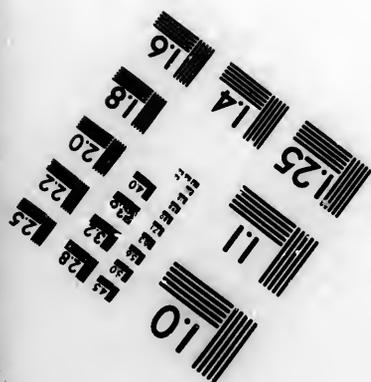
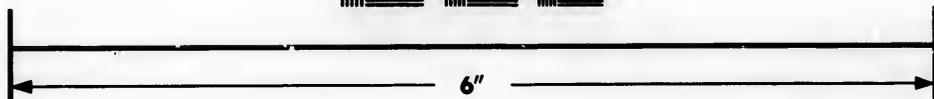
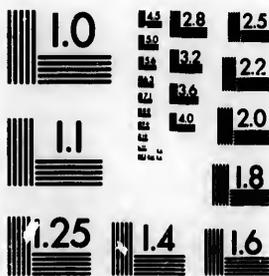


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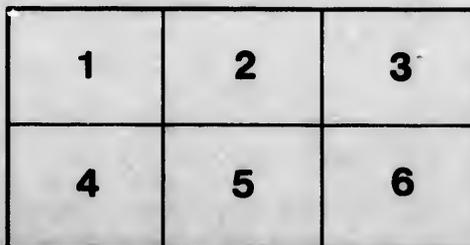
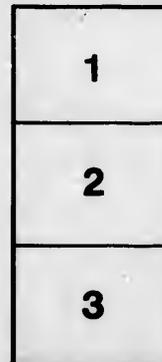
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MEMORIAL

ADDRESSED TO THE

Central Baptist Association

OF

NOVA-SCOTIA.

BY HON. J. W. JOHNSTON,

Judge in Equity.

HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED AT BARNES' STEAM PRESS.

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MEMORIAL.

TO THE MINISTERS AND 'DELEGATES COMPOSING THE CENTRAL
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA :

Dear Brethren,—

I present in the following pages, and in the papers I refer to, charges which I make on behalf of myself, and others, against the Baptist Church in Granville Street, in the city of Halifax, that, should these charges be adequately sustained, the Association may require from that Church such an acknowledgment of its misdeeds as may vindicate its late members who recently withdrew from its fellowship; and, which is of far more importance, may vindicate the Baptist cause, and the system of Independent Church government, from the dishonor reflected on both, by the outrages on justice, truth, and charity, perpetrated by that body, under the pretext of exercising the authority of an Independent Church.

It is my purpose to connect my printed Letter, addressed to Granville Street Church, with this memorial, as part of my communication to the Association, that so I may avoid much repetition. I need not, therefore, repeat the sentiments I there expressed concerning Independent Churches; of deference and affection when they are under the influence of Christian principles; of repugnance when they are blinded and driven by evil passions.

Nor is it necessary that I should here make any comment on the independence of the Churches. It will be sufficient introduction to my subject to remark, that if a particular Church, in the exercise of its powers, scorns the responsibility it owes to its Divine Master,—a responsibility which is the only foundation of its authority:—if, despising that responsibility, it tramples on His laws in its dealings with its pastor, or with members, and arrogantly makes its independence the excuse for breaking away from restraints of inviolate obligation, then will the like power of independent action warrant the Churches associated with a body thus abusing its independence, in excluding it from their connection and fellowship; and their duty will demand the inflexible exercise of that power, until the guilty and erring Church shall be brought to a humbler and better mind, and have made all the atonement in its power for its wrongs against individuals, the Denomination, and religion.

In my Letter to the Church the conduct of that body during its prosecution of its late pastor, is stated and commented upon. What I

then advanced in justification of withdrawal from its fellowship, I now offer to you as charges against Granville Street Church. To these I add subsequent violations of truth, justice, and propriety; and out of the whole there arise questions of general interest and application, and of the deepest importance.

In its Reply to my Letter, in its communications to the *Christian Messenger*, and in other acts, Granville Street Church has exhibited a disregard for truth, a violation of honesty, and a callousness of feeling, so flagrant and undisguised, as would seem to set at nought the consequences of exposure, no less than the restraints of principle. On what calculations this recklessness is adventured I need not enquire now; my duty,—and it is a duty I cheerfully recognize,—is to believe that there exists among the ministers and delegates of the Central Association, and among the ministers and members of the Baptist Churches of this and the adjoining provinces, an intelligence that shallow artifices cannot deceive, and an integrity that no influences can turn aside from the stern fulfilment of duty.

With this letter I also send a copy of the Church's Reply to my letter to them. The *Christian Messenger* is, I presume, accessible to the Association.

In relation to the conduct of the Granville Street Church, evidences are to be found in the letters, appendices, and papers, that cannot be contravened, and by reference to which those who desire to ascertain the truth may do so, in most of the cases with certainty, if they shall be willing to devote a moderate share of attention to the investigation. The matters for consideration are so numerous that the briefest possible notice of most of them is requisite, and many things worthy of notice must be omitted. I claim it, therefore, as an act of justice, not so much to me, as to themselves and the Denomination, that they who feel called upon to form an opinion on the subject, shall take the pains carefully to compare the assertions on each side, with those documents and facts which all concur in admitting to be correct.

The charges which I desire to bring forward are principally as follows:—

- I. The exclusion of Dr. Pryor from his pulpit.
- II. The examination of witnesses by the Committee, in the absence of Dr. Pryor, persevered in after remonstrance and warning.
- III. The not calling a Council at an early stage of the transaction, after the Deacons had agreed with Dr. Pryor to recommend the measure to the Church.
- IV. The refusal of a Council in the Vass matter, and the conduct of the Church in that business generally.
- V. The renewal of the charge of immorality after that charge had been fully disposed of.
- VI. The act of the Church in sustaining the violation of candor and truthfulness by Messrs. Selden and Beckwith at the Central Association last year, in relation to the calling of a Council.
- VII. The malignity towards Dr. Pryor manifested in the proceedings and subsequently.

VIII. The rejection of the decision of the Council.

IX. The violations of truth on the part of the Church.

X. The exclusion of several members in good standing, who, from causes that rendered their remaining impossible, had withdrawn.

My preliminary duty is to call your attention to the Reply made by Granville Street Church to the charges contained in my Letter, that you may judge how those charges stand affected by the Reply, and whether sufficient answers have been given, or extenuation shewn; or whether the first offence has been aggravated by evasion, misrepresentation, and falsehood.

I.—The first charge related to the exclusion of the Rev. Dr. Pryor from the pulpit, in the inception of the proceedings, and the disastrous consequences that resulted. See Letter, pages 7, 8.

It is not denied that Mr. James Johnston's proposal, "that the pastor should not be interfered with in the then immature state of the case," was put down on the Friday evening meeting, and that my proposal, that "some of the deacons should next morning visit Dr. Pryor, ascertain his views, and act as far as possible in harmony," was also overruled.

These tacit admissions show, in a negative form, the determination and state of mind of the meeting; and their Church record (Reply, Appendix, page 40) shows their decision in its affirmative form. "After the close of the meeting several of the brethren consulted together and concluded that it would be inexpedient that Dr. Pryor should preach on the following Lord's day, and requested Deacon Selden to communicate with Dr. Pryor on the subject, and to invite Rev. D. M. Welton to occupy the pulpit."

Notwithstanding these plain and undisputed facts, Granville Street Church hazards the assertion that Dr. Pryor "was consulted, and was told what was 'proposed' to be done with his 'concurrence.'" This pretence is fabricated out of Mr. Selden's note, and Dr. Pryor's reply. It seems, however, but reasonable to expect some explanation here. We require to be told how it happened that Mr. Selden, acting on a decision agreed upon at 11 o'clock at night, in so determinate a manner, should early next morning have taken it upon himself to modify it so essentially as to allow Dr. Pryor's preaching or not preaching on the following day to depend on Dr. P's. own concurrence.

No explanation is given. Without an attempt to reconcile this glaring inconsistency between the determination of the meeting on Friday night, and the alleged action of Mr. Selden on Saturday morning, the notes that passed between Mr. Selden and Dr. Pryor are held up, and the Church, in the reproachful tone of injured innocence, exclaims:—"In the light of these written documents, what can you mean by the rejection of the proposal to consult Dr. Pryor before acting?" (Reply, page 9.)

What I meant they well knew. I meant what they have not denied, their rejection of my proposal, "that some of the deacons should next morning visit Dr. Pryor, ascertain his views, and act as far as possible in harmony." What I *now* mean shall be equally clear. I mean to

charge them with a wilful and bold perversion of the truth, by ascribing to Mr. Selden's note a meaning which they knew was inconsistent with the facts. The note runs thus:—"After you left the room last evening, the brethren came to the conclusion that in the present state of affairs it would not be right to tax you to fill the pulpit to-morrow." So far the note is in harmony with the action of the meeting, and with Mr. Selden's authority, and the effort to make it palatable is but evidence of the decisive character of the action of the meeting. The note proceeds. "With your concurrence, therefore, we propose to get Mr. Welton. Have the goodness to reply by bearer." Out of these words "concurrence" and "propose" the defence has been devised.

But as well the note itself as the existing circumstances at the time condemn the distorted construction which the Church coolly assumes as correct. The first sentence is confined to announcing the "conclusion" of the previous evening, that Dr. Pryor was not to preach. The second sentence informs him that it is proposed, with his concurrence, to invite Mr. Welton. This is coincident with the circumstances; for while the members of the Church who were acting in the matter, were decided against Dr. Pryor continuing to preach, and therefore could not allow the preaching to be subject to his concurrence, it was comparatively indifferent to them who should be his temporary substitute; and on this point Mr. Selden might, either of himself, or, knowing the feelings of other members, offer an option. Let it be remembered that the Reply does not venture to assert that Mr. Selden wrote his note with the meaning, and for the purpose since alleged. This would have thrown the responsibility of the assertion on him individually,—it is now distributed among them; and the story of consultation and concurrence is rested alone on the language of the note, and the bold assumption of an inconsistent and unexplained construction.

Dr. Pryor's reply shews in what sense he read Mr. Selden's note:

"Whatever the brethren decide upon, I, of course, assent to. It seems, however, not exactly in accordance with the usual custom. Will it not look as if my brethren thought me guilty?"

He, at least, interpreted the note to intimate to him an absolute decision, and he yielded to it, not of choice, but "of course." Then break out his feelings,—"It seems unusual. Will it not look as if my brethren thought me guilty?"

There is something touching in this note. It shows us conscious helplessness, struggling with a great wrong. "Of course I cannot resist, but what terrible injury will I suffer in consequence?"—this is the meaning that a feeling mind discerns. Granville Street Church sees only a consultation, a proposal, a concurrence!

But they were not left to discover his thoughts and feelings from Dr. Pryor's note only. After having sent it, he went to Mr. Selden's office, and, in the presence of him and several other members of Granville Street Church, earnestly remonstrated, even unto tears, against his exclusion from preaching, urging the ruinous consequences he apprehended,—but he remonstrated in vain. Yet with the knowledge

of this fact, they have dared to deceive the public with the pretence of consultation, proposal, concurrence.

My son was present, and has given me the statement which follows :

TO THE HON. J. W. JOHNSTON—

On the Friday evening at which the matters connected with Dr. Pryor were first brought to the notice of the Church, after my proposition that Dr. Pryor should continue to preach as usual, and be treated as innocent until proved guilty, —and your proposition that several of the deacons should talk the subject over with him next morning, and, if possible, come to some unison of sentiment,—had both been rejected, it was decided that he should not preach on the approaching Sunday. This decision was absolute and unqualified, and Mr. Selden was requested to communicate with Dr. Pryor, and procure another minister.

Next day I was present at Mr. Selden's office, when Dr. Pryor came in. I remained until he went out. Mr. Ackhurst was there, I think, all the time; and Mr. Rand the greater part of, if not all the time.

Without going into details, it may be enough to say, that Dr. Pryor was earnest in the expression of his desire to be permitted to preach, and strongly represented the bad effect his expulsion would have.

After a good deal of argument, in which, as well as I recollect, Mr. Selden was the principal speaker in opposition to Dr. Pryor's wishes, Dr. Pryor appeared overcome by his want of success, and, bursting into tears, hurried out of the office, complaining that he was deserted by his Church.

There was nothing like concurrence having been either asked from him or given by him. It was earnest remonstrances on the one side, and determined adherence to the previous decision on the other.

The ill consequences anticipated by Dr. Pryor did certainly result. It spread abroad that the Church believed him guilty, and had turned him out of the pulpit, and the natural effect followed.

I am, yours, &c.,

J. W. JOHNSTON, JR.

Yet more than this. Dr. Pryor's son-in-law, Prof. DeMill, on the same Saturday sought out Mr. Selden and Dr. Parker, and remonstrated with them severally on Dr. Pryor's exclusion from preaching. The following is Prof. DeMill's statement:—

My Dear Sir,—In answer to your request, I beg leave to make the following statements:

I. On Saturday morning I called at Dr. Pryor's house, and was shown the letter which the Church had sent him, suspending him from the pastorate.

I at once went to Mr. Selden's office, and denounced the action of the Church as hasty and injurious. Mr. Selden defended the action of the Church on various grounds.

I then called on Dr. Parker between 2 and 3 p. m., and reiterated to him my denunciation of this act of the Church. He defended it with earnestness.

In these interviews it was taken for granted that the letter of the Church was an act of suspension. Neither Mr. Selden nor Dr. Parker pretended to deny the finality of such suspension. Had this not been the case, our interviews, and the language on both sides, would have had no meaning.

II. At these interviews I asserted that this act of suspension would be regarded in the community as a virtual condemnation of Dr. Pryor. My opinion was confirmed by the event. From various quarters I learned that the public believed the action of the Church a sure proof of guilt. In the language of an influential gentleman of this city,—"By this act the Church gave their endorsement to the public scandal."

Very respectfully yours,

JAMES DEMILL.

Knowing, as I do, from having been present at the Friday evening meeting, that the determination that Dr. Pryor should not preach was

inexorably fixed; and knowing the bitter remonstrances of Dr. Pryor and his friends against it, and the painful and injurious consequences that resulted from his exclusion, it will not be thought surprising that I look upon the pretext set up in the Reply as a mere subterfuge. It requires a bold front for one man to look another in the face and assert what is known to both to be a falsehood within their mutual knowledge. This is what, in fact, Granville Street Church has done in the Reply to this charge.

In the Reply, page 7, they claim the benefit of my opinion, and I willingly give it. I remember at the time thinking and saying that if I were situated as Dr. Pryor then was, I would probably prefer to withdraw till the matter should be cleared up, and it is very likely that I anticipated some inconvenience from Dr. Pryor's preaching, and may have so expressed myself, although I do not recollect doing so. But I did not make my judgment and feelings a law for him; and had the interview with him taken place which I proposed, and had he presented the probable injury with a title of the force with which it was realized, I should have acknowledged the justice and propriety of his occupying the pulpit, offend whom it might. This I know, that when I found how terribly Dr. Pryor had been injured, owing to the impression that went abroad that he had been turned out of his pulpit from having been adjudged guilty by his Church, I deeply reproached myself that I had not taken a more decided stand,—fruitless as it would have been had I done so.

It must be remembered that my complaint was,—that a course so just and decorous as a personal interview with the pastor on a subject of the deepest interest to him, had not been adopted; a course the more necessary because it was not until he had left the meeting that the subject of exclusion from preaching was discussed.

Every Baptist ought to know something of the relation that subsists, or ought to subsist between the pastor and his Church; and he should be able to judge whether the rejection of the proposal for a personal interview evinced that affectionate regard, becoming respect, and just consideration which is due from a people to their pastor, in a commencement of a season of terrible trial; and whether in the spirit that was evident in that rejection, may not be seen the germs of the disrespect, harshness, prejudice, and injustice, manifest in succeeding stages of the transaction. Remember also that at that time the pastor was recognized as an innocent man.

Even the Council, mildly as it treated the Church throughout, could not refrain from saying:—"It might nevertheless have been better if the deacons had sought a personal interview with Dr. Pryor, and consulted with him in reference to the services of the approaching Sabbath."

Every Baptist, I believe, will echo this sentiment, and it will give emphasis to the utterance when it is considered that the fault was not inadvertent.

But the Reply claims for the Church the benefit of the Council's opinion in their favor—page 37. Strange obtuseness of intellect this!

They trample under foot the decision of the Council when in favor of Dr. Pryor, and challenge respect for a decision of the same Council when supposed to bear in their own favor. Far, however, be it from me to withhold this small measure of comfort. Compare what the Council have said and what I have said on this point, and a striking coincidence will be remarked. Both extenuate;—both censure. The Council treated the Church with great tenderness, and were unwilling that their mistakes should impugn their affection to their pastor. Yet I think even the Council would admit that, judged by their acts, the thermometer of Christian affection did not stand high in Granville Street Church in this inception of the proceedings.

II.—The next charge is, that the witnesses were examined in Dr. Pryor's absence.

The defence set up against this charge is such a compound of childish quibbles, and mean evasions, as to be beneath notice. I refer you to what is said in my Letter, pages 8, 9; and in the Reply, pages 9, 10, 11. You will discover there these two facts.

First—that my statement is not denied, that “as soon as I heard that witnesses had been examined in Dr. Pryor's absence, I earnestly besought Mr. Selden to induce his fellow Committee-men to abandon so unjust a course. When I saw him again he told me that he had mentioned my objection, but the Committee declined altering the practice they had adopted.”—Letter, page 8.

Secondly—It will be seen (Reply, page 10) that it was arranged to notify Dr. Pryor of the examination of one witness,—I believe the last who was examined at that time,—“but the witness being absent at the time appointed, her evidence was subsequently taken in Dr. Pryor's absence.”

These two facts are sufficient.

There would seem to have been a deep purpose in the conduct of the Committee in this matter. By examining Dr. Pryor on questions suggested by the previous statements of the witnesses, of which he had been kept in ignorance, the opportunity was afforded of entangling him. I was not present, and cannot speak from my own knowledge; but I have learnt enough of what passed on Dr. Pryor's examination, to believe that this advantage was exercised, unrestrained by decent respect or ordinary decorum; and as I understand that Dr. Pryor did not decline to answer any question, however revolting, the Committee and the Church had all the benefit that could be extracted from a course so unusual, and so opposed to the cherished notions of free men. That they made little out of it, is but evidence of Dr. Pryor's innocence.

This second charge is, in fact, not denied. You are to judge whether the attempts that have been made to evade it, are not at once disingenuous and childish.

III.—The Church was charged with a failure of duty of the most serious nature, in not calling a Council at an early stage of the transaction, aggravated by the fact that at a meeting of all the deacons

with Dr. Pryor the propriety of calling a Council was agreed on, and the deacons engaged to recommend the measure to the Church. (See Letter, pages 9, 10.)

There does not appear in the Reply any answer to this charge, or any denial of the statement made, or any explanation of the conduct pursued by the Church. But in a letter from Granville Street Church addressed to the Baptists of Nova Scotia, published in the *Christian Messenger* of January 29th, you are told:—"In regard to calling a Council in the first instance, we have to say that we believe it might have been expedient to have done so, and not inconsistent with the practise of independent Baptist Churches. In view of the suddenness with which this affair came upon us, it will not appear to you wonderful that in matters of expediency we should have erred, etc."

The excuse of suddenness was accorded when it truly existed. To plead it in this instance is a violation of truth. The effect of the suddenness of the first affair had passed away. Time had elapsed; investigations had been made; reports prepared; agreement to recommend a Council made with Dr. Pryor after calm discussion; that agreement abandoned, not on account of the suddenness, but in consequence of opposition to the calling of a Council on the part of members, and another course substituted; and on the next day a solemn act was adopted by the Church;—and yet, under the signature of the Church, and by order of the Church, through the medium of a paper supposed to be the organ of the Denomination, the Baptists of Nova Scotia are asked to accept the suddenness of the first circumstances as an excuse for this failure of the Church to call a Council!

IV.—The fourth charge is grounded on the refusal of a Council on the Vass matter, after the other question had been disposed of,—and the conduct of the Church in this business generally. With reference to this, it is only necessary to refer to my remarks under this head, at pages 10, 11, of my Letter.

V.—The fifth charge is grounded on the renewal of the imputation of immorality after it had been adjudicated, an act, which, in my mind, involved so gross a violation of honor and Christian charity, that I determined to sever my Church connection with the men who had perpetrated it. My remarks on this subject, to which I refer you, will be found in pages 12, 13, of my Letter, and in a previous letter contained in the appendix to the Reply, page 56; and I invite your attention to the observations in the Reply, pages 11, 12, as a specimen—and it is a fair one—of the style in which these professedly Christian men seek to evade serious charges upon their conduct.

Some of these assertions it may be proper to notice.

I was acting, it is said, at this time "the part of an advocate of Dr. Pryor, instead of that of a member of the Church."

Nothing is more unfounded. I sought to fulfil, conscientiously, the duty that my membership imposed on me. I had then, and for some time later, but little communication with Dr. Pryor, or with members of the Church, and I made no effort to sway the opinions of any one. The Church meetings were frequent and I attended them regularly,

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and gave such advice, and expressed such opinions as I believed to be suitable,—with earnestness indeed, because the subject aroused earnestness, but without dictation, and in all modesty; and if my patience was tried when I heard maxims sanctioned by the wisdom of ages, and founded on immutable principles, treated as unsuited for the guidance of a Christian Church, I yet believe I succeeded in restraining, within reasonable bounds, the feelings naturally excited by seeing interests the most momentous in such hands. It is true, when palpable prejudice against Dr. Pryor manifested itself in unmistakable form before my eyes, I denounced it as it deserved; but it was not until it became clear that Dr. Pryor was being sacrificed to pride, ignorance, and malevolence, that I acted in any sense as his advocate; nor was this consummation fully reached until this attempt was made to renew the charge of immorality after the resolution of May 10 had finally disposed of it.

Again—we have this passage:—“Up to this period no desire was expressed to the Church, either by Dr. Pryor or yourself, for the intervention of a Council.” The date here alluded to was May 10, and two days previously occurred the meeting at Mr. Nutting’s, when the deacons and Dr. Pryor agreed on the calling of a Council. Dr. Parker says, (see Reply, page 56,) “We left Deacon Nutting’s with the understanding that a Council would be called, or rather that the office-bearers would recommend such a course to the Church for its adoption.” The calling of a Council in conformity with this understanding was given up without the knowledge of Dr. Pryor or myself; and this was done, in consequence, as I was informed, of opposition to the measure among members of the Church.

With the desire for a Council thus matured, and the measure only frustrated by the opposition existing in the Church, it seems a bold thing to hazard the assertion on which I am commenting, with no better foundation than that the desire was not formally expressed “to the Church.”

Further—the Reply (page 11) contains cavils on my concurrence in the resolution of May 10, dissolving the pastoral relation with Dr. Pryor. The shortest mode of refutation, and the most becoming notice, is to refer you to the circumstances as they are detailed in the documents before you. I regretted that the Council had been given up—because I believed that through the instrumentality of a Council not only might a just decision be expected, but a decision also that, whatever might be its nature, would have more weight and influence than would probably be given to that of the Church, and would less imperil the Church’s harmony. That it was hopeless to anticipate the calling of a Council I could not doubt from the decided nature of the communication of Mr. Selden and Dr. Parker; and the Council being given up, nothing appeared to be left but concurrence in the proposed resolution. As I believed that it did exonerate, and that it was intended to exonerate Dr. Pryor from the imputation of guilt, it agreed with my opinion; the dismissal from the pastorate was sudden and severe, but it had been virtually done already by exclusion from the

pulpit; the Church had this power notwithstanding the fact that the grounds of their action involved no imputation of moral wrong; and it was clear that the measure had been decided upon, and would be carried despite every opposition. Having, on these considerations, concurred in the resolution, the preambles, unreasonably prolix, were abridged at my suggestion.

It may not be uninstructional to learn from Dr. Parker's own pen, how my conduct, in this instance, struck him at the time. His whole statement is worth notice. In the appendix to the Reply, page 55, he says: "Deacon Johnston, (and, indeed, such was my own feeling,) did not by any means approve of the change of procedure in reference to the Council, but moved, as I believed, with an earnest desire to have unanimity in the Church, he consented to the action as above detailed."

It had not then been discovered that I was acting at this time as Dr. Pryor's advocate, and not as a Church member.

I may assume, as an undisputed fact, that the resolution of May 10th, was prepared and passed with the understanding that it excluded any imputation of guilt, because my assertion to that effect in my two Letters, has not, I believe, been denied; and it is attested by the passing of the amendment spoken of in the Letters.

This leads me to mention another gross misrepresentation (see Reply, page 12,) when the reconsideration of the charge of immorality is affected to be justified on the assumption, that as Dr. Pryor had been condemned, or said to have been condemned, on "worthless evidence," it was a generous act to afford an opportunity for the re-examination or cross-examination of the witnesses. They say:—"If our pastor had suffered,—if truth had suffered from our vote and your vote,—on hearing that evidence read, surely, surely, you ought not only to have rejoiced in, but to have sought an opportunity to relieve the sufferer." Now, as the resolution of May 10th, which is the vote alluded to, so far from condemning Dr. Pryor on the charge of immorality, was passed with the express and recognized purpose of *not* imputing guilt to him on that charge, the justification here attempted is founded on a palpable perversion of the truth, effected by assuming as true that which was, in fact, false. It is among the acts of injustice on the part of the Church, that while withdrawing by the open act of the Church the imputation of guilt on the charge of immorality, they yet, by hawking about their written evidence, and circulating their injurious comments, caused Dr. Pryor to be judged and condemned on that evidence, both in the Church and out of it.

There is an attempt made (Reply, page 9,) to discover inconsistency between my animadversion on the taking of the evidence in Dr. Pryor's absence, and my consenting to the resolution of May 10th, as if the latter practically approved the former. Now, seeing that the evidence, taken in a manner most unfavourable to Dr. Pryor was inadequate to convict him, this cavil appears to be pure nonsense.

Without, however, wasting more time on the excuses set up on this branch of the subject, the summary of the charge may be briefly re-

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peated:—that there was the violation of a broad fundamental principle, involving injustice to Dr. Pryor; the breach of the christian charity due to his many and dear friends in the Church; and breach of honor with me.

VI.—The sixth charge in my Letter relates to the want of candour and truthfulness at the Association last year, in relation to the calling of a Council, manifested by Messrs. Selden and Beckwith, and afterwards adopted by a solemn act of the Church. The charge is so fully explained in my Letter, (pages 13 and 31,) and in a previous Letter to the Church printed in the appendix to the Reply, (page 56), that any further comment here is needless.

VII.—The seventh charge is the malignity and prejudice against Dr. Pryor manifested in the proceedings against him and subsequently. These are partially stated in my Letter (page 13). Other instances necessarily appear throughout this memorial.

VIII.—Of the rejection of the Council's decision nothing is required in addition to the comments contained in my Letter and its postscript, beyond some observations on the attempt which the Church has made to escape the obloquy of an act so unjust.

The Reply, pages 15 and onward, expatiates on the paramount authority of a Church over the decision of a Council.

They must not be permitted to escape under generalities. What a Church may or may not do ordinarily, is not the point here. The question is:—What was Granville Street Church bound in honor and justice to do under the particular circumstances of *this case*?

The Church had formed its judgments, and had pronounced its decisions. It had not sought advice. It had rejected the aid of a Council while the season for advice lasted. That season had passed, and condemnation had been rendered. The condemned party, dissatisfied, appealed to brethren outside of Granville Street Church. The Association advised a Council, and the Church accepted the advice.

Of necessity, the Council would consider whether Dr. Pryor was innocent or guilty,—in other words, whether the Church's decision was right or wrong.

Of necessity, too, the Council must have the power to find either the one way or the other, as their consciences might dictate.

And if the Council had the power, it followed as another necessary consequence, that a judgment in favor of Dr. Pryor was a contingency that, as rational men, the Association in advising the Church to accept a Council, and the Church in accepting, must have recognized as possible.

And from this the conclusion is apparent, that the Church, in agreeing to the Council, gave to Dr. Pryor at least, the tacit assurance that they did not consider their condemnation to be an infallible verity, for what was entitled to be reviewed was liable to be condemned.

And this further consequence followed, that if the reversal of the Church's decision was a possible contingency necessarily involved in the calling of a Council, both the Association in recommending, and

the Church in accepting the measure, virtually admitted that the Council might legitimately come to such a conclusion; and that the reversal of the Church's decision would not be "in antagonism to the course which that body, as a Church of Christ, were morally bound to pursue." (See Reply, page 16.)

These are self-evident deductions, and they contain an answer to almost everything advanced by the Church on this point. All the disquisition, therefore, respecting the independence of a Church, and Baptist principles, contained in the pages of the Reply which I am considering, is foreign to our enquiry. The idea that to require the Church to submit to the Council's decision in this instance, was a violation of those principles, may help the Church in its extremity, by diverting attention from the true and only point, and by exciting prejudice—in no other respect can it help them. The one point, I repeat, is—the deference which was *in this case*, in honor, and justice, and in consistency with its own consent to call a Council, due from the Church to the Council's decision. It is, therefore, unnecessary to follow the Reply through its stages of special pleading and unwarrantable assumptions. I shall do little more than is necessary to extricate the case from the mists in which they have obscured it.

A good deal of parade is made of the duty of a Church not to follow counsel which would require them to act contrary to the word of God and their Christian duty. It was not necessary to take so much trouble on a point which no sane man would controvert. But they had a purpose to effect; and accordingly the tendency of the observations is to excite a belief that Granville Street Church was placed in that predicament by the decision of the Council. On examining the facts in their simplicity, however, it is seen that the case is reduced to a mere difference of opinion between the Church and the Council. This much, indeed, is admitted in the Reply, page 19, "They, (the Council) advised us," says the Reply, "to reconsider our action, and in so doing referred us to their verdict. Were we to act upon their advice in the light of their conclusions, without being furnished with the data upon which those conclusions were based? To our minds the evidence against Dr. Pryor left no way of escape from the supposition of guilt. The words of the decision point to a different belief on the part of the Council, and imply that another and intelligible rationale of the facts was possible. Why did they not make an effort at least to convince us of our error? We might then have seen good reason for changing our *opinions*."

I have made this rather long extract, because it brings the matter to a point under their own hand; and because it will be useful in another stage of the inquiry.

I know not what data the Council could have given, or what more they could have done to change the Church's opinion than they did do. The evidence and the arguments were public. The Council had nothing on which to form their judgment that was not known to the Managing Committee of the Church. The function of the Council was to draw their conclusions from a large mass of testimony, delivered

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by a great many witnesses. The Council have said that they performed their duty patiently and prayerfully, and the result was a written decision, in which they exonerated Dr. Pryor from the imputation of guilt.

I have shown that both the Association and the Church must have looked upon such a result as possible, and if possible, then legitimate. It cannot be pretended, therefore, that acquiescence in the judgment of the Council involved a breach of God's law, or of Christian duty on the part of the Church, unless upon one of two grounds;—either the infallibility of Granville Street Church, or their sense of the impropriety of acting on a judgment from which they differed. But these were reasons that might have been urged against consenting to a Council; they are out of place afterwards. The Church might have said in the one case:—"We are gifted with omniscience, and *know* that Dr. Pryor is guilty." Or in the other case:—"We admit that we are fallible, and may be wrong, but our conscience, nevertheless, is too tender to allow us to act on any opinion but our own, and therefore it would be a mockery and an injustice to Dr. Pryor were we to consent to a Council." With such opinions, this must have been the course pursued by sensible and honest men. But after having agreed to the calling of a Council, and united in the selection of its members, after prosecuting Dr. Pryor before the Council with the utmost vigor, and after seeking a judgment of condemnation which would have overwhelmed him in hopeless ruin, the assertion that Christian duty forbade their according to him the benefit of an acquittal is to bring the profession of religion into contempt in the eyes of honest men,—is to prostitute Christian principle into a sham, and conscience into a cloak for self-will and injustice. The questions arise:—Why call twelve ministers and laymen from their homes and their duties? Why put Dr. Pryor through the awful ordeal of such a trial if there could be but one result,—condemnation by the Council, or renewed condemnation by the Church? By their subsequent acts the Church have shown plainly that they were moved by no sense of justice to Dr. Pryor in consenting to a Council, but that their only object was to make his ruin more complete and irremediable. Dr. Pryor, protesting his innocence, sought this tribunal, but did so subject to the alternative of failure, and its fearful consequences. The Church, on the other hand, risking nothing, consented to this tribunal, only that through this it might strike a more crushing blow. And yet in their Reply they tell the public that they acted in vindication of Baptist principles!

No extenuation of the conduct of the Church can be found in the nature of the circumstances. The decision of the Council had every reason to be entitled to the greatest consideration and respect. Eleven men, certainly as well fitted for the task as any which the Denomination in the three Provinces can furnish, came to a unanimous decision. There is much in this unanimity, because it gives to the decision the weight of the judgment of the six Councillors whom the Church had selected, and who, it is not pretended were exposed to influence from

Dr. Pryor or his friends. To hold an opinion opposed to such a decision without some hesitancy and doubt, betokens the rashness of ignorance, and the obstinacy of self-conceit; to act upon it, if in opposition to the merciful side of the question, and to the golden rule, which, where a doubt exists ever inclines in favor of innocence, betokens a hard and a callous indifference to the responsibilities that attach to the giving of judgment where the highest interests of humanity are at issue; to act thus in contempt of a decision predicated on a mutual submission, betokens a defiant violation of the principles of honor and justice; and to throw over this combination of self-sufficiency, hard-heartedness, and injustice, the cloak of religion, can be nothing else than sanctimonious pretence.

Is there any man so low in intellect, so obtuse in feeling, as to believe that the religion of the benign Redeemer demanded from a body of his professed followers, under the circumstances of this case, to reject the decision of the Council, and not only to refuse to withdraw their former sentence of suspension passed on the alleged charge of fraud, but also to condemn on the alleged charge of immorality, respecting which they had before formally declared that they did not impute guilt; to treat one but recently their pastor, as guilty of two great offences, of which a tribunal, so entitled to respect, had declared, with prayerful solemnity, that they believed him *not* to be guilty?

Presumptuous men! How dared they arrogate the attribute of the Omniscient God! And for what?

Dr. Pryor had suffered the grievous punishment of abrupt dismissal from the pastorate. He was left, as old age approached, to seek some means of livelihood for the partner of his sorrows and himself, during their remaining years, and with his character tarnished, as far as Granville Street Church had power to tarnish it. Was this not punishment enough to satisfy pride and vengeance, if these passions clamored for their prey; or to vindicate the rectitude of Christian discipline, if higher principles prevailed? Must this decision of a high and sacred tribunal, disinterested and unswayed by passion, be assumed to be wrong; and a Christian Church run the awful hazard, —awfully great in the face of such a decision,—of condemning an innocent man, rather than permit one drop in the full cup of vengeance to be turned aside from the devoted head; or, to suit my language to their own phraseology, rather than run any risk that possibly Church discipline might not do its full work!

The Church, however, attempts to attenuate the finding of the Council in Dr. Pryor's favor, and in doing so they are guilty of distorting the facts, and perverting the acts of the Council in a manner so daring, that one is at a loss to know whether it was the fruit of some tortuous mind incapable of just conceptions, or a contemptuous belief in the credulity and weakness of others, or a reckless indifference to the opinion of any.

They say, (Reply, page 18,) "Did the Council mean to declare their belief in Dr. Pryor's innocence? Quite otherwise."

Can malignity go further than this? Eleven Baptist ministers and

laymen, including the six elected by the Church, say, under their own hands, that after prolonged, patient, and prayerful attention, they are of opinion that Dr. Pryor is "not guilty" of immorality as charged, and that they "acquit" him of fraudulent intention in his dealings as agent, &c.

The Church has given its own interpretation of the written language of the Council (in their resolution of Sept. 24,) on the charge of immorality. They say: "So *positive and emphatic* an expression would *naturally be understood* to convey to the Church that *the Council wished it to be believed* that the many and suspicious facts, extending over a period of three years, adduced in support of the charges, were *explicable by the Council apart from the supposition of criminality.*" Again, they say: "The decision on the second charge, that the Council acquit Dr. Pryor, &c., would appear to express the conviction of the Council that all the evidence in support of the charge *was explicable by them on grounds consistent with honesty.*"

Before I turn your attention to the verbal statements which are referred to as neutralizing the written decision, let me beg you to pause for a moment at this point in the transaction. You behold eleven of your brethren prayerfully engaged in a solemn duty; they put their decision in writing, and attest it by their signatures; the document passes from their hands and is to remain for all time to come a record between the parties. In it they find the accused to be "*not guilty,*" they "*acquit*" him; the language to this effect, which they use, is "*positive and emphatic,*" it is "naturally to be understood" that "the Council wished the Church to believe," and "it would appear to express the conviction of the Council" that the *facts and evidence adduced against the accused were all explicable, "apart from the supposition of criminality"—"on grounds consistent with honesty."*

The meaning of the written document being thus explicit, Granville Street Church itself being the judge, the question arises:—Did these Councillors mean what they said? We must suppose that they meant what the document imports, unless they were ignorant men, who did not apprehend the force of the language they used, and wrote one thing while they intended something very different;—or corrupt men, who, with prayer on their lips, were practising a deceit on the Church, on Dr. Pryor, on the Denomination, and on the public.

Let us marshal these brethren and see whether they belong to either class:—Revs. Dr. Spurden, George Armstrong, John Davis, I. E. Bill, A. S. Hunt, W. S. McKenzie, C. Randall and S. March, and T. R. Patillo, James E. Rand, W. Faulkner, and Abel M. Wheelock, Esqrs.,—these are not ignorant men. Among them are the most eminent ministers in the Denomination,—the President of the Baptist Seminary at Fredericton, the Editor of the Denominational Organ of New Brunswick, all accustomed to write, and versed in the use of language; to the eight ministers are added four laymen, intelligent and experienced men of business. The Council was assuredly not composed of ignorant men. Are they corrupt men who have conspired together to deceive? We must have some strong evi-

dence before eleven men of exemplary character are thus condemned. If they are intelligent and honest men, they must have meant what they said, and an attempt to prove the contrary being repugnant to this obvious fact, must be ill-founded, whether proceeding from misapprehension or from malice. Such is the rational conclusion before we proceed a step.

This conclusion is attempted to be rebutted by certain verbal expressions of the President, on the ground of which the Church undertakes to say that the Council meant "quite otherwise" than to declare their belief in Dr. Pryor's innocence. I meet this with a positive denial. The President used no language of this import, or bearing the meaning attributed by the Church. As a man of intelligence and integrity he could not have done so, and he did not do so.

An attempt is made to give some plausibility to this preposterous pretence, that the written document conveyed a different opinion in regard to Dr. Pryor's guilt or innocence from that which the Council really entertained, by warping an expression in the decision from its true meaning.

It is assumed that the words in the decision "they" (the Council) "may utter somewhat in the above way," meant some explanation variant from the written language, and that what Dr. Spurden said was variant. Both assumptions are untrue. The whole passage in the decision is this,—“Such is the judgment on all the above points at which the Council has arrived. They would have desired to add a few sentences, embodying thoughts and counsels suggested by the matters which have come before them. The time at their disposal, however, forbids this. They may utter somewhat in the above way, but cannot write anything further.”

The meaning of this is so plain that no man of ordinary candor or regard for his character, could attempt to pervert it. The *judgment* on all the points had been arrived at. Thoughts and counsels could hardly fail to be suggested by so painful a controversy, to the minds especially of ministers, which would prompt a desire to lessen, if possible, the breach, to soothe the feelings of both parties, and to give advice to them in relation to the past and the future. Not having time to put these thoughts and counsels in writing, they might utter somewhat of that nature verbally. The Council's record merely notices the fact that the President had spoken.

It is mortifying to be compelled to notice such palpable perversions of reason and truth; but assuming to be true that which is not true, and thence drawing conclusions inconsistent with the facts, is an artifice which abounds throughout the Reply and the Letters of the Granville Street Church.

It is said, (page 25 Reply,) "To those who were present when the decision was read, and who heard the explanation which fell from the President, the decision carries a very different meaning from that which a mere reader would gather from its language."

No intelligent, disinterested man could have drawn a meaning different from what the written language imports. I do not believe

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that any one did. I know that members of Granville Street Church, active in the prosecution, went out of the meeting, after the decision had been pronounced, in great wrath, giving token that they understood that Dr. Pryor had been acquitted, by indignant language loud enough to be heard, and by violent gestures indicative of excited feelings, for this I saw and heard; nor would it be difficult to prove that other members of the Church, in leaving the meeting on that occasion, gave equally unmistakable evidence that the decision of acquittal had reached their minds without the attenuation that the Reply alleges. Of like import was Mr. Selden's exclamation to Mr. Hunt, (who had asked Dr. Pryor to pray in his meeting):—"So you completed the whitewashing."

Can anything be imagined more abhorrent to a generous mind than the attempt made by this professed Church of Christ to rob Dr. Pryor of the benefit of a judgment in his favor, aggravated by the means used to effect the ignoble object—disingenuousness and misrepresentation? And what more insolent malignity can be imagined than the applying the term "whitewashing" to the decision of such a Council, or to an act of kind consideration by one minister to another? By the use of such a term, however, Mr. Selden plainly shewed that at that time he understood the sentence of the Council as an acquittal of Dr. Pryor.

But the Baptists of Nova Scotia have been told by the Granville Street Church, through the *Christian Messenger*, in their reply to Dr. Crawley, that the Church at the opening of the Council, protected itself by an explicit declaration against the finality of the Council's decision. Their words are these:—

"Had Dr. Crawley been present at the first session of the Council, he would not now assert that the Church agreed to abide by its decision. At that session the representatives of the Church were asked, whether they would agree to accept the decision as final, and they most distinctly answered in the negative, and the point was never afterwards mentioned."—*Christian Messenger*, March 29.

I cannot describe the amazement with which I read this unexpected, and as it appeared to me, most untruthful announcement. I was present observing the proceedings with such close attention, that it was hardly possible that such a question and answer would have escaped my notice; and, if noticed, they were of a nature not to be forgotten. Then at the Church meeting, when the decision of the Council was set aside, I pressed them with such questions as those in my Letter, (page 17,) but no one alluded to such a question and answer, or made any pretence of the kind. I got no answer to my questions. They looked uneasily one to another, like children at school caught in some delinquency, and each, apparently, trusting that another would find an excuse. I repeated my questions in varied form:—"Why call the Council, if respect was not to be paid to its unanimous finding?" Still, I received no answer. At length one member rose, and demanded, "Will no one answer the judge?" Still there came no answer, and still the questions were urged. The same member rose again—"Why don't some of you answer?" he asked; then, addressing a member by name, he said:—"You are a man of ready speech; why

do not you answer?" Thus invoked, the individual rose and spoke, but he did not answer, and my question remained unanswered. Had it been true that such a circumstance had occurred, some one would have alluded to it then.

Again, the Church in my Letter, page 17, 18, were asked:—"Why openly, and without qualification, acknowledge the Council? Why call a Council to review a judgment which was unalterably fixed? And when you did do so in professed respect to the recommendation of the Association, common honesty would seem to have required that you should have explained the position you occupied." Yet with such appeals as these, the Reply makes no pretence of any question and answer of the kind. Nor is this all. After urging that the decision of a Council ought not to bind a Church, they say, (page 17) "Such a view of the case prompted some of our members to say, before a Council was called, that they would not pledge themselves to abide by its decision." Is it within the range of probability, that while deliberately framing the Reply, and while thus aiming to strengthen their position by what members said *before* the Council was called, they would have omitted what a Committee of members said officially to the Council *after* it was assembled, had the truth warranted it?

Both the record of the Council and their own Church record condemned them:—"The Council then requested of each party to declare whether the Council, as now organized, is accepted. Both parties replied in the affirmative; whereupon the Council went into a private session."—(See Council Record. Reply, page 70.) Nor is their own record less expressive in its silence. "The Council having organized by choosing, &c., the Church was asked if they accepted the Council as thus organized. The Church replied in the affirmative,—the Council to take as their basis of, and authority for action, the resolution of July 12th and August 12th."—Reply, page 65. Thus, no allusion is made to the question and answer boldly thrown in Dr. Crawley's face, either in the Council's record, or in the Church's record, or at the Church meeting, or in the Reply. Strange coincidence of forgetfulness!

It is true that two of the Councillors support the view of the Church, but opposed to them are ten who heard nothing of the alleged question and answer, among whom are the President, and the two Clerks, whose especial duty was to attend and to record. The version given on behalf of the Church introduces the President into the supposed colloquy, and represents him as waiving it down with his hand. Yet Dr. Spurden is clear in his apprehension that no such question and answer occurred. He says:—

"The enquiry was put whether each party received or acknowledged the Council, but in what precise terms it was put I do not recollect.

"The direct question, whether the parties would receive the decision of the Council as final, was not raised."

He alludes to some knowledge of his about the state of mind of the Church, which, however, can have no weight in the enquiry. The evidence so preponderates against the statement of the Church, that

it must be supposed that the two members from whom it originated confused something else. It is most probable that the assertion in the *Christian Messenger* was an afterthought, and if an afterthought, then an untruth; at the same time it is quite probable that at the bottom of the matter there may be some specious evasion, and by comparing their statement in the *Christian Messenger* with the references in the Church records to the resolutions of July and August, it may not be hard to discover the materials out of which the assertion has been fabricated.

The view, however, which I take of the case is such that although the Church had distinctly protected themselves against the finality of the decision, yet, having consented to the Council, having exercised guarded caution in the selection of its members, having strained every nerve by evidence and by argument to secure a conviction, and the twelve selected men having concurred in acquitting, they were, by the immutable principles of honor, justice, and charity, bound to have acted on a decision given under such circumstances by men who had the immeasurable advantage over them of being free from the excitement that pervaded the members of the Church, and from the hostilities engendered by warm controversies and keen antagonisms.

IX.—Violations of truth on the part of the Church.

Illustrations of this charge are to be found throughout the whole of this Memorial, for in fact the Reply perverts the truth in answer to almost every charge which it attempts to meet; and the same thing, in a great degree, may be said of the articles in the *Christian Messenger*. In addition, however, to what I have already given, I offer a few glaring instances.

First—Among these none is more daring than that in which they pervert the language of Mr. John Y. Payzant. The object is akin to that which prompted the "Quite otherwise," respecting the belief of the Councillors in Dr. Pryor's innocence. There the object was to be effected by special pleading, petty quirks, and false assumptions. In the case of Mr. Payzant's letter the work was to be done openly and unblushingly.

In the Church's letter, *Christian Messenger*, March 11, occurs the following:—

"He (Dr. Crawley) quotes from the letter of Mr. J. Y. Payzant to the Rev. E. M. Saunders, and states that Mr. Payzant was forced away from the Church by his sense of our injustice to Dr. Pryor. If Dr. Crawley means that Mr. Payzant felt compelled to leave us because he believed we had condemned an innocent man, we must do Mr. Payzant the justice to correct Dr. C's misrepresentation. Here are Mr. Payzant's words on this point,—"*Whether these charges (against Dr. Pryor) were true or false, is foreign to the purport of this letter, and remotely if in any way connected with my act of separation.*" The italics are ours."

In order to expose this deceptive statement, I quote Mr. Payzant's remarks in full:—

"It is unnecessary that I should here go in detail into the merits of the charges made by your Church against Dr. Pryor, their late pastor. Whether those charges were true or false, is foreign to the purport of this letter, and remotely, if in any wise, connected with my act of separation. Let me only say here, that from an early stage of the proceedings which led to his exclusion from the Church, I have

had the deepest conviction of his innocence and moral rectitude; and therefore hold that the act of exclusion was wrong, unwarranted by the facts, and subversive of that respect and control in a community, which a Church of our Lord should possess. Loudly, however, as I do protest against an act so unwarrantable as this, I feel how tenderly the covering of that charity "that suffereth long and is kind," should be spread over the acts of an erring Church, where the error has been that of the understanding and not of the heart. Had forbearance, honesty, and a Christian and sorrowing spirit, stamped this act with their own holy impress, I should have been impatient, 'tis true, of the violence done to my feelings and reason, but would have bowed to the decision of brethren.

But I look in vain for any such Heavenly marks of discipline as these in Dr. Pryor's exclusion. As I now review its character step by step, as I call to mind the hasty action, the reckless manner of receiving evidence, the rejection of wise and considerate advice, the personal treatment of Dr. Pryor, the sneer, the rebuff, the eagerness to clutch at every trifle against him, and the disingenuous evasion of facts that told in his favor, the rejection of overtures for calling a Church Council, and the rejection of that Council's decision when called, I declare I tremble for the condition of men so deaf alike to the voice of reason, humanity, and religion. If such strange conduct had been the sudden outburst of a moment, or of a few days, I knew that reflection and prayer would have restored the better mind; but when through those weary weeks of wrangling and bad temper I found the evil instead of abating, outgrowing all restraint, I felt that here, and now Christian charity should pause before other and sterner duties. Though I know I must have been somewhat influenced by the factious spirit and anger of the hour, I have had frequent occasion, since I ceased to enter the portals of the Church, calmly to review the whole matter. I have tried to examine its every phase by the light of reason and religion. I have asked myself whether that conduct could be explicable on any other ground than that of a bad mind and heart. I have watched narrowly the later developments of the evil in the unmanly attitude the *Messenger* has assumed, in the vile slanders that even now are retailed at the corners of the streets in this city, against Dr. Pryor, and in the unflinching effort to crush him forever—from all which I feel the more thoroughly convinced how impossible was any continuance of fellowship in the past, and how futile, if not wrong, any hope for its renewal in the future.

Though the subject is of a character too painful to be thus adverted to without extreme reluctance, I should be wanting in a proper respect for myself, my judgment and my religion, if I allowed any consideration to influence me in concealing or palliating the final and conclusive nature of my cause for separation from the Church.

But that act of ecclesiastical tyranny had a broader and more fundamental significance than this; it had a meaning that touched the very constitution and government, not of Granville Street Church alone, but of all Baptist Churches. It meant that the majority of individual members in a Baptist Church could lay their hands upon a worthy man and ruin him for life; that whether good men or bad men, this majority could act, however tremendously important the issues involved, without appellate control, or regard to aught, save their own particular ends; that under the guise of an exalted Christianity and pure discipline it could poise a deadlier shaft and wreak a more terrible wrong; in fine, a Church which should aspire in its government to realize the status of a pure theocracy, could assume the functions of the worst religious despotism. Isolated though the case of Dr. Pryor might be, one naturally asked himself what guarantee had he that the next victim to this tyranny might not be himself or his neighbour. Must there not be some thing wrong, some thing radically wrong, in that religious system which became a jeopardy to the reputation and usefulness of its members instead of a safeguard?—was a question I found myself unable to get rid of by means of any previous study or conclusion."

Comment is superfluous.

Secondly—The eagerness with which the Church has sought pretext for presenting before the public detached portions of the evidence, and their manner of doing it, has clearly shown the motive that actuated them. Their references to the evidence in the Reply, but more especially in the *Christian Messenger*, manifest a malice that surpasses the

ordinary measure of human malignity. No piece or pieces of the testimony, even if represented free from exaggeration and distortion, could justify an opinion by any one who had not had the opportunities which were afforded the Council, of seeing and hearing all the witnesses, and of combining, contrasting, and comparing all the testimony.

Some of the witnesses were utterly unreliable, either from the absurdity of their statements, or from the inconsistency of one part of their evidence with another part, or from the contradictory statements of other witnesses. To retail *any* of the evidence from such a source was to deceive; because, if the witness was unworthy of credit the evidence ceased to have weight. But when the evidence was presented to the public, not only without mention of the infirmity which attached to the witness' credit, or of circumstances which modified the statement itself, but was also exaggerated and distorted in its nature and bearing, the offence becomes aggravated in the highest degree. It was uncharitable, unjust, and untruthful; it exposed a man struggling through a terrible ordeal, to prejudice and obloquy; his wife to agony of mind; both, possibly, to the wretchedness of want; the Council to suspicion. And wherefore? There is no assignable reason but revenge and malevolence.

The evidence was nowhere touched in the reply, and in the *Messenger*, but to be perverted. But the "locking of doors," and the "closing of blinds," called forth an especial amount of misrepresentation, and was made the subject of exaggeration and distortion, and malicious comment of the most scandalous nature; and yet, it was the work of men whose consciences were too tenderly alive to Christian duty, to forego the punishment of imagined guilt upon one who had been pronounced not guilty, by eleven intelligent and honest men!

Thirdly—The statement that Dr. Pryor, on the Friday night when the first Church meeting was held, was at Mrs. McM——'s after the meeting was over, is without foundation. He went directly home, agitated, distressed, and heart-broken, from the harshness and want of sympathy which he had experienced; and did not leave his house until after breakfast on the following day. This I know upon the authority of his wife, and also upon that of his daughter, who was at the house that evening, and remained there all night. He may surely be excused if his patience gave way under a protracted cross-examination, conducted in a manner the most insolent, by a young man from whose age he might have expected at least the ordinary decencies of deportment due to one who was so greatly his senior.

Before considering the last charge, I wish to make a few remarks, some having reference to statements in the Reply, and others having reference to the acts of the Church.

The Reply contrasts the number of those dissenting from the Church with its 150 members. Reduce this last number and make it between a dozen and twenty, and it will be nearer to the true number by which, practically and truly, the work was effected, since the rest

took no part in it, or did so only in obedience to the watchword:—"Stand by the Church."

I am asked who is likely to be wrong, I, and those sympathize with Dr. Pryor, or the remainder of the Church. It might not be a great breach of modesty were I to believe that in a case depending on deductions from evidence I might be entitled to form and express an opinion. Let me rather, however, seek an answer to their question from you. I invite you to follow the case through its various stages, and say whose judgment is entitled to the more respect.

1. I advised a personal conference with the pastor respecting the preaching on the first Sunday in the transaction. The Church neglected the advice. Who in this shewed the better judgment and the higher sense of propriety?

2. I denounced the taking of evidence behind Dr. Pryor's back, and urged a different course. They rejected my counsel. Who in this case showed the better judgment?

3. I advised a Council before the Church had committed itself to any judgment on either charge. My advice was not followed. Was it, or was it not sound advice that should be followed? The admissions of Dr. Parker and of the Church have already answered this question in the affirmative.

4. Was the advice that I gave sound, that recommended the referring of the Vass matter to a Council?

5. Was the conduct of the Church proper in renewing the charge of immorality after it had been passed upon, or was my remonstrance against that course warranted and just?

6. Would it have been wise and proper in the Church to have followed my advice and to have accepted the Council's decision?

Consider the evils that have followed those acts of the Church from which I differed, and say whether those evils would not have been averted had my advice been followed. Thus shall you be able to answer, from the materials before you, the question—Who *was* wrong?

It is asked—how are improper motives to be accounted for in the treatment of Dr. Pryor. I have explained, in my Letter, how enmity and antagonism were engendered, which, in minds incapable of rising above pique and resentment, operated to Dr. Pryor's prejudice in the action of the Church. But in addition to this it would not be difficult to trace in different individuals varied motives in accordance with their varying character and circumstances, all leading to the one result—hostility to their pastor. Such a task it is not my purpose here to undertake. The representation that the Church acted from high and holy motives, free from passion and enmity, sounds well to those abroad: I, who was present, and witnessed it all, feel it to be but a delusion. But let me ask a question that may elucidate this. How came it that a Church, who claim to be possessed of kindly affection toward their pastor, should, in every instance, when two courses were open, have adopted the harsher, with one exception, and from that they recanted?

Had the deacons called on the pastor before the first Sunday, in

relation to the preaching, it would have been at once kind and decorous, and might have led to beneficial results, and averted the evils that grew out of the hostility engendered by the opposite course. Sympathetic feeling and kindly affection dictated this course. How came the leaders of Granville Street Church to reject that course when proposed by one of the deacons?

Why was the dictate of natural justice violated, and the advice of the deacon rejected, as regarded the taking of evidence in Dr. Pryor's absence?

How is the opposition to a Council, in the first instance, notwithstanding the agreements of the deacons to be accounted for, when a Council at that time might have averted such a fearful amount of mischief?

Why the rejection of the Council on the Vass matter?

Why the uncalled-for renewal of the charge of immorality, at the expense of the feelings of the friends of Dr. Pryor in the Church?

Why reject the decision of the Council, when a respectful deference to it would have prevented so great an amount of mischief?

Why aim to lacerate the feelings of Dr. Pryor and his friends, by publishing distorted and partial statements of the evidence?

There is one apparent exception; they had the power to have gone further than they did, in the resolution of May 10th. It must be presumed that their action was then conscientious. How was it that they repented of this one only act, that had the aspect of consideration for the pastor, and sought, and finally did push the matter to its utmost extremity? Were they ashamed that there should be a single instance in which, two courses being open, they had not pursued the harsher?

Reflect on the striking fact, that in every stage, and they were many, the harsher course was invariably pursued, except in one, and in that one they retracted.

The inevitable inferences to be derived from these two analyses of the facts are worth far more than their strained arguments, in determining whether Granville Street Church acted with wisdom and tenderness in dealing with their late pastor.

In connection with this I will make a further remark, to which I beg the most serious consideration: No one who makes himself acquainted with the facts, can fail to perceive that there was a period when the Church,—its leaders, of course, I mean here,—did assume a position of hostility and antagonism to Dr. Pryor, and had sunk the character of judges in that of hostile litigants. From that period, any act done by them, in the character of judges, was unauthorized, inconsistent, and nugatory. That period had surely arrived at the Association last June; it had assuredly arrived during the negotiations for a Council. That it had arrived during the proceedings before the Council, no one then present can doubt. The fact to which I allude, is indisputably shewn in the records and acts of the Church. When, therefore, after the decision of the Council, the Church undertook to pass on Dr. Pryor's moral character and conduct, they were disqualified for the office they assumed, for two reasons:—

First—They had voluntarily abandoned the position of judges, and assumed that of litigants. Whether they had done so rightly or wrongly, was nothing to Dr. Pryor; they had done so; he had consented to meet them as litigants; and the issue was put in the hands of the Council. After that issue was decided they could not resume the characters of judges,—reason revolts from the idea; but

Secondly—The conflicts between them, while holding the relation of hostile litigants, had engendered feelings utterly opposed to the impartiality and calmness necessary for just judgment.

On this ground then, were there no other, the act of the Church, on the 24th day of September, in passing on the moral character and conduct of Dr. Pryor, was founded on the assumption of an office which they were not entitled to assume, and if they were so entitled, they yet were not in the condition of mind necessary for the performance of its functions.

I am told in the Reply, page 20, that I had scarcely touched the great question of guilt or innocence, and that I had made no effort to remove the great difficulty of the Church, by fairly dealing with the evidence.

Before the decision of the Council, by common understanding, the evidence taken on the charge of immorality, had been adjudged by the Church, not to sustain the imputation of guilt, and there was no occasion to discuss that charge again until the Council met. On the charge of fraud, I had given my reasons to the Church, why the errors in Dr. Pryor's accounts, and the evidence on that subject did not sustain the imputation of intentional wrong, and ought not to affect his moral character. My own belief in Dr. Pryor's innocence I did express in my letters, but I did not discuss the evidence, and for two principal reasons:—

First—My letter was written to justify my withdrawing from Granville Street Church; my reasons for impugning the conduct of the Church, were not dependent on the question of Dr. Pryor's guilt or innocence, and I did not intend to give them any pretence for evading my charges by raising any other issue.

Secondly—I considered, as I still consider, that the decision of the Council had closed the enquiry, and I did not intend to weaken the weight of that decision, by opening up a question which they had determined.

Throughout this Memorial I have made mention of many violations of Christian charity; but amid all the acts of malevolence done by Granville Street Church, their conduct toward Mrs. Pryor stands out with revolting prominence. After the cloud had burst upon the head of a husband whom, from the experience of forty years she loved and trusted, and while her own heart was rent with agony in her deep sympathy with him, no member of the Church approached her to sustain or console, save a few of the female members, who, however, speedily discontinued their visits with the exception of two, whose kindness warrants the title "sister;" a title profaned by the others.

The Reply, teeming as it does with statements concerning her husband most revolting to her feelings, was directed and sent to her by the act of the Church, and she was thus invited to read this disgusting compound of misrepresentation and malice, from which her soul could only turn with a loathing and abhorrence that may well be imagined by all whose hearts have not been trained to Christian charity in the school of Granville Street Church. There are Baptist wives who can enter into her feelings, and can understand this outrage perpetrated on a wife's loyalty and love to the cherished partner of life's joys and sorrows.

But the cup of insult was not yet filled to the measure required.

The following communication was made to her:—

Halifax, April 18, 1868.

MRS. E. M. PRYOR:

Madam,—I am directed by the Granville Street Baptist Church, Halifax, to forward you the enclosed resolution passed by them last evening.

Your obedient servant,

B. H. EATON, Clerk.

"The conduct and general spirit of Sister E. M. Pryor, in reference to the case of discipline of our late pastor having been considered by us, and her communications to us relative to the subject above mentioned having been read before us, and she having absented herself from the communion of the Church for a long time—

Resolved,—That we regret deeply the course Sister Pryor has taken, but regarding that course as unscriptural and disorderly, we now feel it our painful duty to withdraw fellowship from her, and we do hereby, accordingly, withdraw fellowship from her."

And who is "Mrs. E. M. Pryor," who is thus exposed to every obloquy which might attach to the highest exercise of power possible to Granville Street Church?

Let me answer. She is a woman who, for forty years, has devoted her life to works of piety and holy benevolence in the Baptist Church—one who has ever been a ministering spirit in the chambers of sorrow and sickness—whose path through life has been followed by the prayers of the poor and the mourner going up as orisons to Heaven. Characteristic was her remark to a friend on the occasion when, in violation of an engagement professed to be permanent, her husband's income was diminished by the unexpected demand of rent:—"I am sorry for it," said she, "for it is the poor who will suffer, all that we could spare from our income has been devoted to them." Witnesses from every place where she has been can testify to the truth of this portrayal. But to do her character full justice you must have the testimony of those who have known her day by day while suffering from the cruellest and bitterest trial to which woman's nature can be put; who have been with her, too, at the very moment when, by some inadvertence, there were brought to her notice those messages of falsehood and malice sent to the Baptists of Nova Scotia by Granville Street Church through the *Christian Messenger*.

Patient suffering of wrong and resigned submission to her Heavenly Father's will marked her every word and action. No vindictive

recrimination against the persecutors of her husband and herself ever escaped her lips. Among the hardest words were such as these:—"How can these men say such things about my husband, whose whole life has been spent in the service of God, and in works of usefulness and benevolence, who labored so faithfully among themselves? How can they persecute us so?"

In writing this, I speak what I have seen and heard. All who came within her sphere felt the influence of a deportment so heavenly, and some accustomed to put but little trust in religious profession, were constrained to exclaim—"This is religion."

When indeed she sought to separate herself from those with whom she could not hold any communion, she was called upon to speak more distinctly of their conduct, and the dignity of Granville Street Church was offended, yet her letter is no other than one which will claim the admiration and sympathy of every generous heart.

What then is her offence?

In the forefront is "the conduct and general spirit of Sister E. M. Pryor, in reference to the case of discipline of our late pastor." What conduct would they have had from her? She believed her husband to be innocent, and acted on that belief—yet calmly and modestly. Had she stood the only one who protested his innocence, she would not have perpetrated any high offence, and many many hearts would have sympathized in her true hearted faith, but she stood not alone. Eleven selected men had declared her husband not to be guilty of the crimes laid to his charge. True, Granville Street Church differed, and the wire drawn distinctions, and refined special pleading, by which they justified their dissent, found no place in her mind;—but neither had the Council seen them.

But further, she did not perversely obstruct their path—"We differ as regards your treatment of my husband beyond the hope of agreement, and while we differ on such a point, my communing with you would be but a profanation. I will withdraw, and leave you unembarrassed by my presence, while I seek a more congenial resting place"—such is the language of the facts and of her acts.

This surely is the course prompted by reason and religion. But the answer is:—"You shall not leave us:" and "Why may I not leave you? For what object should I remain?" is the natural rejoinder. "You must remain that we may turn you out." "And what is the advantage gained by turning me out?" "Much," replies the Church. "We will disgrace you as far as it lies in our power. We will shut you out of every other Baptist Church in the Association, and compel you to live without the ordinances, or seek them in another communion. It is Baptist practice."

If it be Baptist practice, I hesitate not to say that it is one which is "more honored in the breach than in the observance."

Here is a wife believing in the innocence of her husband, and confirmed in that belief by the solemn judgment of a competent tribunal after full investigation. Here is a Church trampling on that judgment and pursuing her husband with unsurpassable rancor. Every honest

mind, acquainted with the relations of a Baptist Church, feels that she cannot, in such circumstances, fulfil those relations with the Church that has thus acted. To do so she must put her tenderest and most sacred feelings to torture; she must act a falsehood in pretending, by her conduct, a fellowship that does not exist, and make a mockery of sacred things; or, she must submit to be disgraced, and sent abroad an outcast. Surely, such a doctrine cannot commend itself to reflecting minds. It can only tend to render contemptible the act of exclusion, for no one will be, or will feel to be disgraced under such circumstances.

I must notice the mistake into which I am said to have fallen, in reference to certain charges against the Church, presented to the Council, (see Reply, page 21,) because there was, apparently, a mistake in my Letter. In reality there was none, at least, according to my apprehension of the circumstances. I presented those charges as from myself, as a member of the Church, and supposed that it was so understood, as well by the Church as the Council. They were withdrawn at the desire of the Council, because, as I understood, they did not consider their functions to extend beyond the questions between Dr. Pryor and the Church. By some misapprehension, what I intended to do on my own behalf, was supposed to have been done for Dr. Pryor.

The Reply abounds with allusions to my observations that the decision of the Council was just and righteous, and with labored arguments to shew that the Council had acquitted the Church, and, therefore, I ought not to censure.

I have not been able to see the accuracy of the premises, or to comprehend the force of the argumentation. My remark on the decision was intended in reference to the acquittal of Dr. Pryor, but I have no objection to its being extended; and the decision speaks only of two points in the Church's conduct, and of both with disapproval.

Among much that I cannot comprehend, one thing is clear, Granville Street Church has profound respect for the judgment of the Council—provided, always, that it can be construed in their own favor; as a shield to protect themselves it is invulnerable; when thrown over Dr. Pryor it is worthless; but then it is a more sacred duty to shield Granville Street Church, from even the slightest imputation, than to save their late pastor from ruin in its most terrible forms.

X.—I have now to enquire into the nature of the relation that subsists, or ought to subsist between a Baptist Church and one or more of its members, who can conscientiously no longer continue in their connection either from change of opinion in doctrine, or from the belief that the Church or an influential portion of its members have violated fundamental principles of Christian conduct, under circumstances that destroy respect, confidence and affection.

There is required in Independent Churches a personal and individual fellowship and intimacy in Church relations between the different members. Were this wanting they would be brought into parity with systems from which, on that account, among others, they differ.

When circumstances arise which destroy community of feeling what is to be done? Common sense replies,—let the members withdraw. Is there any scriptural doctrine or precept to the contrary? If there is, that decides the question. I know of none. The connection cannot continue. In fact it is virtually terminated. There must be withdrawal or exclusion.

In one respect, the effect is the same,—the termination of the relation, but that is *all* that the sentence of exclusion *professes* to do; and it has the appearance of trifling for the Church to say, “we withdraw fellowship,” when the member can reply:—“There is no fellowship to withdraw from, seeing that I withdrew my fellowship from you some months ago, as I wrote to inform you.” It may be said that exclusion is a punishment. Strictly speaking this is a mistake. An Independent Church has no power to punish. It can neither fine, imprison, whip, or apply the thumb-screw. All that it can do is to separate an offending member from its communion, and this seems to imply that the member is in voluntary connection. As regards members who have withdrawn for adequate causes it carries no moral weight; and if they are in circumstances to be unaffected by it otherwise, it is *brutum fulmen*, and is treated with indifference or contempt. There may be circumstances in which it may affect an innocent man injuriously, and then it is unjust; and it is unjust and uncharitable, though in a less degree, in all cases where the members have withdrawn, and the sentence is not required for the purpose of separation, but is passed from a desire to degrade or annoy.

The entry into a Baptist Church is an act of conscience and will; so should be the remaining in it; and it is most repulsive to me to regard it as a prison in which members must be retained against their will;—retained practically they cannot be, but retained nominally, and for the sole purpose of insult and degradation.

When a member withdraws from change of religious opinions, as in Mr. Payzant's case, the act of exclusion is a glaring inconsistency with Baptist principles and practice. Who maintain more strictly than Baptists the freedom of conscience? and shall they hold Episcopalians, Wesleyans, Presbyterians to be free to leave their communion to join that of the Baptists, and preclude a Baptist from exercising like liberty should his conscience prompt him to change his views?

So as regards a wife who believes her husband to have been the victim of a cruel prosecution by the Church, and has withdrawn from a communion abhorrent to her best and holiest feelings, as is the case with Mrs. Pryor.

So as respecting members who saw their late pastor pursued with unchristian temper and implacable malice by the Church, and the law of truth trampled under foot in their attempts to justify their conduct; and in consequence broke off from their connection, as is the case with myself and others.

In any of these cases shall the power to withdraw be denied, when

the propriety of withdrawing is palpable; when to remain would be a desecration of the principles of Church fellowship, and a nominal union with all the elements of disunion?

It has been said, that there is a mode of separation by dismissing. This does not touch the principle; and the question is too important to be disposed of by a side wind. Does a member's freedom of conscience and will give him a right to withdraw when it is manifest that the bond of union has been dissolved? This is the question. But, in part, this objection concedes the principle, for the right to require a dismissal recognizes the right to separate from the Church with which the member is in connection, and, that right being admitted, it will be impossible, I believe, to maintain the principle that the Church, from which he so separates, has a right to regulate his action after he has left it. It has been said, I believe, that a Church has a right to see that its members do not go abroad into the world without the restraining influences of Church relationship. It must be remembered that a Baptist Church is not the Church; it is only *a* Church; and leaving it does not import the going into the region of heathenism, and heresy, and error, or even the leaving the services of a Baptist Church. The relations between the withdrawing member and his Church may be inconsistent with dismissal; besides it may not be convenient to join another Church; there may be none conveniently situated, or congenial; or other reasons may prevent the possibility or the desire to join another Baptist Church at that time. In the case of change of doctrinal opinions, and where the individual unites with another Denomination, dismissal is unsuited to the circumstances.

Another answer I understand has been that if the freedom of action here contended for were allowed, the Church might become depopulated. This shows but poor reliance on the power of truth, and is making a prison indeed of a Baptist Church.

Members of Granville Street Church moved by a sense of the great violation of Christian duty on the part of the Church in a matter so deeply affecting one who had but recently been their pastor, and who was connected with them by strong ties of relationship or friendship, and knowing that their bond of union with the Church had been irreparably sundered, formally withdrew from the fellowship of the Church, and gave notice in writing through the Clerk of having done so.

These acts of withdrawal were not recognized by the Church, and on the 18th day of April, resolutions for withdrawing fellowship from each of them were passed by the Church, this act was delayed for many months, and my son and myself have since been united with the Baptist church at Dartmouth.

The task I have had to perform has been a most distasteful and repulsive one. Pretentious rhetorical displays where the sense is not commensurate with the sound, false assumptions and inane conclusions, petty quirks, and the little artifices common to minds that mistake cunning for wisdom, and artifice for intellectual acumen, pervade this Reply, and offend taste and reason; but far worse than this is the utter disregard for truth, displayed in almost every page.

Throughout the Church records of Granville Street Church will be seen the same marks of the tortuous mind,—the same absence of simplicity of thought and feeling,—the same resort to puerile distinctions, overstrained argument and captious objections, that abound throughout the Reply; and nothing, anywhere, of the honesty, frankness, candor, and plain common sense, that should distinguish the utterance of a Church of Christ.

If it has been mortifying to be obliged to give my time and thought to such a production as the Reply, it has been distressing to be obliged to speak, as I have done, of a Church with which I have been connected since its formation, some forty years ago; in whose formation I bore no inconsiderable part, and in whose fellowship I had expected to pass the short remnant of my days.

I have the satisfaction to know that in all my connection with the Church I have never aimed at pre-eminence, or failed in marked deference to others; and throughout the unhappy transactions to which your attention has been called, it is a source of gratification that I acted with a strict regard to my duty as a member. My error was, in communicating too little with Dr. Pryor in the early stages, and in not detecting the necessity of using any influence I might possess, to counteract the banding of members into an unreasoning body, following their leaders; yet, I take consolation in the assurance, that had the counsel I gave, been regarded, much of the evil we deplore would have been averted.

It is for you to pronounce on the charges I have brought against Granville Street Church, and to determine the questions that arise out of those charges.

It is intimated, indeed, that it becomes not a single member to pronounce upon the conduct of the Church. What! Is the eye to be blind to acts of injustice and oppression; the ear deaf to falsehoods perpetrated before it; and seeing and hearing, is there to be no corresponding action? Are others to be serfs, that a few in Granville Street Church may play the despot? These pretensions suit neither Baptist principles nor Baptist feeling.

But I need not dwell upon these. Granville Street Church admits that "every member of the Baptist Churches comprising the Central Association, has pledged himself to refer the important matter of unchurching a Church, as far as the expression of the public opinion of the Church goes, to the Association," (Reply, page 33) and that is the question I refer to you. Had, indeed the Dartmouth Church been awed by the significant hint in the Reply, page 33, or swayed by its sophistry, I should have been shut out from this opportunity of addressing you, by the act of exclusion, which act, long deferred came not a great while before holding the Association.

I am not insensible to the influence which Granville Street Church will bring to bear on this enquiry, and the embarrassment which these influences may throw around the steps of many members. For the sake of the Denomination, and the cause of truth, I trust that the uprightness and intelligence of the Association will be equal to the

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duty which it is called upon to fulfil, and I have faith in that uprightness and intelligence. For myself I have personally little, or rather no interest in the result of this appeal; but I cannot forget that the prime of my life was spent amid labors and sacrifices in assisting in the elevation of the Denomination in connection with the fathers, under whose sanction, assistance, and encouragement, it was my pride and privilege to act; and remembering these things I may not be indifferent to the manner in which they, on whom the duty has descended in this later day, of maintaining the honor of the Denomination and the integrity of the Churches, shall fulfil that duty.

J. W. JOHNSTON.

POSTSCRIPT.

While the Memorial was passing through the press, an Extra of the Christian Messenger of the 3rd inst., came under my notice, containing a letter from the Rev. John Davis, one of the Council, dated April 8, 1868. It is satisfactory to me that all that is in the foregoing paper respecting the Church's rejection of the Council's decision was written as it now stands, before the appearance of the Extra. Did I desire to answer Mr. Davis' letter, I do not know that I could do so much more directly than is done in the remarks on the subject, written while ignorant of its existence.

When I wrote the postscript to my Letter to the Church, and my remarks in this Memorial, I believed that an honest and intelligent man could not in a solemn judgment intentionally write one thing while he meant something else. I did not believe he could write—"in my opinion Dr. Pryor is not guilty of immorality as charged," or—"I acquit him of dishonest and fraudulent intention," &c., unless those declarations truthfully expressed his honest belief. As little could I imagine that an honest man, having acquitted Dr. Pryor of dishonest and fraudulent intention, and having recommended the Church to reconsider the action on that charge, by which they had suspended him from fellowship, could have made that recommendation with any but one purpose,—that is, that the Church, accepting the judgment of acquittal, should rescind their sentence of condemnation. When, therefore, the *Christian Messenger* affirmed that there were members of the Council who gave a construction to the decision opposed to these self-evident truths, the necessary alternative was that either the statement was untrue, or, that members of the Council had acted as fools, or as knaves. I believed the former to be more likely. From Mr. Davis' letter, I understand that I was mistaken. I, therefore, apologize to Mr. Selden, for having believed that it was more likely that he should say what was untrue, than that the Rev. Mr. Davis, as one of the Councillors, should "befool" or "beknave" himself. It is, however, to be remarked, that the letter has not been produced, which, in November, 1867, Mr. Selden said he had received, and which was the occasion of my remarks. A letter written in April, 1868, by Mr. Davis, may be sufficient to place the Reverend gentleman in the category he seems emulous of occupying, but does not meet the case as between Mr. Selden and me.

Mr. Davis confuses things essentially different, and the venom, in his observations, is derived from that confusion. He confuses the charges of *immorality* and *fraud*, with the charges of *want of discretion* and *incompetency, etc.*

The latter have not been the subject of controversy since the decision of the Council. The acquittal of immorality and fraud took away from these their chief significance and weight; for want of discretion without immorality, and incompetency and negligence without fraudulent purpose, are errors so light when compared with those graver charges which affect moral character, that no complaint has been made against the condemnation of the Council, in relation to these. The acquittal claimed could only relate to immorality and fraud.

Again, under the same confusion of ideas, Mr. Davis has failed to notice that the Church did not refuse to rescind, on the ground of the want of discretion and incompetency, found by the Council. They acted on the presumption of guilt, on the higher charges of immorality and fraud, on one of which the Council had given their opinion that he was not guilty, and, on the other, had acquitted him.

Mr. Davis' letter draws from me statements which otherwise I should not make, because I have desired to confine myself throughout, as far as possible, to what I personally know, and also have desired that the Council's decision should rest on its own integrity and the authority of the body from which it emanated; and sad it is to see one of that body seeking to defile their and his solemn act.

Soon after the decision, I learnt from members of the Council, that almost immediately upon the Council proceeding to deliberate on their judgment, it was found that there was a unanimous opinion that Dr. Pryor was not guilty of the immorality alleged against him, which was the first charge brought up. The time occupied by the Council was employed in agreeing on the mode in which the imputation of want of discretion and negligence should be worded, and in deciding on the acts of the Church referred to in the decision, and the mode in which the opinion of the Church respecting them should be expressed. I also understood, that after the close of the meeting, in which the decision of the Council was announced, a number of the Councillors shook his hand and congratulated him. One in particular congratulated him with great cordiality, and after giving his congratulations, added:—"And believe me, Dr. Pryor, the Council in thus acquitting you have acted most conscientiously." I wonder if this could have been the Rev. John Davis. *Council*

It is a humiliating spectacle to see a minister volunteering his aid to crush a brother minister while struggling under a great trial, affecting interests of unspeakable magnitude to himself, his wife, his children, and his friends, especially when to do so he must derogate from his own character for intelligence, or integrity.

Before I conclude this postscript let me fulfil the grateful office of bringing before you the opinions and conduct of Baptists abroad; grateful, because it brings us into an atmosphere of charity and christian kindness, from which, in the consideration of this case, we have been so long banished.

Dr. Pryor having applied to his former Church at Cambridge for admission, they, while confiding in their former long and well-tried experience of him as their pastor, and while respecting the opinion of

the Halifax Council, yet, with that discretion which is consistent with charity, sought the opinion of experienced Baptist ministers on the whole case. A conference was in consequence held, at which ^{thirteen} ~~thirteen~~ *eleven* ministers attended, including some of the names most eminent in the Denomination, and also some of the strictest disciplinarians. Their Report I transcribe, and in addition to those who subscribed may be added the names of other Baptist ministers who were prevented from attending by unavoidable engagements; but who, having made themselves acquainted with the case, concurred in the sentiments of the Report. On this Report the Church at Cambridge felt at liberty to fulfil, what their knowledge of Dr. Pryor and their respect and affection for him prompted without any other sanction than their own judgment and feelings; and he was received into the Cambridge Church; of which he is now a member, in cordial union with the Church and his brother ministers.

The following is the Report:—

CAMBRIDGE, 28TH JANUARY, 1868.

The following Resolutions embody the sentiments of a conference of ministers, whose signatures are appended, in reference to a subject presented before them for their advice, by the Baptist Church in Old Cambridge.

BARON STOW, *Chairman*,
AUSTIN J. COOLIDGE, *Secretary*.

In view of all the facts now presented for our consideration, we, the undersigned, are clearly of opinion:—

1. That we have no occasion to go behind the decision of the Mutual Council which unanimously acquitted the Rev. Dr. Pryor of all criminality in act or intent, and thus put him before the public as a man unjustly censured by the Granville Street Baptist Church.
2. That the repudiation by the said Church of the finding of that Council, in flagrant violation of an implied promise to abide by its finding, together with their subsequent proceedings, manifestly unwarranted and vindictive, completely absolves all other Baptist Churches from obligation, to respect their disciplinary action in the case of Dr. Pryor, as valid on any grounds, either of courtesy, or denominational usage.
3. That should any regular Baptist Church receive Dr. Pryor into their fellowship, we could defend their action as every way righteous and honourable.

BARON STOW, D. D.
 ROLLIN H. NEALE, D. D., Pastor, 1st Church Boston.
 WILLIAM SAMSON, D. D., " Brookline Church.
 SUMNER R. MASON, D. D., " 1st Cambridge Church.
 DANIEL C. EDDY, D. D., " ————St. Baptist Church.
 G. W. GARDNER, D. D., " Charleston, 1st Church.
 W. HOWE, " Broadway Church, Cambridge.
 C. W. ANABLE, " Old Cambridge Church.
 W. V. GARNER, " Charles Street Church, Boston.
 W. H. S. VESTRICE, " Hyde Park Baptist Church.
 W. HAGY, D. D., " Swanant Avenue Church, Boston.
 W. STUBBS, " Watertown Church.
 J. N. BOND, Secretary for Missionary Society.

To these may be added the following, who were prevented from being present by the examinations at Newton Theological Institution.

A. HOVEY, D. D., Prof. Past. Theology, Newton Theo. Institute.
 O. STERNS, D. D., Pastor, Newton Baptist Church.
 J. C. WHITEMAN, " North Cambridge Baptist Church.

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