

and angels. We will not hearken to those questions which gender strife, nor discuss them at all. If a person say such is his private opinion, let him have it as his private opinion; but lay no stress upon it; and if it be a wrong private opinion, it will die a natural death much sooner than if you attempt to kill it.

In illustration of this most interesting point, I beg leave to introduce a narrative which justifies the course here recommended, and presents it, in a very eligible character, to the advocates of the ancient order of things—

In the year 1828, when the gospel, as taught by the Apostles, was proclaimed with so much power, in the Western Reserve, Ohio, by our brothers, Scott, Bentley, Rigdon, and others, some of all sects obeyed it. Among these some Methodist and two Universalist preachers were immersed for the remission of their sins. One of these Universalist preachers appeared at the Mahoning Association, held in Warren, in the month of August, 1828. He was invited to deliver an oration, at an early period of the session of the Association. He did so. Many of the brethren heard him with great pleasure: but some—remembering that he had, only a few weeks before, proclaimed Universalism, or some species of Restorationism—could not be altogether reconciled to invite him to a seat, and to treat him as a brother. Indeed, some worthy brothers were intent on having a motion made, calling upon his brother Rains, for an unequivocal declaration of his opinions upon the Restoration scheme, to which he was suspected by some as still partial. It was intended, by some members, to non-fellowship this brother, if he avowed these principles. Some opposed this measure; but finally brother Rains arose, and in a very clear and forcible manner, and with all deference, declared that, when he obeyed the gospel, he had, as he thought, virtually renounced sectarianism, and did not expect that the disciples of Christ were to judge him for his private opinions. It was true, he said, that many of his former opinions remained. These opinions he did not wish to inculcate; but if he were asked to avow his private opinions concerning his former peculiarity, he must confess that he was substantially of the same opinion still.

This greatly alarmed some of the brothers, and they were prepared either to renounce him, or to withdraw from the Association, if he were acknowledged. Some of us made a proposition that if these peculiar opinions were held as PRIVATE opinions, and not taught by this brother, he might be, and, constitutionally, ought to be retained; but if he should teach or inculcate such private opinions, or seek to make disciples to them, he would then become a factionist, and as such could not be fellowshipped.

Whether he held these views as matters of faith, or as pure matters of opinion, was then propounded to him. He avowed them to be, in his judgment, matters of opinion, and not matters of faith—and, in reply to another question, averred that he would not teach them, believing them to be matters of opinion, and not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Although a majority of the brethren were satisfied, still a number were not reconciled to this decision. It was repeatedly urged