

# Letter: 25e 50 G v Wigram, Lausanne, July 14th, 1842

by John Nelson Darby

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*John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility to God while maintaining unity and discipline within the church community.*

**Scripture:** Romans 14:12, 1 Corinthians 9:16, Ephesians 4:11

**Topics:** "Unity in the Church", "Individual Responsibility"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility in the body of Christ while maintaining unity and discipline within the assembly. He expresses that while he respects the preference for corporate meetings, he must act on his own responsibility to God when necessary, ensuring that his service and gifts are exercised without interference. Darby warns against creating barriers between individuals and Christ, advocating for a balance of individual gifts and collective order. He acknowledges the need for godly counsel and discipline but insists that personal accountability to Christ is paramount. Ultimately, he conveys that fidelity and humility are essential to navigate the complexities of church governance.

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## Transcript

p50 Dearest G V Wigram, - As to all speaking, if the brethren prefer all meetings of brethren as such, it is all very well; I have no objection; I would meet cordially with them; but when they do not meet corporately as brethren, then I act on my individual responsibility to God - I individualise myself. If I find it profitable to associate another with me, as Barnabas or Silas (Paul chose Silas), it is all well; but I count it of the very last importance to maintain individual responsibility, while insisting on unity and discipline. Counsel the individual, exercise discipline if needed, refuse him your room if he preaches error; but where there is unity and discipline in form, if individual responsibility be not recognised therewith, it becomes a petty Rome, and worse, from being narrower. Where charity is warm, there is no difficulty. If brethren who have a room, desire to use it only for corporate meetings, as I have said, it is all well, and I admit the liberty of the Spirit edifying by whom He will; but my position in the body of Christ for service in the responsibility of individual gift is between me and Christ, where not exercised in a corporate meeting; I dare not forego this responsibility (woe to me if I preach not!); and no one can meddle with it - he meddles with the prerogative of Christ. In the assembly, the order of the assembly, or Christ by the Spirit in that, is supreme; out of the assembly, I act on my own responsibility to the Lord. If I have five talents, I do not necessarily club with

him who has two.

I admit fully, alongside of this, all godly counsel; and all discipline as to error or misconduct. Even so, you cannot help a man's preaching alone; only you can refuse to recognise him, or warn, or the like. I attach all possible importance to this individual responsibility (repeating yet again, all just accompanying principle): I would not be of any body where it was touched; I dare not, for I should do just what Rome has - set up something between me and Christ. If the brethren do not like to lend me their place of meeting, where I may exercise my gift on this responsibility, I resist not; it is merely a question of rooms, or of wisdom; perhaps they may be wiser in this than myself. The question arose at - . I replied, as above, that if the brethren did not like me to preach on my own responsibility in the room, and would have only open corporate meetings, I had no more to say, I would hire another; but out of the corporate meetings I was Christ's servant, and I recognised no right in another to meddle with this responsibility, saving discipline if that were needed. The difficulty disappeared, as it always does where there is fidelity; though humbleness alone can save us getting out of one ditch into another.

Ever, dearest brother, with much thankfulness for your letters,

Yours affectionately.

Lausanne, July 14th, 1842.

[51025E]

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