

Education and Pictou Academy.

LETTER I.

To the Members of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia.

It was not my intention to have written anything further in connexion with the late controversy on the subject of Pictou Academy, as I considered the chief object I had in view, and perhaps the only one of real interest to the public, had been secured by the action of the people of this Country, this having been effected I had no longer a desire to continue a contest, which could only be profitless, and possibly personal.

The Rev. James Ross, has however again taken the field in the "Novascotian," as he says "friends were anxious to make themselves more thoroughly acquainted with the subject," and as the "Eastern Chronicle" had already refused several communications, he had prepared, "a simple statement of the particulars, and present condition of the Pictou Academy," which he offers to the "Novascotian" it being read in "many sections of our Church where the Eastern Chronicle is rarely seen."

The instructing his friends in a matter in which they are so deeply interested, yet, with the merits of which, it would seem, they are so little conversant, is a very laudable undertaking; but I will presently show, from Mr. Ross' own writings, contrasted with the recorded opinions of those whose testimony he is bound by every obligation of nature, of honour, and of justice, to respect that he is no way fitted to discharge the duty he has undertaken. "There is guilt in ignorance of a man, when knowledge is within his reach; there is guilt in heedless inattention, when truth and motives of the highest interest have claimed his serious attention." There is still greater guilt, when a man sets himself up as a public instructor, and having within his reach the means of correctly informing himself, does not avail himself of his opportunities—or having done so, suppresses or perverts facts, and publishes to the world as truths, under the prestige of his Office and the sanction of his name, what have not the slightest connection with Truth.

Mr. Ross and some of his friends, have asserted, and still do assert, that I have endeavoured to mislead the public, and that I was entirely ignorant of the subject on which I had undertaken to write. I wish it to be distinctly borne in mind, that I have not yet brought forward in support of my views, any authority

which has not been recognised as the *highest and best*, by Mr. Ross and his friends. I have not adduced the statements of those who *opposed* the Academy—I have not expressed the opinions of the Rev. Messrs. McKenzie and Fraser and their supporters; I have only cited the language of Dr. McCulloch and other warm friends of the Institution; this course I will still pursue, for "thank God for books, they bring us into connexion with the distant and the dead—they make the past, present; the distant near;"—b, reams of *authentic* records (which I shall be happy to produce at any time to such as may feel an interest in them) I am now enabled to make the dead, and the distant, speak. After I have furnished my statements, and given my references, I shall, as I have formerly, done, leave it for you to say, who has furnished the true history.

The first fact worthy of attention in Mr. Ross' simple statement, is, the assertion that the Trustees, are employing its funds "for purposes quite foreign to the design of the original contributors," which design was, to provide the means of instruction in those branches of a liberal education which are not taught in the Province Grammar Schools; the subscriptions raised were for the purpose of carrying out this object. "By whom these subscriptions were raised," says Mr. Ross, "and for what purpose the Institution was founded, will appear from the preamble to the Act by which it was established."—he then takes the trouble to cite the preamble whereby it would appear that Edward Mortimer and others were Presbyterians, and were desirous of Educating their children in their own faith, and it is "evident beyond dispute," says Mr. Ross, "that the parties who paid and contributed divers sums of money, for the purpose of founding and supporting Pictou Academy were Presbyterians residing in Pictou; and that one and the principal object contemplated by its establishment was to provide means of educating their children in the Presbyterian Religion."

My comment on this, is that it is neither evident nor beyond dispute, but the very reverse; my proof lies now before me. In the first place I produce the Act of incorporation as originally proposed, it is in the handwriting of Mr. Mortimer. It contains no reference to