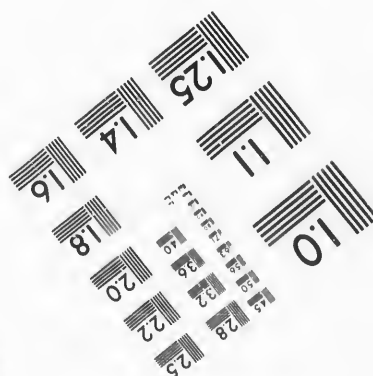
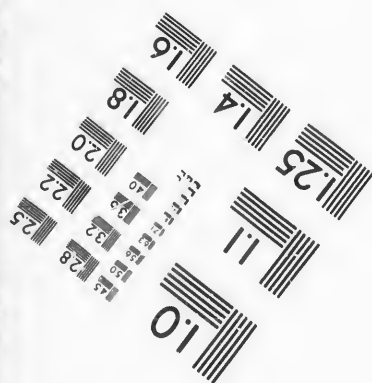
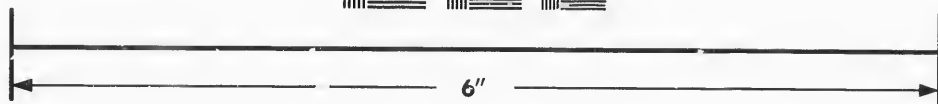
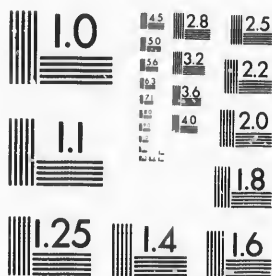


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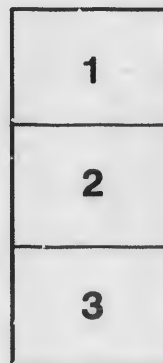
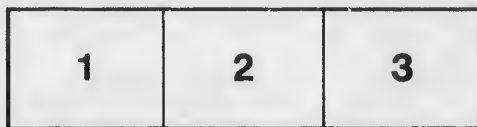
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A  
**LETTER**

TO

**JAMES W. NUTTING, ESQ.**

ON RECENT EVENTS IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
GRANVILLE STREET, HALIFAX, N. S.

---

**BY JOSEPH BELCHER, D. D.**

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HALIFAX:

PRINTED BY ENGLISH AND BLACKADAR.

1846.

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Sir,—

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## LETTER, &c.

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SIR,—

It is with inexpressible pain that I sit down to address you on topics with which you are closely connected, in your official capacity, with the Church in Granville Street. I had once hoped that before now your wrath might have cooled down; that your piety might have been called again into exercise; and that the Church in Granville Street, together with the one I have the happiness to serve might have begun ere this to concentrate their efforts for the welfare of each community, and to cherish feelings of holy zeal for the advancement of the common cause to which we are both professedly devoted. Your recent conduct, however, places this hope at a distance, and compels me "to withstand you to the face, because you are to be blamed." I would willingly refrain from "sharpness," but you know the Divine injunction in such cases is, "Them that sin before all, rebuke before all, that others also may fear." "Rebuke them sharply."

I shall first take the liberty of writing a few sentences on the somewhat extraordinary Report, said to have been unanimously adopted at your church meeting December 8. And what a Report! Its whole character is most distressing. I solemnly put to you before the whole church and the world the question—How could your conscience allow you, in such a state of things as that Report describes;—nay, how could common honesty permit you in November, 1844, to invite a minister to the pastorate among you without frankly stating to him the pecuniary circumstances in which you were placed? By what rules of scripture, or honor as practised by gentlemen, were you justified in inviting a minister to remove his large family from New-York to this city, leading him to incur a very considerable expense for such a purpose, under the assurance "the stipend which the church feel themselves enabled to offer their pastor is £250 currency," when you knew that the church was, and had long been in a state of insolvency? kindly answer me this question.

A second statement in the Report requires a word or two. We are told that the state of pecuniary affairs during the



year of my pastorate "does not exhibit a more prosperous state of affairs than those preceding it." How is this? Nov. 14, 1844, "the church feel themselves enabled to offer £250"—within twelve months nearly thirty members were added, and still they fall short £80. Where was the deficiency? Who were the defaulters? But stay a moment; was there really a deficiency, and to what amount? In Halifax all this is quite well understood, but our friends in the country who only see "The Christian Messenger" will verily believe what you say about this matter. We may gather from the Report compared with the accounts not given in the Messenger, two or three items which will place the whole affair in another view. Let us see—

The Receipts are said to be	£304
The Expenditure	- 385
The consequent deficiency	- - 81

Very good; but then there are some other facts which the Messenger does not tell, but which a truly "Christian Messenger" would not have laboured to conceal. I will tell them for you:

1. Expenses on my first visit to Halifax, and supplying the pulpit, not likely to occur again,	} £32 0 0
2. Pew Rents said to be due, about	
	45 0 0
	<hr/> £77 0 0

Giving us really a deficiency under ordinary circumstances during the year of £4, or the prospect of a positive surplus for coming years, of a considerable sum, provided you had availed yourselves even to one half the extent of the offer I made to take a reduced salary. At all events, I have the comfortable recollection of your own assurance that the income of the year exceeded that of any former one by the amount of £40.

A few words more about this Report, and I will consign it, I hope to an eternal dismissal from my thoughts. It tells us two very remarkable things about the Trustees—1st, "Respecting various rumours afloat, as to the trust having been held for improper purposes, such as controlling the free action of the church in the choice of a pastor, your Committee owe it to truth and to the trustees to state that such is not the case; and that they (the trustees) have simply held the building in trust appropriated to the worship of God." Now, sir, there is in the possession of one of the members of your Committee, a Church book, in which I have read the

Record of a letter being sent to the church by a trustee, not then a member of the church, intended to influence the conduct of the Church in reference to the choice of a pastor whom they had assembled to elect, and whom they did elect: —that same book records that the same trustees did dismiss the pastor and his church, amounting to some scores of members, from the chapel, because three of the members of the church, *two of them trustees*, chose to have another minister and to raise another Church; I am informed, too, that within these few last years one of the trustees, not a member of the Church, used to meet with you at its meetings, and speak and vote, till the determined opposition of one or two brethren succeeded in obtaining his absence; and whether the Trustees and their influence did or did not expel the last pastor, we shall see in a few minutes.

The second remarkable thing told about these trustees in this Report, is, "so soon as they (the Trustees) were informed of the wish of the Church to have the trust altered and enlarged, and the building made over to it, so as to have the Chapel recognized in all time coming as the property of the Baptist Church, they immediately assented, on condition, that with the trust, the Church also assume the liabilities; and they have individually, both within the Church and out of it, expressed a strong desire to have it so." *Of this statement I demand the proof.* I claim the production of a document which shall shew that all the Trustees have in any way whatever consented to any such arrangement; I demand the evidence that on the payment of the debts owing, the Trustees will so secure the Chapel to the Church and congregation worshipping in it. Nay, my dear Sir, do not evade the point; Lawyers like those composing the majority of the Trustees, know well that some evidence fit to produce in a court of law or equity ought to exist in a matter of such importance as this. Where is that document? Till it be produced, though you may send back the Report again and again,\* that so the trustees may stand clear in this matter, neither the Baptist Churches of this Province, nor the public

\*Some amusement has been created in the city, by a fact, which somehow or other oozed out, that the Report as first presented by the Committee was not satisfactory to the Trustees present, and that it was sent back that it might more clearly exculpate those gentlemen. After some considerable difficulty, it is said, they agreed to present it as it now stands. No small attempts, however, are still made to explain away some of its statements.

generally, who have contributed liberally towards the building, will be satisfied. It really would have been better, sir, that you should have taken the counsel of the shrewdest men on your Committee, and not have printed the Report, which I now deposit among the few curiosities which I have during my lifetime collected.

Before I proceed to remark on the letter you addressed to the brethren and sisters now composing the Church of which I am pastor, it seems proper that I should ask on what principles you justify the publication of your Report and that Letter in the Christian Messenger. You say, and I once thought, and still think truly, "although it may be advisable, in most cases, that the proceedings of churches, in matters of order and discipline, should be confined, as far as may be, to their own immediate body, yet occasions may, and often do occur, which render it highly desirable that such proceedings should be more extensively known and circulated. Such an occasion, it appears to us, the circumstances connected with the difficulties that have lately arisen in the Granville Street Church evidently afford." Good doctrine this, very, and painfully true; but alas, it must not be always taught—at least not by every one. I acted on this doctrine when I could gain access to you in no other way, and published a few hundred pamphlets for circulation among the churches in this province, detailing facts about the difficulties in Granville street Church; and for the publication, the trustees, and a few of their friends, expelled me from the pulpit; again and again saying, as you will recollect, the truth or the falsehood of the pamphlet was not the question—the sin was the *publication*—the publication at all, in any form, to the world; now *you*, without any direction, without any sanction whatever from the church, and against the advice of your best friends to refrain from printing at all, take the advantage of the controul you possess over the professed organ of the Baptist Denomination "for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick," to publish statements, every paragraph of which contains distinct or implied misrepresentations. By what law, human or divine, can that which is sin in me be righteousness in you? If I was reckoned your enemy when I told you the truth, what must you be when you again and again publish falsehood, and will not allow me to defend myself in your column? "Thou art inexcusable, O man, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." You will, however, no doubt, make yourself quite easy on the censure

which the Church might be disposed to pass on your conduct. *They cannot expel you ;—You are a TRUSTEE.*

For the information of those who may feel interested in the matter, it may, sir, be desirable to shew the precise circumstances under which your very extraordinary letter was written. Facts at which we shall glance just now, induced forty-six persons heretofore connected with Granville Street Church, on Nov. 30 last, to send to that body the following letter.

**TO THE BAPTIST CHURCH MEETING IN GRANVILLE STREET, HALIFAX, N. S.**

**DEAR BRETHREN,—**

We are directed, by the brethren and sisters whose names are herewith enclosed, respectfully to request from you as a Church of Jesus Christ, a dismissal from your immediate fellowship, with a view to the formation of another Church of the same denomination.

We do not deem it necessary to enter into details as to the reasons which, in the judgment of the brethren and sisters deliberately and prayerfully taking this step, have pointed out the present proceeding as the path of their duty. No differences as to the leading doctrines of the sacred volume have led to this step; nor are we conscious of the least unhallowed feeling on our part, or of anything inconsistent with the warmest christian affection.

That the Great Head of the whole Church may afford you increase and prosperity is, and shall be, our unceasing prayer; and we earnestly entreat that like desires may be cherished by you on our behalf; that so by our united efforts and prayers, the cause of Christ may be promoted in this city and community.

Affectionately requesting an early communication from you in reply to this, we are, dear brethren, on behalf of all the brethren and sisters on the enclosed list,

Yours in christian love,

SIGNED BY THREE PERSONS }  
AS A COMMITTEE. }

*Argyle Street, Halifax, N. S., }  
November 30, 1845. }*

This communication was laid before the Church in Granville Street, at a meeting at which several of the seceding brethren were present to answer any enquiries, but they were not allowed to speak. From their account of the meeting

as given to us, it appeared that no small merriment was excited. The supposed scene of signing it was described by a gentleman of a very lively imagination, who, by description and pantomime, excited a laugh, while it was entirely doubted whether the document had been duly authorised. Our brethren were told that a dismission could not be granted unless each member applied personally, or in writing for it; and when the question was asked by one of your own members, "Would the dismission be granted if that were done?" you, sir, the chairman, replied with a contemptuous smile, "Ah, that is quite another question."

A few days after the meeting in Granville Street, notes, of which the following is a copy, were placed in the hands of some of our members, left at the offices of two or three, and put under the doors of several others :

"The Deacons of the Granville Street Church are directed by a Resolution of the Church, passed at their last meeting, to request that you will state either in writing or personally, whether the request for a dismission contained in a letter addressed to the Church containing your own and the names of several other individuals who have lately seceded with Dr. Belcher, was authorized by you or not.

13th December, 1845."

On the 21st December we had another meeting, and after full deliberation the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted :—

#### I.

That we have heard, with the deepest regret and sorrow, the account given us by our brethren who were present at the recent meeting of the Church in Granville Street, as to the manner in which an application from forty-six persons to be dismissed to form a new Church in this city was received and treated; that we feel grieved that our brethren there could dispute the authority of a letter adopted by the whole body of applicants, every name having been solemnly given after serious and prayerful deliberation, and signed, at the request of the whole, by three brethren in whom the Church in Granville Street had heretofore reposed full confidence; and that we cannot but fear the wish of some of the brethren of that Church was, by effecting our disunion, to disappoint our purpose.

#### II.

That as we are informed that a note has been addressed to some of our number, enquiring as to whether they had authorized an application for their dismission, we feel called on to say that as such note has not been sent to our whole number,—that as by implication it involves the charge of the absence of integrity on the part of our brethren who applied for the said dismission,—and as it is anonymous, and therefore may not be genuine, we cannot with propriety act upon it.

## III.

That while we still cherish a feeling of christian regard for the Church in Granville Street, yet as we are aware that, contrary to all precedents, even in their own history, they intend to refuse a dismission for this body to retire for the purpose we contemplate, except on terms which would long perpetuate unlovely feelings, the brethren and sisters now present request the brethren: ———, ———, and ———, to inform the Church in Granville Street, by letter, that in conformity with the usages in England in similar cases, as proved to us by the examination of "The Baptist Manual," recently published, we hereby withdraw ourselves from their communion to form another Baptist Church; and that the list of persons who may wish to unite with us in this communication be kept open till Thursday evening next.

## IV.

That we will still cherish for the brethren and sisters we now leave, feelings of holy love; we will pray for their prosperity, and will be ready, whenever they manifest reciprocal feelings, to cooperate with them, so far as our sense of duty will allow, in all things tending to the glory of our common Lord.

The fact of these resolutions having been passed, became known immediately to one of the deacons of your Church, who expressed his satisfaction that we had taken such a course, as, he said, it would relieve the Church in Granville Street from a very unpleasant duty, meaning our exclusion. But he, poor man, did not know *your* arrangements; he is only consulted after matters have been determined on by his superiors. On the following Wednesday evening, before you had received an answer from any one of the anonymous notes—that you might be beforehand with our letter of withdrawal—you suddenly introduced into the Church, and carried, in spite of all remonstrance, for the letter was *not* adopted *unanimously*, the communication of which you are so fond as to print it in more than one form. This letter was placed in the hands of most of our friends late on the Saturday evening, to prevent, if possible, at the last hour, the formation of the Church on the following day, for which you knew arrangements had been made. This was followed up on the Lord's day morning by your agents in all directions visiting, coaxing, and intimidating to the utmost of their power, but entirely without success; forty-six members from Granville Street on that day united as a separate Church.

And now let us look at the Letter itself. And the first thing which strikes us is the assumptions of its authors. It breathes infallibility throughout. Not an idea ever seems to have approached you while writing it that you had ever done, or said, or even thought wrong in any thing. You are "the



aged and experienced ;" you " regard with peculiar commiseration and pity most of those who have seceded ;" and all the fault—every iota of the wrong—has been with us ; but pause a moment, some of us belonged to Christian Churches long before any man among " the leading brethren" had received christian baptism ; even the youngest and most " inexperienced" are able to read and to understand somewhat of the holy volume ; the " beloved sisters" for whom you have become so suddenly and so affectionately concerned, cannot but be surprised at passing events ; and all of us think we have ample cause to entreat you to pull the beam out of your own eye, that you may better see how to take the mote out of your brother's. Humiliation is seldom effected by raising a claim to infallibility.

And now comes the grand evil—Dr. Belcher's letter. And what of that ? Why, the whole truth of it is admitted, for no one of its manifold statements is denied. You talk indeed of " Dr. Belcher having thus insinuated some charges against his brethren, without supporting them by adequate proof ;" but then every one knows that " proofs numerous as blackberries" are at hand ; your staunchest supporters, when the letter was published, shook their heads, and said, " It's all true,"—yes, and say so still ; and you yourselves have never called for proof. The severity of that letter, sir, is its *truth*.

Aye, but I did not go and state my grievance to the brethren who offended me alone. No, I did not. The rule to which you so often refer relates to private grievances, not to public offences such as yours. My charge was not that you had offended or insulted me, but that you and a few others had ever manifested a Diotrephesian spirit in the church, a sin, which demanded far other treatment than a mere private offence between one brother and another. Besides, I should greatly like to know how it was possible to reach you otherwise than by the Press. For six long months did I try, but in vain, to get a meeting of all the deacons. I had devised plans for usefulness, about which I wished to take counsel ; cases of discipline demanded attention ; hopeful instances of usefulness needed enquiry, but no meeting of deacons could I obtain ; I never saw you altogether except at the Lord's table, after the early part of May. I complained, but was told that extreme pressure of business in the courts—the claims of " The Messenger"—absence from town, and I know not what besides, prevented the possibility of meeting at present. I could not get access to you to say or to do



anything, while I was told that notice was given me to leave in three or six months. The only chance left to rouse you to action was to use the mighty power of the Press. Referring to this, you say "such a stab aimed by a pastor at the vitals of his own church and flock, has perhaps never had a parallel;" certainly no pastor before ever had such a difficulty of access to some of his deacons; this, I think, is *unparalleled*; but many a pastor before me has retired with a portion of his flock to form a new church.

But let us now come to what is intended to be the very severest part of the letter, and which looks very awful indeed on paper, but it is only intended to produce effect out of Halifax, for you very well know that where the facts are known the whole affair is laughed to scorn.

The publication of the letter, and its "endeavour to rend the Church," is the topic under review, and the statement is "it demanded an expression of the strongest reprehension. This reproof the Church administered by their solemn Resolution, which declared this act of their pastor the severance of the bond between him and his people." Do, my dear sir, read this passage again and again. Do not smile—it is a very serious and very important statement. Now for the facts.

I published the letter on Monday morning. What was done by you and your colleagues? Did you come to me and talk over the matter privately? Not you indeed. Monday evening service passed over—not a word said;—Wednesday evening the same; one or two of my friends said, "they are waiting for Friday evening," no, said another, "we cannot attend to business at Conference meetings;" "I shall go and protest against that," said one of your main supporters at that very meeting. Well, Friday evening came, and it was a smaller meeting than usual, even though several important persons were present whom I had never seen at a Conference meeting before. At the preceding conference meeting, held on the 3d of that very month, one of the deacons would not allow even the resolutions of a business meeting to be read for confirmation, because "Conference meetings were held exclusively for religious exercises;" and certainly no one could have expected any such business as was brought forward, partly because, as you well know, there is a standing law on the church book, that any one having a motion to bring forward at a church meeting, should send a written notice thereof to the pastor and deacons at least a week before the meeting, and because no notice whatever had been

publicly given of the meeting. But the time came—you and another brother refused even to pray;—a very long address, admirably fitted for an assize court, was made; and one of the members, accustomed heretofore to say all manner of severe things against the deacons and trustees, after a very excited speech, moved a resolution, which he said he had drawn up that afternoon, expelling the pastor from the pulpit. This was seconded by a deacon and trustee. No explanation was asked from me; no remarks from those brethren who took a different view of the matter, were treated with even a shadow of respect; an amendment proposed, which tended to divide the blame between myself and others, was scouted and ridiculed; all the manœuvring of lawyers in courts and of political partizans in parliamentary assemblies was employed; a parade was made, intended to intimidate, and for the first time in a Baptist Church, the name and vote of each member was separately recorded; and what then? Why out of a Church of 223 members, 26 brethren voted—16 for the expulsion and 10 against it. These 16 are described as “the Church.” What a lamentable confirmation of the statement so often made that five or six persons at Granville Street have always considered themselves “the Church.”

Let us look for a moment at these sixteen persons. This number included four trustees, who, as the persons charged in the printed letter with wrong, one would have thought should have been prevented by delicacy from voting at all; three others of them had testified again and again against the conduct of these gentlemen; another was told at the moment by one of the trustees how to vote; another was the doorkeeper, who told me he was only a servant, and must vote as he was ordered; and another was a brother who voted under a misapprehension of the whole subject, and is now one with us. Now how much was this majority of six worth? Can you call that vote the “solemn Resolution of the Church?” The severity of christian discipline consists in the fact that it “is inflicted of many”—that it is administered with all solemnity and love,—and that it is done “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Will you or any other man pretend that this was the character of the act of which we are now speaking? You disingenuously accuse us of want of truth when we speak of deliberation in a case where thirty days of solemn thought and prayer occurred; but where was your deliberation—what was your spirit, when 16 of you without an hour’s notice, or without a single petition for Divine direction, expel the pastor from the pulpit, and call it the act of “*The Church?*”

And now, sir, I appeal to you, — to the whole Christian Church, and to every man of common sense, whether conduct like this could be sanctioned by those who had carefully studied the New Testament, and who knew the principles on which Christ has founded his Church? Must they not have regarded this conduct as “disorderly?” And must not every one who viewed it in connection with the whole of your past proceedings, have considered it an utterly hopeless task to reform such persons? It excites no surprise in the community that forty six persons determined to come out from among you and to be separate; the only wonder is that, notwithstanding all your influence, your misrepresentations, your promises, and your intimidation, practices which might be acquired from “the experienced” actors at political polling booths, the surprise I say is that so many stay behind.

But then you tell us in the Messenger that forty five only, exclusive of Dr. Belcher, who, as even *you* had not dared to attempt to exclude from the church, made forty six, whereas the number of members reported to the last Association was 218; yes sir, and 5 added since, made your list of members on the books 223; but where are many of them? Can some of them anywhere be found? How many of them are in actual attendance? I have heard of votes at your church meetings since we left you, passing 8 to 7, making 15 in all. Will you kindly tell us in the next number of the Messenger the average number of members present at the meetings of the Church since the month of October last? When you have done that, I will tell you why the majority of your present members stay away from your church meetings. It may seem a curious fact that our church meetings are more numerously attended than yours. You have yet 177 names on your list of members; how many *hearts* have you?

I could scarcely restrain myself from cherishing strong feelings of indignation when I read the attack you make on the character and conduct of a gentleman who bore the office of deacon with you, but who retired with others to sustain our new cause. He was not bound by “a decision passed in his presence,” when he protested against it as unrighteous, and was sure that it was merely the decision of a Faction, and not the act of “the body to which he belonged.” Notwithstanding what you now say, you deeply regretted his loss, and did whatever you could to induce him to return. The best wish of my heart is that every deacon of a Baptist Church stood as high in the community for correct, amiable, and unassuming christian deportment, as does that

gentleman. *His* conduct never yet gave me a moment's uneasiness.

But the great sin of which "the Pastor," "a deacon," and the "beloved sisters and youthful and inexperienced brethren" have been guilty, is that of "most hurtful schisms." This is a hard word, but you are a scholar, and know that in this connection it is entirely misapplied. Its meaning is *a rent in a body*; in an ecclesiastical sense, a division in a Church;—now we have separated from a schismatic, that is a divided Church. It was long in a state of schism before we left it, and if report says true, you are sad schismatics still; for some of your number tell us that you have not had an unanimous vote on any subject since we left you. And notwithstanding the fact that we have left you without your consent, past history tells us that you and every other Baptist Church in the Province will receive all you can obtain from us, and *some* will dismiss to us.

You will probably, however, be ready to remind me that you employ the word in the sense of *separation*, and that this was our sin. It was a charge you know against the infallible Teacher, "he draweth the people away after him;" the apostles, too, caused separation wherever they went; nay, you, and those who act with you, committed this same crime, if crime it be, some twenty years since, when you left a church, though "no conscientious difference of opinion in doctrine compelled your separation." Ah, sir, as Solomon says, "there is nothing new under the sun;" and so, I am told, that the Pulpit of Granville Street has of late rung with the identical expressions which echoed within the walls of St. Paul's nearly twenty years since. Your old friends then asked in reference to your separation, "What then compels it, but party views, strife and evil surmisings against your brethren whom you thus judge unheard." And in addition to this, like us, you formed another church "without first laying the whole matter before the assembled brethren." Alas, again "Thou that judgest another condemnest thyself." The fact is, those who stay in a body may compel, by their unrighteous conduct—their unholy tempers—their persevering self-will, and their neglect of duty, those who cannot approve of their conduct to "withdraw" from them as from those "who walk disorderly." A body may be corrupt as well as some of its parts; it may be my duty to withdraw from a Church as much as it may be the duty of a Church to withdraw from me. There was in an ancient Church a gentleman of whom the amiable Apostle John says

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"I wrote unto the Church. but Diotrephes, who loveth to hate the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." John threatned him with great severity, and regarded him as malicious, improperly treating his brethren, "and casteth them out of the Church." Similar conduct and feelings on the part of yourself and the other trustees of Granville Street Church first compelled us to withdraw, and then induced you to treat us as evil and wicked persons. You compelled us to adopt the course we did adopt; and every step you have taken since we left shews that "instead of the beautiful example of holy union," of which you so touchingly speak, "you are presenting to the view and the decision of your enemies, and the enemies of God and Christ, an unhappy exhibition of separation and of schism." Yes sir, I have heard of the infidelity of more than one young man in Baptist families in this city, induced by the almost constant schisms and quarrels of the Church in Granville Street. Would to God that it now presented a different scene!

And yet it might even still rise to prosperity. The possibility yet exists of its becoming a holy, united, useful and happy community. Will you allow a brother of more than thirty years connection with Baptist Churches, and of not much less standing in the ministry, to close his letter with a few counsels in return for those in yours, which compose its only beautiful passage, and which I trust you yourself will carefully study with a view to practice; while I would cherish the spirit and perform the duties I recommend to you.

Suffer me then to say, Brethren, renounce all idea of infallibility, and humble yourselves before God on account of your sins; put away from you the spirit, and the practices of the world; be less determined to have "the chief seats in the synagogue;" distinguish yourselves less as lawyers, and talk like christians; allow your brethren to have some wisdom as well as yourselves; treat them with courtesy, and let their proposals be considered as those of fellow christians; no longer suppose that a Church is only prosperous as it is kept in a high state of excitement; diligently cultivate the religion of the closet; devote an hour, a day to special prayer for the increase of personal religion, and the revival of church prosperity; cherish holy tenderness for the souls of your children and your neighbours; seek out for a pastor who shall give himself "to the word of God and to prayer," and let the affairs of this world alone; and love him as your friend and brother; discourage in your connexions and among those over whom you have influence, all tale-bearing and all false

reports of those who walk not with you; silence the public outcry that you withdraw your custom from tradesmen, simply because they venture conscientiously to differ from you; be assured that persecution will never excite, or increase christian affection; and remember that others have a right to advance the cause of the Lord Jesus as well as you; cherish the religion of holy love to God and to your fellow christians, and then shall all admire your piety; peace shall be enjoyed in your midst; neighbouring churches shall cease to weep over you, and instead thereof shall rejoice with you, and "God, even our own God, shall bless you." That this may be your happiness in years to come, is my fervent prayer.

Before I put a final period to this letter, allow me to entreat you, and your literary colleague, as editors of what professes to be the organ of the Denomination, and as those who direct the Collegiate, the Missionary, and the Associational interests of the Baptist Body in this Province, to remember your solemn responsibility to God for the influence you possess. It is commonly reported of you that you use that influence for worldly rather than for holy purposes; certain it is that you ask the state to support what should be sustained by the Denomination at large. The State must not be allowed, either in whole or in part, to educate the rising Baptist ministry in this Province. This would and must make them politicians, and injure their christian character for life. Do not frown, and seek to crush those who venture to maintain this sacred Baptist principle. Condescend to believe in the christianity of some who "do not belong to the Association," and somewhat relax your authority over those who do. You have, by implications, given them instructions in "The Messenger" not to hold fellowship with those of whose conduct you disapprove; if any of them should, on high principles of religious freedom, act otherwise, do not withhold "A Mission" from their pastor, nor in any other way chastise them for acting out their consciences. There is a spirit of restlessness, of dissatisfaction, with things as they are; and a desire after freedom is springing up, which it will require all your experience, and tact, and talents of government to check. Nay, you cannot do it. Wisdom dictates that you yield to the pressure which is coming upon you.

That "the wisdom that is from above," which is first pure; then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy," may be liberally bestowed on you, is the prayer of your injured friend and servant,  
 JOSEPH BELCHER.

Halifax, January 7, 1846.







