Palestine, what business had Park Street, which was only the twenty-sixth part of London, to decide, alone, the disputes in Ramsgate? Ought not Park Street to have asked the advice of the other assemblies, and have deliberated on such important step in a spirit of brotherly fellowship.

One would have thought Park Street should have been the last meeting to put itself forward in that matter on account of the nearly fatal fault it had committed by its more than foolish declaration scarcely two years before. That declaration has been defined by Mr. Darby as "an act of *independency*," and he added, he would leave Park Street, unless Park Street should agree to his own written declaration. Other assemblies invited Park Street to a common judgment of the question, no answer was vouchsafed to them.

#### APPENDIX.

A notice of an assembly judgment was publicly read at Park Street, and the London gatherings in fellowship with it, stating, that the Saints at Guilford Hall, Ramsgate, had twice set up a table in independency which could not be recognized; but that they had owned and confessed their failures *on both those occasions*. Subsequently brethren wrote on behalf of Guilford Hall denying that they had ever acted on such an evil principle as independency. They had therefore never acknowledged to it in any way.

Those who before the Lord falsely stated that the Saints had confessed the failures they had charged them with, dare not say they were led by the Holy Ghost to make such a serious mistake, but they dare require all the gathered saints to have fellowship with those at Guilford Hall, though they have not acknowledged those failures in any way, or they will not have them in their communion.

God is not the author of confusion, but has allowed the mistake to occur; and a very opportune rebuke it is to those who consider that assembly judgments are infallible.

Calling evil good to deceive by a fair name, is of ancient date; but bringing evil to light and arrogantly expecting Saints of God to be associated with it, while unrepented of, is quite new, and looks like grieving the Holy Ghost by acting very presumptuously. Now, we read of the sin of ignorance and of presumption. For the former, serious as it is, a sacrifice is graciously provided. For the latter, on the contrary, an awful sentence of judgment is pronounced. Whoever reads the foregoing must be accountable for having his attention called to this grave matter (Lev. iv. 27, 28). It has come to his knowledge: he is not ignorant now.

The Guilford Hall saints have admitted that independency is an evil principle. The London saints in fellowship with Park Street have unitedly testified that the Guilford Hall saints repeatedly acted on that principle. Nevertheless, the Park Street companies will have none at *their* table, unless they are identified with the saints at Guilford Hall, whose doings they have published as evil. I grieve to appear invidious; but how shall I speak of it as "the Lord's table," when, 14, 15).

"Whatsoever does make manifest is light."

H. PRITTY.