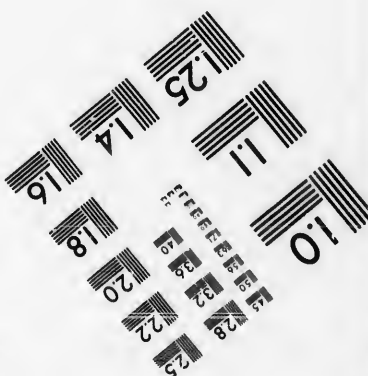
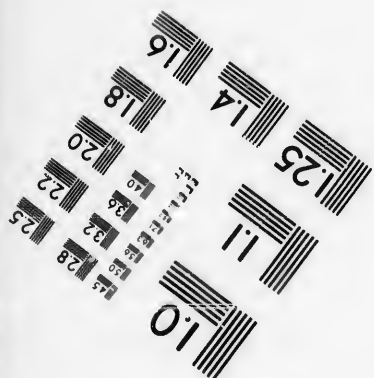
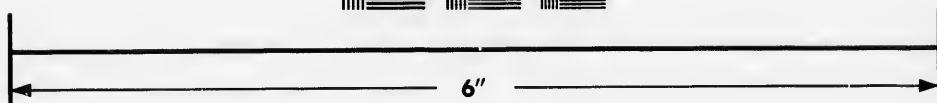
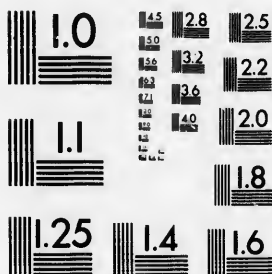


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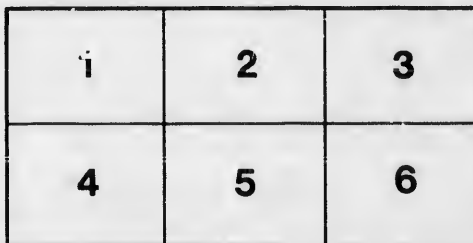
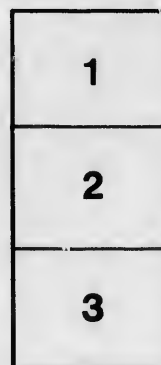
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A Letter, &c.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN AND FRIENDS—

The usage of your Church preventing a Pastor from being present at any of its Meetings for the transaction of business, has placed me in a considerable difficulty. Some things are needful to be said to a Church which cannot properly be stated from the pulpit; such are the contents of this letter. I might, it is true, leave these things unsaid, but that would neither be just to you, nor to my own reputation; I might have called a Public Meeting, which would probably have been the most popular, as it certainly would have been the most exciting step; but, on the whole, I have preferred the calm, deliberative mode of addressing you from the Press. You can review the whole affairs I have to discuss, while that portion of the public who may feel interested in our matters, may read it too. Baptists have nothing to conceal; publicity is their very life; in Religion there is sin where there is concealment.

In former days, and in other Countries, Pastors have had to address their people on the persecutions they have endured from the world. Such is not my case. During my twelve-month's residence among you, I have not met with a single act, word or look from any one connected with any class of Christians differing from ourselves, to give me a moment's pain. The Clergy, Legislators, Professional Gentlemen, Merchants, and all other classes in this City and Province, have manifested towards me and my family all possible courtesy and kindness. Persecution, so far as I know, is not to be found in any Denomination apart from our own.

Neither have I to complain of you, Christian Friends, as a body. Nine-tenths of your number, or even more, have continued to show me the same urbanity and cordial kindness, which marked your first intercourse with me. I do not blame the whole of you for the faults of a few, and protest against any remarks I may offer, as implicating the character of the Church

in Granville Street. My charges are only against a few persons—alas that they are so influential,—and that hitherto their acts have too often been regarded as the acts of the whole body.

Nor am I about, in this letter, to go into the scenes or the history of other days: I have neither the disposition, nor the opportunity for it. The Records of the Church in Granville Street, I have never seen. I have often requested to examine them, and that favour has been as often promised, but I have seen no other book than the one began in January last. Perhaps withholding the Records may be wise. It might have given me instruction, but certainly could have imparted no pleasure to have read the *full* account of the origin of the body—the details of the removal of its successive Pastors, almost without exception, against the wishes of the Church, or of the arrears of salary still due to at least one of them. I cannot doubt but that the contents and the omissions of the said Records would be equally instructive; some of you have told me quite sufficient to prevent my feeling any very deep regret on account of my loss. The things with which we have now to do are those of to-day; and to detail these matters, important certainly to us, I now, with candour, and, I trust, Christian feeling, proceed.

When attending the Baptist Triennial Convention, in Philadelphia, in April, 1844, an estimable Minister from New Brunswick told me somewhat of the importance of the position of the Baptist Church at Halifax, and the desirableness of its possessing a Pastor of standing and influence, and urged me much to consider its claims on myself. My reply to him was, that I had other arrangements in prospect, but that if the Baptists of Halifax thought proper to invite me, I might, perhaps, pay them a visit. Months rolled on, I heard no more of it, nor thought of it more. I was just about to settle down in New York, when I received a letter from the Rev. James N. Granger, M. A., Pastor of the Church at Providence, R. I., founded by the immortal Roger Williams. The following are extracts, printed, like all other documents, from the original:—

Providence, Oct. 4th 1844.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—

I have been constrained to make some enquiries concerning your present plans for labour among us.

One of my Church Members, (the Revd. Mr. Douglass, Domestic Missionary for this City,) has recently received an unanimous invitation to become the Pastor of the Baptist Church, in

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Halifax, Nova-Scotia. After a good deal of hesitation he felt it his duty to decline, and to continue his labours in the less conspicuous, but not less Christian field, in which he has hitherto been employed. He has to-day received a letter from the Revd. Dr. Crawley, lately Pastor of the Church, and now President of Acadia College, urging him to reconsider his determination, setting forth the great destitution of Ministers in the Province, the great importance of the post, and the fearful consequences to the Church, and the denomination there, which he fears will follow if Mr. Douglass persists in his determination to remain in the States.

Mr. D. is of course exceedingly pained at this representation, and, while he still regards the claims upon him here as imperative, is more than ever desirous of doing all in his power, to provide them soon with a minister. He called on me to-day, and showed me Dr. Crawley's last letter. It occurred to me, that you might be willing to visit them. I have no doubt from what I know of the people, that if you would go there in the next steamer, with letters of introduction from Mr. Douglass and Rev. Drs. Wayland and Caswell, you would be cordially received and your visit result in their desiring your residence among them.

* * * * *

Pardon me for intruding upon you with this business. The rising interests of the Baptist Church in Nova-Scotia, awaken my concern and gratitude, and lead me to desire to see an able man in the Capital.

May I hear from you at some future day?

Very respectfully,

Rev. Dr. Belcher.

JAMES N. GRANGER.

My first impression was decidedly against a visit to Halifax.—The invitation did not come from the Church, and I considered that if I went I might properly be regarded as an intruder—unsent for. My ministering brethren in New York, told me that in America it was very common for ministers to introduce themselves to Churches; and thought, though they kindly wished me to remain in New-York, that I must lay aside a portion of my English delicacy in such matters. At length I consented to visit Providence and see the ministers there on the subject. The Rev. I. E. Bill, who happened to be in New York, at the time, exceedingly urged my proceeding to Halifax; and on the 18th Oct. of last year, I arrived with private letters to leading members of the Church here from the Rev. Dr. Caswell, the Rev. I. E. Bill and the Rev. Mr. Douglass. I was received with the utmost cordial-

ity ; my coming seemed to be regarded like the visit of an angel ; and all considered it as a striking answer to the prayers they had offered for a Pastor.

I must be pardoned, Christian friends, if I ask you now to read some " Testimonials." I hope I am not presenting them to you from any feeling of vain glory. They were, in each case, given without solicitation, and indicate, in my humble judgment, the confidence my honoured brethren in England and the United States reposed in me. I would not have intruded them on your attention now, but that I have been told by a Reverend Brother in my own Study, that I never could co-operate with my Brethren in England, or in the States, and therefore was compelled to come to Nova-Scotia ; while another Reverend Brother in the Country is reported to have described me as a " despicable creature, utterly unfit for Christian fellowship."

The first document I shall lay before you is the dismissal of myself and Mrs. B. from the 2nd Church at Greenwich.

To any baptized Church of Jesus Christ meeting in the United States of North America, or elsewhere, the Church of Christ meeting in Bunyan Chapel School and Lecture Room, Greenwich, England, sendeth Christian salutation.

DEAR BRETHREN,—

This is not the first time we have been called to lessen our numbers by dismissing dear friends to churches in your happy land, but we have never done it with feelings so painfully oppressive as now.

Our beloved friend, the Rev. Joseph Belcher, D. D., has, after a faithful, affectionate, and disinterested discharge of the pastorate among us, from the commencement of our church in April, 1838, resigned his pastoral charge, and has requested with his beloved wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Belcher, a dismissal from our communion. With unfeigned grief we accede to the request.—Our heavenly Father calls to the duty, and we therefore obey. May the step conduce to the glory of God, and the comfort of our friends.

We rejoice that our beloved brother needs not " letters of commendation from us." His standing in our denomination is known to not a few of the most eminent brethren of your country, nor is our sister less entitled to our Christian esteem ; and we need therefore only say that no event connected with this separation lessens the confidence we have ever reposed in our valued friends. Long may they live among you to enjoy and to diffuse many blessings.

Believe us to be, dear Christian friends in the bonds of faith and love.

Yours most cordially,

Signed on behalf of the
whole church, by order
of the church meeting,
September 11, 1843.

JOHN KINGSFORD,
Chairman.

THOMAS TURPIE,
Deacon.

And 12 members.

Perhaps it would be unnecessary to trouble you with the resolutions of the church on the same evening on my resignation of the pastoral office; they were of the same general character, but at this moment I have mislaid them. I will endeavour to recover them, and they shall then be at your service.

The next document to which I must ask your perusal is the one signed by the Rev. Drs. Murch and Steane, and the Rev. J. H. Hinton, A. M., Secretaries of the Baptist Union, a body which comprises nearly one thousand of the Baptist churches in England. I print it from the original; its publication by the Union, may be found, with my answer, in the Annual Report of that Body for 1844, pp. 34, 35.

London, October 12, 1843.

The Committee of the Baptist Union having been informed of the intention of their esteemed brother, Joseph Belcher, to proceed with his family to the United States, they take the occasion of expressing, with much pleasure, their conviction of the unblemished character with which, both as a christian and a minister, he quits his native land—their cordial estimation of him as a friend and fellow labourer in the gospel—and their high sense of the valuable service he has rendered to the Baptist denomination in England. They further desire to recommend him to the frank reception and cordial regard of their fellow Christians generally on the other side of the Atlantic.

Signed by direction of the Committee,

W. H. MURCH,
EDWARD STEANE, } Secretaries.
J. H. HINTON, }

The following was furnished to me, like all the others, without solicitation, from the ancient society it describes, composed of 50 Baptist ministers, forming one portion of the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations, well known as the only society of English Dissenters who have right of access to the throne.

*The Board of Particular Baptist Ministers residing in and near
the Cities of London and Westminster, to the Baptist Ministers
of the United States of America.*

DEAR BRETHREN—

We are informed that our Brother, the Reverend Joseph Beicher, on whom one of your Universities has recently conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity, intends shortly to leave this Country, and seek a residence among you. We cannot allow him to depart, without commending him cordially to your fraternal regard. During the last twelve years he has been a Member of this Board; and by his regular attention to public business, especially to the statistics of our Denomination, to which he has devoted much time and labour, he has rendered valuable services, which we gladly acknowledge. It is our earnest prayer, that the blessing of God, our Father, may rest upon him and his household, direct his future movements, and make him eminently useful among the Churches of your land.

We doubt not that you will receive him kindly, as a servant of Jesus Christ our Lord,—both yours and ours.

Signed on behalf of the Board and by its direction,

JOHN KINGSFORD, * *Chairman.*

WILLIAM GROSER, *Secretary.*

London, October 31, 1843.

The following will speak for itself :—

London, Nov. 17th, 1843.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

The Baptist Irish Committee on being informed the other evening of your intention to leave this Country for America, resolved, that in their name I, as their Secretary, should give you this expression of their most cordial esteem. They have acted with you with great pleasure. Many of them have known you intimately for many years. I, as you are aware have so known you for more than twenty years; and we all unite in expressing the fullest confidence in your Christian integrity—and in

* By way of explanation of the name of this venerable Minister occurring both here and as Chairman of the Church Meeting at Greenwich, it may be remarked, that in the latter instance, he was invited to preside at a Meeting, to the Church of deep and solemn interest, as being the Pastor of the nearest Church "of the same faith and order;" and he presided at the Meeting of the Board in pursuance of a standing rule, that at the ordinary Meetings the senior Minister present shall occupy the Chair. He is the oldest Member of the Board, having united with it in 1802.

the likelihood of your being extensively useful in the land to which you go. May God's mercy guide your way, appoint the bounds of your habitation, and eminently bless you in whatever department of Christian usefulness may occupy your hands and your heart.

I will only add, I write this officially, but with my entire personal concurrence, and in order that it may serve you in any way in which such a testimony can be useful. Show it where and when you please.

I am,
My Dear Brother,
Very truly yours,
SAMUEL GREEN.

REV. JOSEPH BELCHER, D. D.

The Committee of the Baptist Home Missionary Society also furnished a like Testimonial, but as it was addressed to the Board of its kindred Institution in New York, it is not now in my possession.

I may add to these Testimonials, the facts that for twelve out of the thirteen years I resided in London, I was annually elected a member of the Committee of the Society to which I have just referred; that for eleven successive years I was elected Secretary of the Baptist Union from which I at last retired as my own act with the unanimous and cordial thanks of that Body for the services I had rendered; that for seven years I served on the Committee of the Baptist Irish Society, and that of all these Committees, together with those of the Baptist Union, and the three Denominations, I was a member when I left England, as I was also from its commencement on the Direction of the British and Foreign Seamen's Society. I hope I have proved that I *could* work with my Brethren in England.

And could I work with them in the United States? Be it remembered, that I did not *settle* there, being in the States only a few months. Yet was I invited as the result of the Testimonial alluded to above, to a seat at the Board of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in New York as also at the Board of the American and Foreign Bible Society, of both which invitations I availed myself more than once. One of the largest and wealthiest Churches in that City sent me as a delegate to represent them at the Triennial Convention at Philadelphia; and the Hudson River Association, the largest Body of the kind in the United States, comprising about 12,000 members, appointed me in 1844,

as one of their Delegates to the Annual Meetings of the Home Mission, and the American and Foreign Bible Societies in Providence in April last, which delegation for obvious reasons, I could not fulfil. I hope that these with similar facts, such as an invitation to the Pastorate of one of their Churches before I visited Halifax, and an invitation to fill an important office in one of their Great Denominational Institutions after that event, will prove that I really could work with my Brethren in the States. If doubt may yet exist, it may perhaps be removed by the following document from the Rev. Dr. Wayland, the well known President of Brown University.

"It gives me great pleasure by this note to introduce to my friends in Halifax and elsewhere my friend the Rev. Dr. Belcher. I had the happiness to form the acquaintance of Dr. B., in London, some years since, where I found him intimately associated with our best brethren in the Dissenting Ministry, and highly esteemed by them. Among his friends are numbered the Rev. Drs. Harris, Cox, Hoby, Styles, and others whose praise is in all the churches. I have had the pleasure of still further acquaintance with Dr. B. since his residence in this country, and I cheerfully testify to the high opinion I have formed of his intelligence, amiable character, and moral worth.

F. WAYLAND."

Brown University, Oct. 15, 1845.

These documents were, by the church in Granville Street, deemed satisfactory, and I shortly afterwards received the following communication:—

"At a meeting of the members of the Granville Street Church in Halifax, on Friday, the 1st November, 1844,

It was resolved That the Deacons and Committee of the Church be directed to express to the Rev. Dr. Belcher the high sense the church entertains of his kindness and consideration, in undertaking a long and inconvenient journey at so late a period of the year to supply their wants, and that they offer him the cordial thanks of the church for this instance of his Christian regard for their welfare.

Resolved unanimously, That the Deacons and Committee of the church be directed to confer with Dr. Belcher, and ascertain from him whether it will be in accordance with his wishes to take upon him the Pastoral charge of this church for one year, or such other time as may be mutually agreeable, and in that case to agree upon such salary as may be competent to his support, and within the means of the church to afford.

The brethren who waited on me with this communication will recollect that in answer to it, while I stated that I could not but be gratified with the confidence thus reposed in me, yet I was by no means inclined to incur the very heavy expense of removing a large family from New York, and furnishing a house, with the prospect of perhaps not more than a year's residence; I proposed that we should go on as we were proceeding for a few weeks, or a month or two, and that if at the end of that period they were prepared to invite me to settle with them, with an understanding that should anything hereafter make a separation desirable, a few months notice might dissolve the connection. With the idea of my permanent settlement all appeared to be delighted. They were satisfied—more than satisfied, and apparently waited with difficulty even for a few days, when the Committee who had been some months before appointed to obtain a pastor waited on me with the following documents. :—

Halifax, 14th November, 1844.

DEAR SIR—

In the name, and on the behalf of the Granville Street Baptist Church, at Halifax, we are directed to request that you will accept the oversight of their Church, as their Pastor, and to beg that you would, as soon as convenient, favour them with an answer to such request.

The Stipend which the Church feel themselves enabled to offer their Pastor, is £250, Currency; and, in case of your acceptance of the Pastorship, they are desirous that it should commence from the beginning of the present month.

We enclose a copy of the Resolution unanimously passed by the Church at their Meeting on Monday evening last, and are,

Dear Sir,

With much respect, and

Christian affection,

Very sincerely yours,

J. W. NUTTING, *Deacon*,

EDWD. G. W. GREENWOOD, *Deacon*,

JAMES C. HUME, M. D.

J. W. JOHNSTON, *Deacon*,

JAMES COPPIN, *Deacon*,

JNO. WHITMAN,

DAVID MCPHERSON.

COMMITTEE.

TO THE REV. DR. BELCHER.

At a Meeting of the Granville Street Church on Monday evening, the 11th November, 1844.

It was unanimously Resolved, That the Rev. Joseph Belcher, D. D. be invited to accept the Pastoral charge of this Church, with the proviso suggested by Dr. Belcher, that in case of either party hereafter wishing to dissolve the connection, three or six months notice to that effect be given, and that the Deacons and Committée communicate to Dr. Belcher, the Resolution of the Church.

(A true copy of the original,)

J. W. NUTTING, *Deacon.*

Whatever view may be taken of this subject, my dear friends, by some, the whole world will believe that you were in earnest, and will hardly know what to think of the deacon, who thus came to me with these documents, containing his own signature, who now solemnly assures me that he voted against the call, stating that the salary could not be raised. The difficulty, however, is partially removed when he states that the pecuniary engagements between a church and its pastor are not binding as those between one tradesman and another! Alas for me, I believed the written and the *viva voce* statements of these gentlemen. I really thought, from the indications all around me, that the hand of God was in the matter; and as all were very urgent for a reply, I read from the pulpit as follows:—

Halifax, N. S., Nov. 16, 1844.

To the Baptist church meeting in Granville Street, Halifax.

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—

Your cordial and unanimous resolution, adopted on the 11th instant, inviting me to the pastoral office over you, has been conveyed to me by the hands of the beloved brethren who compose your Committee. It has awakened feelings of deep interest, and I trust fervent prayer. Such an engagement, solemn in its character, and followed by results reaching through all time, and connecting themselves even with eternity, may well excite emotions which cannot be described to any, and can only be felt by few.

Permit me, dear brethren and sisters, to congratulate you on the unanimity which has marked your conduct, and on the spirit of Christian piety and activity which I hope is reviving among you. To a request given under such circumstances, to which I humbly trust you have been led, in answer to fervent prayer, by the Great Head of the Church, I cannot give a refusal. Whatever I may possess of talent, of labour, and of religion, is willingly and

cordially placed at your service. Would that the offering were more worthy! May the gracious Master we serve accept the dedication!

In accepting your kind invitation, I rely on your cordial co-operation, your continued prayers, your christian sympathy; and I feel assured that I shall not be disappointed. May our union tend to the glory of Him who died for our redemption,—the welfare of all who compose the church and congregation and their families; and the highest interests of the inhabitants of the city in which we dwell.

I am, dear friends, yours in the bonds of Christian affection,
JOSEPH BELCHER.

Here then was apparently a settlement of a Pastor with a people on which the eye of a Christian might rest with complacency. The congregation increased—the Church was enlarged—money, I was assured, came in more freely than at any former time, and things seemed to promise continued happiness and increasing prosperity.

There were, however, I was fully aware, two sources from which danger might arise. It was on all hands admitted that the Denomination, both in the City and in the Province, had too much mingled itself with party politics; you yourselves were divided on these points:—my views entirely accorded with my wishes, and I resolved to maintain an entire *neutrality* on all such topics. This harmonized, as I understood, with the desire of all, though I always had some fears about the heartiness of a few in the arrangement. *I have kept my pledge, and have never expressed an opinion on any party question of a political character.*

The other difficulty which I saw might arise was connected with the fact that an opinion prevailed—whether well-founded or not I did not know, that the whole affairs of the Church had been managed by a very few persons, and that many were on that account greatly dissatisfied. I was again and again assured by the leading persons in the Church that happiness and success depended, under God, on my acting in the Church entirely independently of all the influence possessed by them.—I saw the difficulty here, but resolved, as far as I might be able, fearlessly but affectionately to declare, and as far as possible to do right. In my utter inability to cope with these two difficulties—an inability which would be the lot of every man under Heaven—has arisen our present trials. Let us see how they have wrought.

In the month of April arrived from England a Rev. gentleman

who had been to solicit the aid of the Baptists in that Country on behalf of Acadia College. That aid they had generously rendered ; but some how or other he was not very comfortable in his visit. The pulpits were not thrown open to him so generally as he expected ; the politics of the Body there did not accord with his own ; the modes of transacting business in their public Societies did not resemble the Association of Nova Scotia. He came back disliking England and Englishmen. He has never stated to the public, either at the Annual Meeting or from the Press, any of the particulars of his visit. I am told, however, that every thing the Ministers hear of England "disgusts" them, and that they are sure that every thing they do is superior to any thing that can be done by Englishmen. This may be very true ; one only wonders how, under such circumstances, they can consent to take money from England.

The time came on for the Association to hold its Annual Meeting. On my way to it, I was told by the Rev. gentleman, to whom I have just referred, then and still the Moderator of the Body, that I could not have, nor ought to have an opinion about any thing ; and it was impossible that having resided in the Province, but some eight or nine months, I could know anything about the Denomination. I ventured to differ from this view of the matter, and intimated that I was not thus to be put down.—By the assembled Brethren I was received with the utmost cordiality—invited to preach, placed on no less than seven Committees for the transaction of present business, though never at the instance of the moderator or officers—and in every case when a proposal originating with me was put to the vote it was carried. It is true that my two favourite objects have since been both defeated. The one was the Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths. The facts connected with the origin of this measure were not all known, nor the high patronage it had met with ;—and so after the measure had passed, Mr. Moderator said "it would not work." An officer of the Association declares in the *Christian Messenger* of July 25, that it "did not (I have reason to believe, although no objection was made to it in passing) receive the most perfect approbation, on account of some difficulty apprehended in its practical details ;" and the parties who conducted the printing of the Minutes have settled the whole affair. They give the resolutions correctly, but omit the "forms" said to be "hereunto annexed." The other measure in which I felt great interest was the circulation "of the best productions of the venerated fathers and founders of the Baptist Churches in the father-land ;" the Association appointed me to collect subscriptions for this

purpose—but when I received a letter from the Rev. Dr. Davies of London, stating that two volumes were in the Press, one of them consisting of “Early Tracts and Documents on Religious Liberty,” and the other “The Ancient Church Book of Broadmead,” and sent the letter to the Editors of the *Christian Messenger*, requesting them to give some account of the matter in their paper, the letter was kept for several weeks, and then returned with an intimation that they could do nothing with it.

It will very naturally be asked why all this counterworking of plans which had been approved by the body. My friends said that jealousy was felt in certain quarters; I suspect myself that two or three matters in which I had the very great unhappiness to differ from some leading brethren were not without their influence. In the Association I had the misfortune to think, with some others, that a separation into two or more parts might be shortly desirable, and I confess that in no very measured terms I denounced the writer of an article in the *Messenger*, who applies language like this to a proposal which had been recommended by several of the churches, and sanctioned by some of the oldest and most excellent men of the body:—“The Nova Scotia Baptist Association has, if I mistake not, become too rigid and fixed in its character as one, to be made two on any other principle than that of slaughter. Advocates of division have started too late. Sheer violence must dissever now; and suppose all other considerations aside, and all preliminaries fixed, what Goth is going to strike the blow of dissection? Where shall it aim? Where is to be the slaughter house? Are our friends in Amherst willing for it to be there? Who can stand and look on unmoved at such a spectacle? It is well enough to talk about feelings, rather than judgment as dictating the conservation of our integrity as a body, but I ask again, who is the bold and coolly skillful operator to concert, to propose, to execute, in all its entirety, the act of violence which shall sever at a blow the Nova Scotia Association?”—*Christian Messenger*, June 27, p. 204. I confess that I could not approve of this language, even though it might proceed from a learned professor of a college. Without any pretensions to the gift of prophecy I ventured to predict that the association will fall by its own weight within seven years. No association of a hundred churches, in the whole history of the denomination, ever existed many years.

I had the misfortune too, to object, when it was proposed that in future anniversaries of the body one meeting should be held of “the ministers alone.” I was convinced that such a meeting would lead to jealousies; and all my reading of ecclesiastical his-

tory shews me that such assemblies have never been held without evils arising from them, and therefore have our fathers and brethren always been opposed thereto.

Nor was this all. In the meeting of the Foreign Missionary Society, I did object to the interference of the Committee in the choice of a missionary's wife. I thought that each man likely to be employed in such an office must be competent to such a duty for himself. If I am wrong in this view, I am not alone; for I can find in no report of any Missionary Society in the world a passage at all resembling the one which appears in the present year's "Report of the Committee of the Nova Scotia Baptist Foreign Missionary Society."

On yet another point was I somewhat determined in my opinions. My English views and feelings made me aware of the importance of exact and full accounts of the receipts and expenditures of Public Money. I did urge in the Domestic Missionary Meeting, the importance of a full report of the transactions of the Committee—detailing the labours of its Agents—giving full particulars, where and from whom each and every pound of its income was derived, and in what way it had been spent. I know that, in all Countries, there is very properly great sensitiveness in the public mind on this subject; and I feel it very important that the utmost transparency should be shewn in auditing and publishing all such accounts. No allegation of the want of funds to do this, will satisfy the public. The only way to obtain ample funds is to publish whence they came, and to show how properly and usefully they have been spent.

But I fear that I committed even a greater sin than any of these. I was requested to speak at the annual meeting of the Education Society. I did so, and took the opportunity of ridiculing both the principle and the amount of the Government grant to the College. I wished that the Government would at once and forever withdraw all such grants, and leave Education and Religion both alone. I thought it degrading, that a body of Christians like the Nova Scotia Baptists, consisting of nearly a hundred Churches, and more than nine thousand Members, should accept the paltry sum of £250, currency per annum, from the State, thus recognizing the principle of an Establishment; and could only justify them in taking it on the ground of insisting on perfect equality among all classes; which, however, we have not, as one of the Colleges has very much more than we receive. Nothing was said to me on the subject, but the speeches are described in the "Minutes" as "*for the most part of a highly animated and gratifying character;*" and though I paid a sub-

scription of 20s. in June, which was duly acknowledged in the *Christian Messenger* of June 27, I have not the honor of a place in the list of Members published in August. I rejoice in the interest taken by the Baptists of this Province in Education; but regret the shackles they have placed on their own efforts. Acadia College is the only Baptist institution in the world which has a portion of its governors appointed by the state. It is quite right that Government should take care of the expenditure of the sums voted by it; but alas, for the Baptists who are thus linked in with the State! How much wiser our brethren in Calcutta a few years since, who when asked by the Governor General of India what Government could do to aid them, nobly replied, "My Lord, we only ask to be let alone!"

I very deeply regret these differences from my honored brethren, but I make no apology for them; for English Baptists cannot help thinking for themselves. Baily, one of their enemies, described them two centuries ago, "as a people very fond of religious liberty, and very unwilling to be brought under the bondage of the judgment of any other." I confess to being numbered with those who rejoice in such a character, and claim for myself a right to differ from others, while I freely concede to them, in all such things, a full and free right to differ from me.

Perhaps the statement I have now made will account, whether satisfactorily or not I will not say, for a variety of matters which have indicated the displeasure of my Brethren who take the lead in the affairs of the Denomination. They do not yet know me; and a longer acquaintance may possibly bring us nearer together. I wish well to every Baptist Institution in the Province, and only ask that they shall be conducted on the great principles of the Denomination to which they belong. Let me now dismiss public business, and return to Granville Street.

Notwithstanding all this abroad, I hoped yet to be happy with my own people; the prospect, however, soon began to be clouded. It was felt exceedingly important to build a vestry and school room. The proposal was popular, one of the brethren was appointed to enquire after some land adjoining the chapel, and I hoped to accomplish the undertaking without adding to the previously existing debt upon the chapel. In the mean time, communications were constantly being printed in the local newspapers relating to the trusteeship of the building;—calling upon me to discountenance the political preaching of my brethren,—and complaining of collections being made for public objects, and not being paid to the parties appointed to receive them. Some of these papers I imagined to proceed from party political motives,

and where blame really attached, I was willing to attribute it rather to the want of consideration than of intention to do wrong. You are witnesses that I never replied to them. Their tendency to injure us, however, could not be disputed; and so much the more as no other religious denomination, so far as my information extends, is ever thus attacked by the public press.

The time however, now came when I could no longer be deaf. Whenever I spoke of money, I was told the Chapel was private property, and that no subscriptions would be forthcoming till it was secured to the Church and congregation meeting in it. I enquired about the matter, and at length ascertained that the place, *in equity*, would be ruled to belong to the Baptist Denomination, *but not a word of its being secured to the Church and congregation meeting therein*. In a word, I learnt that the Trustees might again do what they did some years since—dismiss the congregation and Church meeting in the place, and obtain another Minister, and raise another congregation. I could not but sympathize with the mass of the people, and I said to a leading gentleman, whose quiet influence is almost proverbially great, “the Chapel, really, must be put in trust for the Church and congregation.” His mild and courteous reply, uttered with emphasis, was, “Dr., you take your salary as long as you can get it.” No one who knows that gentleman could mistake this. Nothing more has been done about building a Vestry and School Room.

But, alas, another calamity was pending. One of my sons who had in England learnt the profession of a Printer, and who had also been encouraged by the Church to which he belonged to engage in the Ministry, had been residing with me from the time my family arrived in this City. He had often preached among you with acceptance, and promises were made to him of influence being exerted to secure the Pastorate of some one of the destitute Churches in the province. Months, however, elapsed, and he was at length told this could not be done. He resolved on turning his attention again to his profession. He was offered an engagement in the office of a newspaper which it seems is of what are called liberal sentiments, or of views opposed to those of the trustees of the Granville Street Church. *With the arrangement I had nothing to do—I was not consulted—and if I had been, I could have given no opinion which would not have offended one party or the other. I was silent, and he accepted the proposal.* One would have supposed that no third party had anything to do with such an affair, and certainly no reasonable man would have expected that I should have been called to suffer from it. But the gentleman to whom I just now referred, told

me that "such an engagement would cut James off from the denomination, and would injure me"; another of the trustees said that "he would not contribute £— a year to Dr. Belcher's support if his son was to be employed by the opposing political party"—a third of these gentlemen wrote on the very day the engagement was publicly announced, and intimated to a gentleman in London that my pastoral engagement would shortly close; while the lady who seems to regard it as her duty to make the first announcement of a pastor's removal to him, came to me with the comfortable assurance that "I was ruined."

Will it be said that I must be mistaken, and that such things could not be true? Such a supposition must in some quarters be cherished, for who among you is not constantly hearing that there are no politics ever referred to in the church, or at all connected with it? But further evidence, if needed, is quite at hand. At the time of which I am now speaking the Rev. Dr. Maclay was in this city, collecting for the American and Foreign Bible Society. He mingled especially with the trustees and their immediate connexions, and certainly learnt from them far more of politics and parties than I knew from all my residence here. On his departure, he wrote me three very long letters, filled with the political history and a sketch of the political parties of the province; his object being to induce me to exert my authority to withdraw my son from the aforesaid obnoxious situation. I will in this case only give you short extracts, the whole letters may be seen by any one who may desire it. From Truro, August 13, he writes, "However much the people of your charge may love you, and however much they are pleased with your preaching, yet I am persuaded your residence in Halifax will not be permanent, if your son, who is a member of the church, and a minister of the Gospel, shall continue one of the editors of a paper whose aim" &c. &c.—Again on the next day he writes from Pictou in the same strain, telling me—"I believe the church esteems and loves you, and desires to make you and your family happy; but the step that James has taken has given much pain to your very best friends; they feel much more than they express on the subject; and if you choose to consult them you will find it to be so;"—"impute the freedom I have used on this subject to the earnest desire I feel that nothing may occur to destroy the union which has taken place between yourself and the church in Halifax."—Can it still be denied that my removal was then decided on, unless I conformed to their wishes? and suppose I had done so, another party, perhaps even more numerous, would have been offended; at all events, —and that is the most important,—I should have violated my solemn pledge of political neutrality.

Of course my removal could not be brought before the church *on this ground*; and some other method must be had recourse to. Not a word was said to me more than the reader has been told; not a Deacon opened his lips to tell me of any feeling existing on the subject but on the 26th of August a meeting of the brethren for business was held; this meeting, according to your constant usage, as am informed, I was not allowed to attend; long pecuniary statements were given—an utterly fruitless attempt was made by the chairman to find fault with my ministry;—the insolvency of the church seemed for the moment to be made very clear; and at length, by general consent, the deacons were to inform me that they feared they could not long continue to fulfil their pecuniary engagement. So ended a meeting, as I am informed, of three hour's duration.

On the following day, three of the deacons waited on me with the message just referred to. I asked them, if I was to regard the message as a notice to remove. Mr. Nutting, who conducted the conference on the part of his brethren, replied that they wished me to take the next step. My reply was that I should take no step till they favoured me with the communication in writing.—This was promised. Mr. N. farther stated, in reply to questions I asked him, that the congregation had very largely increased, and that the income had been £40 more during the time I had occupied the pulpit than in any previous year. I asked if the pecuniary difficulty was the only one, and he gently intimated some “want of adaptation in the ministry,” and when pressed if these were all the difficulties, he promptly replied “yes.” I then told him of the letters I had received from Dr. Maclay, and charged the whole affair with being a political movement. His reply was I was quite mistaken; however, they came with a message from the church, and he should decline entering into other matters; admitting, however, that he had conversed with Dr. Maclay, *who had promised to talk with me*. The other deacons, I believe very truly, at least one of them, utterly repudiated any political feeling on the subject.

The plea of *poverty* is no very uncommon thing among us; and a cursory view of matters might seem to confirm the representation. It is certainly true that not a few debts are owing to various parties; it is equally true that £25 voted many months ago for my expenses in first visiting Halifax twelve months since, cannot be paid, because “there is no money in hand,” and the £40 it cost me to remove my family from New York to this city, though such expenses are usually paid in England and the States, by the churches, have not yet been thought of; it is certain that

our Sunday School, though it has had no collection for almost two years, and is burdened with debt, asks in vain for help; but still, there is no very great poverty. It is not to be discovered in the houses, the entertainments, no, nor in the contributions of our friends. Let an object be brought forward before the people, and who refuses aid? Take the last few months as a specimen. In April, nearly £24 was collected for the Foreign Mission; in June, more than £12 for the Home Mission; in August £60 for the Bible cause; and now in October another Sabbath's collections, and other contributions, which I am told are intended to make up £20, are being collected for the Home Mission. Besides these there have been a variety of smaller collections, generally for distant objects; and pledges have been cheerfully given for handsome sums to other Institutions, which have shortly to be met. Who will say that the congregation is either very poor or illiberal? But more than all this, it was officially declared to me under date of November 14, 1844, "the stipend which the Church feel themselves enabled to offer their Pastor is £250 currency," and every one knows that the property connected with the Church is largely increased since that date, by the accession of nearly thirty members, some of whom have been blessed, in the good providence of God, with a competency which raises them far above poverty. Away with all such pretences, inconsistent alike with truth, and with honour. The great thing—the only thing here wanted is a systematic collection and apportionment of funds; but though more than one of your number have again and again submitted such plans, it has been utterly without avail. Here, and here only is the source of all your pecuniary difficulties. The people have been fully able, entirely willing, nay, *anxiously desirous* to contribute all that might be needed for the support of every interest connected with the place, but they have not had a fair opportunity.

Learning a day or two after the visit of the Deacons, that no written communication would be sent till it had been submitted to the church, and being anxious to allay the excitement which I found universally prevalent, I addressed to the church a letter of which the following is a copy.

Halifax, N. S., August 30, 1845.

To the Baptist Church, Granville Street, Halifax.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Your communication made to me through the Deacons, in connection with the excitement which prevails among us, has created in me much mental solicitude, and awakened a spirit of earnest prayer.

Since that interview, almost innumerable communications have reached me from members of the church and congregation, and others, all breathing a spirit of great kindness to myself personally, and to my ministry among you. And while these expressions of regard call for my liveliest gratitude, they awaken my most intense anxiety. They show, beyond all controversy, that my removal from Granville, at the present time, would inevitably ruin the church there; and though many very kind and liberal offers of help to support a cause elsewhere have been made, I feel that the violation of unity among the Baptists of this city would be a calamity, the effects of which would be felt far and wide, and ought, therefore, if possible, to be avoided.

I trust, my dear brethren, that the prosperity of the cause of Christ is dearer to me than life itself; and I am ready to give some small proof of my regard to it by making a sacrifice on its behalf. The evils among us, as it appears to me, admit of an easy remedy. I therefore beg to submit the following propositions:—

1. That, in accordance with the wish so frequently and generally expressed, the chapel be invested in trust for the use of the church and congregation now meeting therein; in the same way as other Baptist chapels in the Province are so secured; full indemnity being given, as now, for the payment of the mortgage and other debts thereon.

2. That no political opinions, nor any expression of them, be allowed to have any influence whatever on church fellowship, or the maintenance of Christian intercourse among the members of the church.

3. That on condition of these proposals being heartily complied with, I am prepared for some time to come to sacrifice £25 per annum of my present salary, or even, if need be £50, hoping that a slight literary effort will make up the deficiency.

Trusting that these proposals will be met in the same spirit of kindness in which they are made, and waiting the decision of the members of the church,

I am, dear brethren, very affectionately, your pastor,
And servant in the Gospel,
JOSEPH BELCHER.

It might have been hoped that this communication would have been approved; but what was done? To this hour I have received no reply to it. The church again met, and again were entertained with a long mystification about the "accounts." At length, however, with considerable difficulty two committees were ap-

pointed;—the first to ascertain whether the subscribers would continue their subscriptions for the pastor's support another year; and the other to learn from the trustees whether they would secure the chapel, on the payment of the debts, to the church and congregation. The first committee have for weeks been prepared to report,—that nearly every subscriber is willing to continue his or her subscription, on condition of my remaining pastor, *except the trustees*; and that others also are prepared to add their names to the list on the same condition. The other committee, as I am informed, have not deemed it necessary to proceed. A farther meeting of the church, is on various pretexts, deferred. The facts are very clear, the overwhelming majority is against the trustees. And what then? Why I am now actually told by the clerk of the church that the resolution of the church meeting on August 26, was that the deacons were to request me to resign the pastorate in six months, and that it is so entered in the church book, which, however, he will not permit me to see. The account of expenses which was promised to the committee appointed on the subscriptions, though repeatedly applied for, is withheld; and a thousand arts are quietly employed to turn the current of opinion, or to wear out the spirits of my friends. Here is a gentle insinuation that Mr. A's interests in connection with his business lie in Granville Street;—there is the rail and soft enquiry—"Well now, Mr. B. saying nothing at all of the past, do you really think that *now* Dr. B. is likely to succeed at Granville Street?"—and yonder again is no doubtful statement—"If you take that side, I shall not deal with you in trade." All is meant to go on quietly as possible; my hands are bound, that I cannot take a step for the advancement of the cause; political influence in the church will not be abandoned; the chapel will not be placed in trust for the church and congregation, unless it be clogged with conditions, that no man valuing his religious freedom could consent to; and the pastor, like his predecessors, is to be quietly starved out, and that notwithstanding his people are willing, nay anxious, to support him. Such, my friends, such, men brethren and fathers, is our condition. Alas, that in the free province of Nova Scotia, Baptist persecution, for the first time in the history of the Denomination, should be found to exist.

But all these proceedings are founded on anti-Baptist principles, and in the name of the Baptists of the whole earth I denounce them. Baptists know no other body of men possessing control or influence but each separate church. Over a Baptist church no trustees, no councils, no associations have legitimate control. Our churches are friendly with all these, and are ready

to co-operate with them, but they will be governed by none of them.

From all these statements it will be seen that I have adhered to the terms of the original arrangement with the leading members of the Church in Granville Street. I have maintained my independence, and insisted on the right of the Body to claim the Chapel, in opposition to the trustees, who have ever acted as though it were entirely their own; and I have refused to act for any party in any thing connected with party politics. For these high crimes, for so they seem to be considered, I am, without the consideration of any claims to Christian justice, or without regard to the principles which usually influence honourable men in common life, to be sacrificed.

And if this be indeed the decision of the Baptists of Halifax, and the friends of perfect religious freedom in Nova Scotia, I will submit to it with what grace of resignation I may. I will place myself before my adorable Master, and while I appeal to him as to the purity of my motives, in coming to Halifax, in accordance with what appeared to be His will, and as to the solemn and entire surrender I made of whatever I possessed, derived from the studies, the experience, and the reputation of a ministry of more than a quarter of a century, to the advancement of His cause in this Province, I will implore His guidance for myself and His blessing on you. At fifty one years of age I have no time for disputation, and if I have now seemed to assume an attitude different to that in which I have heretofore stood, it is because I feel that the occasion has loudly and imperatively called for it.—Melancthon could not have done the work of John Knox in Scotland, and the timid Cranmer could not have administered the reproof given to Harry the Eighth by Latimer. It is unspeakably delightful to speak of the happiness of piety, the importance and loveliness of Christian meekness, and the forgiveness of injuries, and still more delightful to practice them; but there are times when the watchman of Heaven must, however painful the task, shew the people of God their sins, and declare to the world that these sins do not spring from Religion.

Is then, the cause of Christianity among the Baptists in Halifax hopeless? *In Granville Street, on the present platform, that cause cannot prosper.* Public spirit cannot breathe, freedom is shackled, discipline cannot be discharged; its Pastor and Deacons cannot even meet each other once in six months, and no pastoral influence or labour can be exerted. *The laws of Christ demand a higher and holier spot for their execution.*

I am aware of the influence exerted in opposition to all who

not subject to the arrangements of the gentlemen who claim to direct the affairs of the Church;—I know that no small portion of the talent and the wealth is on that side;—I am not ignorant of former struggles to bring about a different state of things, and the failure of such attempts;—and I cannot be surprised at the timidity and the fear felt by not a few who sigh for the interests of piety, holy freedom, and the happiness of man.

But the subject has another side. Not a few of you desire your freedom, and can achieve it; scores if not hundreds of Baptists in this City are not, and never will be associated with Granville Street Chapel; our principles are not unpopular among our neighbours; every other Denomination of Christians are both peaceful and prosperous; and a large and rapidly increasing population invites our labours, and promises, with the Divine blessing, richly to reward it.

And if I venture to recommend another Baptist Church in Halifax, and the erection of another Chapel, what then? Is it a money question? Well, the debt on Granville Street Chapel now is £1,500; and to make it suitable for a Baptist place it wants a Vestry and School Room; these are indispensable to prosperity, and would cost at least £300, besides an annual payment of ground rent on which they would stand. For this £1,800 ground might be secured—School and Vestry Rooms occupying the whole basement, and a Chapel 70 feet by 50 might be erected, well pewed, with a deep front gallery, baptistry, gas lights, and all other conveniences.

“But where,” asks my very cautious friend, “where is the money to come from?” A very necessary and a very wise question. Let us look at it. I put out of the question all considerations of large donations. I say nothing of hundreds, and fifties, and tens, though I know not why they should be withheld. “Why,” said a brother to me not long since, “five hundred people giving a penny a day, would raise £750 a-year, and who does not throw away a penny a day?”—But I do not propose this, reasonable as it might seem—let us act on a very much smaller scale, and see what might be done for a Chapel the first year. I think that without difficulty we might find

100 persons to give a penny per week; the year's result would be	£21 13 4.
50 at twopence per week	21 13 4.
40 at threepence	26 0 0.
20 at seven-pence halfpenny	32 10 0.
10 at a quarter dollar each	32 10 0.
4 collections made quarterly might produce	40 0 0.
Produce of collecting cards, Bazaar, Tea Party, &c.	100 0 0.
From friends of other Denominations	50 10 0.

Here is a sum total of

£324 6 4.

Look at it again and again, and see if there be anything unreasonable or impracticable in the plan; and ask whether we shall have young men and young ladies enough to collect it? I only think of 20 young people collecting five shillings a week each, here is £260 at once. Shall the plan be tried? As Yaakee would say, "I guess it will."

But some of you have long since been ready to exclaim, "Our chief difficulty will be to support the Pastor; and if Granville Street, with its numbers and its wealth cannot do that, how can a smaller and poorer body do it?" Be not alarmed, dear friends, that whole matter has been carefully looked at; and again we will, if you please, have recourse to arithmetic. And again, we say nothing of large subscriptions—those sources and supports of undue influence—we ask none to oppress themselves or their families; we only ask that all shall do something, and that this something shall be done on the Scriptural plan, once a week. Because I would calculate too highly, I have undertaken in the following table to shew you what can be easily done by a congregation of 240 persons only.

The following proposal, then, is for the support of the Pastor, and is, of course, in addition to the subscriptions for the Chapel.

	£	s.	d.
100 Subscribers at one penny per week each, will produce annually	21	13	4
60 do. at two pence	26	0	0
40 do. at three pence	26	0	0
20 do. at seven pence half penny	32	10	0
20 do. at one shilling and three pence	65	0	0
100 Quarterly Subscriptions, in addition to the Weekly Subscriptions, as Pew Rents, of 2s. 6d. each	50	0	0
Collections on 46 Sabbaths in the year, leaving six Sabbaths for other objects, at £1 per Sabbath	46	0	0

Making an annual total of £267 3 4

A sum exceeding the Pastor's present salary.

Could this be done? Of course the sums might be paid quarterly, monthly or weekly, as each Subscriber chose; but to render the plan efficient, payments must be regular and prompt. On this plan not a few of our Chapels in England have been, to a great extent built, and in this way are the Pastors sustained. Indeed, in our own City, a very short time since, in another Communion, more than £70 was collected within a few weeks in pennies.

Let me be well understood. I propose to preach no new doctrines; to introduce no new system of government different to that adopted by our Brethren generally throughout the world; I desire no independence which the New Testament and Baptist usages will not warrant; I avow an attachment towards all

Christians, and readiness to co-operate with them in the advancement of the great interests of Christianity.

Let me be well understood. I am no politician. I am neither a conservative nor a liberal. I am occupied with higher matters than those which concern states and governments, "and cannot come down" to discuss their measures. The Christian pastor who dabbles in party politics, commits, in my view, high treason against the kingdom of heaven, to which he owes the most entire allegiance; deprives his own soul of the feelings essential to the discharge of his duty; and robs the church and the world of the energies which, at his ordination, he solemnly consecrated to their highest and holiest interests. "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." I am his property, his servant, and would only advance his glory. Let others act how they may, be it mine, in the pulpit "and from house to house to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." Allow me to attend to the claims of souls, perishing souls, at home and abroad, and to subserve the highest interests of the universal church. Let each of you do what seems to him right in political matters. "Act the citizen as becometh the gospel of Christ," and I am satisfied.

Again, I say, let me be well understood. What I propose is this, that each of you, and that all others who are desirous of seeing a new Baptist church, on the great and recognized principles of the denomination in England and America, should kindly favour me, at the very earliest opportunity, with a note stating your intention, and saying what sum you propose to give quarterly, monthly, or weekly, first for the support of the pastor, and secondly for the erection of a chapel. If names enough are forthwith sent in, to justify a commencement, I will announce the time and place of meeting for the appointment of trustees, for securing a place for temporary worship, and for the adoption of a plan for an honourable, and I will yet hope amicable withdrawal from Granville Street. What you do, I entreat you to do quickly.—
"The king's business requireth haste."

At the meeting to which I refer I should suggest that the proposed building should be called "Salem Chapel" (*the abode of Peace*); that the money collected for it should be placed in one of the banks, in the names of trustees to be appointed by the meeting, from which it should be drawn only by joint consent—that trustees, say 12 or 15 in number, should hold the chapel and all other property for the use of the church and congregation meeting therein, so long as they held the faith and order specified in the deed; the said trustees in no way interfering with any

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It will be seen that the plan I propose involves no respo-
sibility, even to the amount of a copper, beyond what each indi-
vidual may voluntarily engage to give; and inasmuch as no man
vises to the steps I now take; no man can hereafter be bla-
mable if my proposal should fail.

FAIL! No, it cannot, if it be as I trust it is, the cause
of God. I confess to you that I am sanguine as to your cherishing
in connection with this subject, the spirit of ardent prayer, and
holy zeal. The servants of Christ must, if necessary, make sac-
rifices for his cause. For my own part, I will, if called to it,
practically say with the eminent Dr. Gill, on a similar occasion,
"I am not afraid to be poor." But no very great efforts are
needed in this case. We want a large number of small amounts;
mingled, we will venture to hope, with larger sums than any I
have ventured to specify. I am anticipating the receipt of many
scores of notes, running—"Dear Sir—I like your plan. Put
down my name for one shilling a week for the pastor, and six
pence a week for the chapel. To be paid monthly.

[Name]

[Profession]

[Residence]

or "I rejoice in the prospect of a new Baptist church. My sub-
scription to the pastor's support is sixpence weekly, and the same
to Salem chapel—I hope to pay weekly.

[Name, &c., as above.]

or "The rapidly increasing population of this city calls for your
effort. I enclose [] pounds towards the erection of Salem
chapel.

[Name, &c., as above.]

So from all classes, and orders. But let them come soon.

"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell
me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to
the left.

I am, dear friends, yours, very truly,

JOSEPH BELCHER

Sp Garden Road, October 22, 1846.

