

was told it was now necessary for him to be locked in the solitary cell, and desired to follow the warden, who went first, carrying a lamp in one hand and a key in the other.

"Now," said he, "I ask whether you have treated me as I deserve? I have done every thing I could to make you happy. I have trusted you, but you have never given me the least confidence in return, and have even planned to get me into difficulty. Is this kind? And yet I cannot bear to lock you up. If I had the least sign that you cared for me"—

The man burst into tears. "Sir," said he "I have been a very demon these seventeen years; but you treat me like a man."

"Come, let us go back," said the warden. The convict had free range of the prison as before; and from that hour he began to open his heart to the warden, and cheerfully fulfilled his whole term of imprisonment.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Day of Prayer.

Dear Brother,—

Thursday, Dec. 5. is the day recommended by the Convention to be set apart and observed by the churches as a day of prayer. It is to be hoped that the observance will be very general.

There is no need to expatiate on our manifold necessities, or to describe with minute detail our spiritual state and circumstances. All must admit that there never was a time in which the gracious interposition of God on our behalf was more earnestly to be desired. Calamities indeed will be our condition if the Lord should "stand afar off," and leave us, in judgement, to ourselves.

Among the reasons for special prayer at this time, the scarcity of ministers stands prominent. The condition of some of our churches is truly distressing. Not only are they without pastors, but they know not where to look for them. Candidates for the ministry are also few in number. Other denominations are suffering in the same way.

Let the churches meet on the day above-mentioned, and seriously consider their state—and humble themselves before God, confessing their sins—and ask for pardon, for grace, for wisdom, and especially for an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Yours truly, J. M. CRAMP.

Acadia College, Nov. 21. 1867.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, NOVEMBER 27, 1867.

Rev. I. E. Bill and the Council's Decision.

Saint John, Nov. 20th 1867.

S. SELDEN, Esq.

Editor of the Christian Messenger.

MY DEAR SIR,

The enclosed speaks for itself. I trust as a matter of common justice that you will give it a place in the columns of your valuable paper. An early insertion will much oblige.

Yours truly, I. E. BILL.

TO THE BAPTISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA.

Dear Brethren—I am sure you have been grieved to see that between the Editors of our two denominational organs, an unpleasant dispute has arisen regarding the decision of the late Ecclesiastical Council convened with the Granville street Baptist Church, Halifax. In several editorials addressed to you through the Christian Messenger, you have been taught to believe that the Editor of the Christian Visitor has ignored the decision of that Council. This charge has been based upon a supposed discrepancy between the report of the Council in question as given by the Visitor, and the decision itself. Both have been placed in the columns of the Christian Messenger, and you must have therefore had the opportunity of judging for yourselves as to the correctness of the charge made against the Visitor, and I, as one deeply concerned, was quite willing to abide your verdict. But in a recent editorial of the Messenger, notwithstanding my repeated explanations showing the substantial harmony between the documents in question, as understood by me, I am again accused of ignoring the decision of the Council. Some of you will see in the Visitor how I meet this accusation; but as comparatively few of you see the Visitor, I feel that it is a sacred duty which I owe to my own character and to you, my Christian brethren, to place this matter before you in its true light.

When first requested to go to Halifax, I was asked to serve on an *ex parte* Council. This I absolutely refused to do; but when invited to serve on a Council in harmony with the action of the Central Association, I consented. The Council met, and after seven days of patient

\* This request was from the Rev. Dr. Pryor.—Ed.

and prayerful investigation came to a united decision. The Council carefully measured the responsibilities of that decision. They knew that it would be subjected to the ordeal of a most searching criticism not only by our ministers and churches, but by a discerning public, and more than all, that the genuineness of its sentiment and spirit would be tested by that tribunal from which there is no appeal. I felt that as a Council we had no party ends to serve—no man's person in admiration—no popular prejudices for or against the parties concerned to consult; that as a Council assembled in the fear of God on a case of infinite moment, we had only one thing to do, and that one thing was to do right; and in so doing to "maintain a conscience void of offence towards God and man." The decision of that Council has been placed before you, and I wish you to know, my Christian brethren, that when I put my name to it I did so with the cordial approval of my heart and conscience; that from that solemn moment to the present hour I have not knowingly in thought, word, or deed, "ignored" its utterances or trifled with its spirit or purpose. If any of you suppose that I have done so, it is because my language has been misinterpreted, or tortured, to convey sentiments which I do not cherish. So far from ignoring it, I adhere to it with unbending fidelity as a deliverance based upon truth, justice and charity—three elements that should always blend in just proportions when dealing with an accused party. I cleave to it also as a decision which constituted a fair, honorable, Christian basis for the restoration of harmony between contending parties, and for the peace of the Baptist brotherhood in these Provinces.

This frank, unvarnished statement of facts, you will please receive as coming from a brother, who for long years was intimately associated with very many of you in the most sacred engagements of the Christian faith, and who though now absent in body is nevertheless present in spirit, and most earnestly prays that "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost may be with you all. Amen."

Respectfully and affectionately yours in the bonds of the Gospel, I. E. BILL.

Saint John, Nov. 20. 1867.

We are glad to receive the above from Rev. I. E. Bill, and to find our contemporary treating this subject in a little more becoming spirit than he did in his last editorial. His defence of the Decision of the Council is quite unnecessary, seeing that we have made no objections to it. Our objections have been, as our readers well know, to his superceding the decision of the twelve brethren composing the Council, by an editorial of his own, giving the case a very different complexion from that the facts would warrant, and circulating a reprint thereof in Halifax and elsewhere.

The above letter is sent to us in the form of a printed slip, and dated one day earlier than the last issue of the Visitor. It may therefore have been printed for the same purpose as the reprint of his first editorial on the subject, and may be already in the hands of some of "the Baptists of Nova Scotia." Our brother need not indulge his fears, that our brethren in Nova Scotia will not perceive the true merits of the case. We think them quite capable of forming a correct judgment on facts as well as on matters relating to church order.

Not only have we the above letter, but, in addition, a long editorial article in the Visitor of last week, which is also in a somewhat different style from his previous one.

Instead of giving us a "lofty stand point," "encompassed with a brilliancy of spiritual light," &c., he ventures to affirm, respecting ourselves, that, in reference to what we last wrote on the subject: "The author must have been wrought up to an intensely desperate mood before penning an article so pregnant with all the elements of ill-temper." A pretty serious charge, if it were true. It may possibly be believed by some of those who read only the Visitor's remarks. It is unnecessary that we should say more on this, than that we were not aware of being in such a condition; but we were grieved to find our brother trifling with a matter of such grave importance. What we said, as written under a sense of duty, and a most painful one—arising from the course pursued by the editor of the Visitor. Our statements may, however, speak for themselves.

We are glad to find that our brother in his editorial, has also changed his position somewhat, and that he now pays a little more respect to the Council's decision; although in doing so, he makes a great talk about our treatment of that document, and would create the impression that we have but little respect for it. It is really curious to observe how our brother strives now to turn attention away from his attempt at the outset to supersede the Decision by his own version of it, and how anxious he is to bring out instead of that fact, the question, Whether or no we accept it. He fancies he discovers some inconsistency between our demand for the Decision itself in preference to the Visitor's article, and our opinion respecting that decision.

He asserts that "the whole drift of the last editorial in the Messenger goes to make

the impression upon its readers, that the editor approves of the decision of the Council, but that the Visitor rejects it." Such a statement is hardly worth contradiction. The only foundation our contemporary has for such conclusion, is that we have merely demanded that the Decision should have been allowed to speak for itself, which he sought to prevent, by publishing a version, greatly differing therefrom, in several particulars—his assertion to the contrary notwithstanding. His strong feelings have rather got the advantage over his judgment, or he would not have written such a string of words as the following:

"Bro. Selden, you know it is not so; you know that in heart by word, by pen and by deed,—in private, in the church, and in the public press, you have, in a style most offensive, ignored the decision. Now in the face of such an open, and unceremonious rejection on your part, don't we beseech you for your own sake, and for the sake of that religion which you profess, strive to impress your readers with the idea that you adhere to the advice of the Council, and that the Visitor is the rejecting party."

How very desirous our brother is for "harmony between contending parties!" Whether the Visitor is the rejecting party and wished to ignore it, or no, may be seen better, perhaps, by what he then did, than by what he now says. "Actions speak louder than words." The substitution of his version of it, and then scattering reprints thereof over the city and province, we thought, looked very much like a wish to ignore it. We know of nothing else he could have done that would so effectively reject it, ignore it, or set it aside, if so be that the Decision itself had not been subsequently published in the Messenger, and afterwards in the Visitor. If this had not been done the Council would have been misrepresented, and their Decision most certainly ignored.

We hardly think it becomes our brother to add to the appeal in the above quotation such a wicked sentence as the following: "Such tergiversation must be condemned by every honest man." If there has been "tergiversation" it has not been with us. We have no occasion for such action, and wish that others had not. It is strange that our brother does not perceive how contradictory his own statements are, for while he unblushingly states as quoted above, "you have, in a style most offensive, ignored the decision;" he afterwards says "On that decision, so formed, we take our stand to-day. To it we unswervingly cleave Bro. Selden will you do likewise? If so, between you and us there need not be another word of disputation." Is there not a curious discrepancy between his statement and his question? But how very magnanimous and disinterested of our brother! Having applied the match, he now deprecates the destruction and ravages of the flames. Words may be softer than oil, and yet be drawn swords. It is too late to ask for peace when words like these have been so recklessly used. But he asks, Will we take our stand on that decision? Of course we accept the document as the decision of the Council, but we do not agree with the opinions expressed on all the points on which it treats. And we would ask, Do you Bro. Bill "unswervingly cleave" to the decision as interpreted by yourself, or as understood by other members of the Council?—There is but one sentence in the decision that points to any action at all, and that is not of union, but of reconsideration.

We are assured by members of the Council they did not intend it to mean, or for a moment suppose it would effect the restoration of Dr. Pryor to the fellowship of the church. Bro. Bill himself knows very well that the word "reconsider" did not mean a restoration to fellowship. The council had a long discussion on that point and would not advise the Granville Street Church to take any such action. Where then is his "basis of union"? and what had the church in that document to guide them? The expression of opinion in the decision of the Council was of such a nature that it more than confirmed all the previous acts of the church. No reversal of those acts or rescinding of resolutions was even hinted at. No, nothing but "reconsider their action." And "reconsider" it, they did, as we shall shew.

We think our brother's new-born admiration of that document is rather more glowing than its authors contemplated. He writes of it as in the above letter, and, in his editorial, he says:

"The decision of the twelve brethren convened from the three Provinces presented a hopeful basis of union, for the Editors of the denominational press, for the members of Granville Street Church, and for the ministers and churches of the denomination generally. Let that be adhered to by each and all, and the unity of the denomination is preserved, and the interests of truth and charity maintained; but from upon it ignore it, and insult it, and you have confusion, heart burnings, disputations, and, we fear, even evil word and work."

What a pity our brother did not find this out before! Whilst the decision says not a word about its being "a basis of union;" or even the "restoration of harmony," on the two points on which it expresses any opinion at all the verdict is that of *censure* of Dr. Pryor's conduct—stronger than any previous expression of the church. As Bro. Bill proposes to make them "a basis of union" we copy them:

"Resolved. That in the opinion of this Council, Dr. Pryor is not guilty of immorality as charged in the allegation; yet it is at the same time the opinion of this Council that Dr. Pryor has shewn great want of discretion in the character of his visits to Mrs. McMillan."

"Resolved. That the Council acquit Dr. Pryor of dishonest and fraudulent intention in his dealings as the agent of Miss Vass; but they are of opinion that it was most unwise in him to undertake the management of her accounts at all, and that he is charged with incompetency in keeping accounts, and culpable negligence in not preserving vouchers."

On the third point in the decision, no course having any reference to union was recommended. No, nothing, it will be perceived, but a "reconsideration." Read it.

"Resolved. That in relation to the suspension of Dr. Pryor on the charge of fraudulent transactions in the affairs of Miss Vass the Council is of opinion after a careful examination of the whole matter in relation to which this Council has already delivered its decision, that it would be advisable for the church to reconsider their action thereon."

This then, the church adopted. We published in connection with the decision of the Council on the 2nd of October, an extract from the proceedings of the Church on the subject.

We refrained from publishing the reasons recorded, and still have no desire to do so. As, however, many enquiries have come to us, some of them from New Brunswick, respecting the ultimate action taken by the church, we append the resolution, which we learn is in entire accordance with the recommendation given by the Council, as understood by several of its members. After a recital of the reasons, the resolution concludes as follows:

"On the 30th of May last the church suspended fellowship with Dr. Pryor until such time as he should afford satisfactory explanation of certain statements apparently confirmatory of the charges then under consideration. The main question now is, whether such explanation has been furnished. After carefully considering all the evidence adduced before the Council the church are forced to conclude that it has not been furnished; and therefore they cannot rescind their resolution of suspension, and they see no prospect of any further light being thrown upon the matter. Considering these things and the character of the evidence adduced in support of the charge of immorality and impropriety, and Dr. Pryor's conduct during the whole course of the proceedings relating to him, the Church have no course left but to declare the termination of Dr. Pryor's connection with them as a member, and they do therefore hereby withdraw fellowship from him."

This action we repeat, is what was fully anticipated by several members of the Council and in harmony with their recommendation. We have it under their hands. Although the Decision was a unanimous one, it was explained by the President of the Council and another member as not understood by all alike. The Council did not see "eye to eye," neither were they "joined together in the same judgment" as our brother affirmed. And our brother knew they were not when he penned his statements that they were. They merely agreed together on the wording of the Decision, and left the Church to take the responsibility of future action, without giving any more definite advice than "reconsider."

Let Brother Bill get the Council to approve of his first article and we have done. Or else, let him, like an honest man and a christian, acknowledge that he has misrepresented the Council, the Granville Street Church, and the Messenger, and we shall be only too glad to accept the peace he proffers.

Having complied with our brother editor's request in placing his letter before our readers, we have now a similar request to make of him: viz., that he will give the above article, with his own letter, an early insertion in the columns of the Visitor, so that those of our brethren amongst the Baptists of New Brunswick who do not see the Messenger may be more correctly informed on this matter.

We ought perhaps to apologize to our readers for occupying so much of our space on this subject, and we most sincerely hope that there will be no necessity for again referring to it.

The following is a postscript to a letter received a few days since from a respected ministerial brother. As it was not written for publication we do not give the name of the writer: