

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Works of Fiction.

Mr. Editor,—

I have read with much pleasure, and I hope with profit, the article "Novels and the Theatre," in your issue of the 19th ult.

The subject treated, is one of importance, considered in relation to the present and future well-being of society in general. It is more so than is generally admitted. It was said, if my memory is not at fault, by Sir Jas. Mackintosh, "let me write the songs of the people, and I care not who writes their morals." I quote from memory and cannot vouch for the literal correctness of my quotation; the sentiment I believe correct, and there can be no doubt that the morals of a people are greatly modded by the character of the matter read. A compromise of extremes is often the result of a desire to meet the taste of those who feel no interest in works of stern reality,—whose only merit is in their truthfulness and the instruction they contain,—who, nevertheless, would not stoop to read the more exceptional works of fiction. To meet, it is said, this class of readers, and they are by no means few, a literature must be provided, that will secure their attention by addressing itself to the imagination. Hence fictitious stories pervade so generally the literature of the present day.

I should be happy to receive from your venerable correspondent Dr. Tupper, through the columns of the *Christian Messenger*, an extended opinion on the question of fictitious works, taking, in the range of his remarks, the character of a large portion of *Sabbath School books*.

On certain portions of the Bible, quoted to justify the novelist, such as the Parables by Nathan, Jotham and Jehoshaphat, the Dr's. opinion would be timely, and highly regarded. I hope to see this subject by him or other able men treated as it requires,

I am, &c.,

A COUNTRYMAN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Christian Wakefulness.

"Now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Rom. xiii. 11.

By the figurative use of the word sleep in the above passage, I suppose, the apostle means carelessness, inattention, or unconcern. And it is this carelessness, apathy, or mental slumber from which he insists, that it is high time to awake.

But, when we look at men of the present day in their relation to this world, when we view their habits, and tendencies in reference to time merely, we see at once, that this is one of the very last injunctions, that needs to be pressed upon them; for, in this respect, they are already wide awake. The age in which we live, is a busy one. It is an age of activity. It is a time of bold adventures, mighty enterprises, exciting changes, and stirring events. It is a time in which men, so far from being asleep in reference to the things of time and sense, are actually taxing their powers, both of mind and body, to the very extremity of endurance, and in many cases beyond that point. And this restless activity, this persevering diligence is apparent wherever we turn, to whatever point of the compass we direct our eyes. In science, in literature, in the arts, in commerce, in jurisprudence, in politics, in every department of human skill and industry—as well as in plotting and scheming—all is wakefulness and activity, and men are every where thoroughly in earnest.

But, while persons are thus awake to the present, may they not be asleep in reference to the great future? While time, and the things of time are thus busying them, thus employing their heads, their hearts, and their hands, is it not to be feared, that they are losing sight of eternity? While they are so intently, so fixedly gazing at the things that are seen, may not their perception of the things that are not seen, be comparatively dim and obscure? While they are making so rapid, so gigantic strides in the paths in which men walk by sight, is there not danger of failure in their walk by faith? In a word, is it not to be feared, that the present, the visible, the temporal are in a great measure, closing our eyes to the future, the invisible, the eternal? Yes, dear Brother, this is the danger. The danger is, that time with its trifles and toys, is eclipsing

to our view the great eternity, with all its dread solemnities, its sublime realities.

Yours in Christ,

J. MORRISON.

Onslow, Feb. 27th, 1868.

IN MEMORIAM.

For the Christian Messenger.

ANNORA FOSTER,

At Port Medway, Dec. 13th, 1867, aged 29 years. Our sister professed faith in Christ in 1863 and was among the first the writer had the privilege of baptizing in Port Medway.

It may be said of her, that she adorned her profession. Her life was exemplary. She was modest and retiring, but devotedly pious.

Consumption claimed her as its victim. She repined not at her approaching end but met death with calm composure. May the widowed mother, the sisters and brother be sustained in their bereavement.—Communicated by Rev. J. E. Gouche.

REBECCA THOMSON,

daughter of deacon John and Mary Thomson, of Hammonds Plains, was born in 1845.

Her parents were anxious that their daughter should fill a sphere of usefulness in life, hence every opportunity was embraced to cultivate her mind.

Brother Thomson's residence has been a home for travellers, especially for christian ministers. His daughter and her kind mother always made them welcome. Deceased was baptised by Rev. R. Philp while pastor of the church, under whose faithful ministry she experienced a change of heart and found peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Her parents were realising in their beloved daughter their fondest hopes. But alas, the brightest things below the skies soon fade under the effects of consumption. She frequently spoke of soon having to leave this world and her hopes of a better. On one occasion while her mother was holding her hands she said, "Mother, these hands shall never work again, I would like to have lived to have been some use to the cause of Religion, also to wait on you and dear father in your declining years, but God has ordered otherwise. I shall have to leave you." She died 5th of January, 1868, in the 23rd year of her age.

Those hands shall never work again,  
My toil on earth is done,  
This feeble pulse soon cease to beat  
And soon my race be run.

And soon the joys of earth shall be  
Among the things that were,  
And my immortal spirit then  
Shall fill another sphere.

NELSON BAKER.

For the Christian Messenger.

To the Baptists of Nova Scotia.

LETTER 6.

Dear Brethren,—

The lamentable haste used in the professed answers to these communications, now accelerated by the unprecedented privilege obtained of reading my letters before they appear in public, still interrupts my original plan, and obliges me to diverge considerably from the course I had proposed; I must therefore beg you to excuse what may occasionally appear an interruption, perhaps sometimes a repetition in the line of remark.

I am deeply grieved at the irritation discovered in the third letter purporting to be an answer to my third, and I cannot avoid referring it to the petulance and inaccuracy of youth. Granville Street Church is no longer guided by its old leaders.

But there must surely still be precious souls who, in memory of our past relation, and of the sainted dead who fell asleep during my ministrations among them, do not sneer at my yearning remembrance of the church "of my first love;" who would not attribute to me things I have not said; nor strain my words into meanings that were not intended.

Every careful reader of my letters and the professed answers, will have perceived to what I allude. They will have seen, that language has been imputed to me that I have not used; and that the words I have used have been put in the worst point of view.

But certainly I have no fear that you, my brethren, will apprehend that one, long affectionately familiar with your Hardings, Dimocks, Mannings, Chipmans; with the sainted Burton and Munro; and ever loved and trusted by them, and now grown old among you, is going to attempt the terrible things against the churches, with which the writer of the letter in question tries to alarm you.

But though idle as regards any direct force, this is all calculated to have the indirect force of turning you away from the true points in question.

I trust you will see, however, that while I have no where used the words "spiteful and vindictive" at all, and have employed any other terms expressive of wrong feeling in the church only as the unavoidable inference of positive acts, I especially refer to fraud and falsehood as the only true interpretation of one specific act, in order to awake, if possible, the church from its dream of innocence, I no where use these, or any other terms, in the style of mere vituperation, as is sought to be made appear.

The church does not hesitate to charge fraud and falsehood on Dr. Pryor, in these very words, about which such an indignant flourish is made when I use them, though many persons, fully as competent as they, can see in his conduct nothing of the sort.

But if fraud and falsehood belong to every willful violation of contract, and the church have willfully violated theirs, then that charge justly lies in those words, against that violation.

Here rested, then, the true question from which the writer of the Church letter seeks to divert you by a noisy personal attack on me.

Was the refusal to accept the Council's decision under the circumstances a violation of contract? Are churches who make a reference like this before us, to be justified in the violation of their engagement? These are questions of great and vital moment to us all.

We are constrained to ask whether the third letter of the church has afforded us any answer on these points.

It does not do so by the quotations from various treatises on church discipline. These are entirely aside from the questions at issue. They are plainly passages designed only to guard against any usurpation of right by a council; or any improper submission to the dictation of others in doctrine.

The present case is wholly unlike either of these. It is simply a reference to certain christian judges to decide on facts. The Council usurp no authority; no doctrine is in question.

The church had passed an unfavorable judgment. This is complained of as unjust; and the church thereupon agree to call a Council of ministers and laymen to say what opinion they form of the same facts; and they agree to do this by earnest solicitation on the part of Dr. Pryor; they were not moved to it of themselves; it was designed then as a concession to him; and further, they took care that he should bear half the expense, impoverished as he was by their act of suspension.

These facts, together with their having already passed a judgment, shewed that they looked to the possible reversal of it by the Council, and must have known that Dr. Pryor looked to this also. They knew it was the remedy he sought against what he deemed their injustice. It amounted then to a positive engagement. Had they meant other than this, honour and good faith required that they should have said openly, at the first, "We agree to a council, but understand! we shall not accept its decisions unless they agree with ours." Of course that would have stopped the whole thing.

Nothing of the sort appeared in the basis about which they were so careful and solicitous. If they had meant it honorably it must have appeared there.

Besides, if it were not the understanding of the church as it was evidently that of Dr. Pryor, that the church would accept the decision of the Council on the matters of facts referred to them, then they allowed to Dr. Pryor no possible advantage by the Council, though they made him pay for half the expense of it; and they permitted him and his friends to take an immense amount of trouble, and threw on an impoverished man a great expense, to obtain a tribunal, whose judgment could not possibly do him who sought for it the least good, and while they were secretly resolved it should not do him any.

He might indeed be more crushed by the Council, but could not possibly obtain any relief.

Does it not outrage common sense to expect one to believe that this was the thing agreed on? If so, we are left to one of two alternatives. Either the church intentionally permitted Dr. Pryor to be deceived as to their purpose, which I believe is the same thing as intentionally deceiving him; or they made an agreement which they have now violated. This is the interpretation of their conduct which the facts in the case clearly develop. They either made, or pretended to make, an express reference, an arbitration of matters in dispute.

This was the character of their engagement even if there were no heat or prejudice. How much more does it partake of this character on the supposition of the existence of prejudice or heat. In that case, who will not say that they became unfit judges of the matter before them, and that a reference to others was only the claim of ordinary justice?

I intend in a subsequent letter, to give evidence within my own notice of heat and excitement. Judge Johnston, a grave truthful man, as every body knows, gives strong and clear evidence to this point. I will here present that of Mr. John Y. Payzant recently a member with them, till forced away by his sense of their injustice.

The following passages I take from his recently published pamphlet. I lament that the Baptists have less so talented and worthy a member; and some possibly may try to throw odium on him for his adoption of Episcopacy. That circumstance, however, cannot impeach his veracity.

"As I now review" writes Mr. Payzant, "its character," that of Dr. Pryor's exclusion, "step by

step, as I call to mind the hasty action, the reckless manner of taking evidence, the rejection of wise and considerate advice, the personal treatment of Dr. Pryor, the sneer, the rebuff, the eagerness to clutch at every trifle against him, and the disingenuous evasion of facts that told in his favor, the rejection of overtures for calling a Church Council, and the rejection of that Council's decision when called, I declare I tremble for the condition of men so deaf alike to the voice of reason, humanity and religion. If such strange conduct had been the sudden outburst of a moment, or of a few days, I knew that reflection and prayer would have restored the better mind, but when through those weary weeks of wrangling and bad temper, I found the evil instead of abating, outgrowing all restraint, &c., &c."

Oh sad, sad picture! Who does not see that when at length these angry, reluctant brethren consented to a council, it could mean nothing but a reference to calm and unbiassed men, to decide a case of fact which the Granville Street Church had rendered themselves utterly unfit to try.

I may add here Mr. Payzant's view of the character of the act of the Church in excluding Dr. Pryor:

"From an early stage of the proceedings Mr. Payzant writes, "which led to his exclusion from the church, I have had the deepest conviction of his innocence and moral rectitude; and therefore hold that the act of exclusion was wrong, unwarranted by the facts, and subversive of that respect and control in a community which a church of our Lord should possess;" and again, "Had forbearance, honesty and a christian and sorrowing spirit stamped this act with their own holy impress, I should have been impatient, 'tis true, of the violence done to my feelings and reason, but would have bowed to the decision of brethren. But I look in vain for any such heavenly marks of discipline as these in Pryor's exclusion."

You will ponder I know, dear brethren gravely and prayerfully over these extracts. The result I must hope will be salutary.

Now, every candid mind will admit that prejudice and passion unfit any man to sit in judgment on his neighbors' life or reputation, and therefore render in this case all further discussion needless.

I may, however, just say, that the texts referred to in the third church letter are as inconclusive as the quotations from authors on Baptist discipline. They show that discipline is to be observed. They do not shew that a church may not receive aid and advice in this from other churches.

But the point in question is misapprehended by the writer of this letter. It is not, whether it is allowable to refer to another body the duty of performing the discipline of the church. If the decision of the Council had been accepted, it would have become their decision, the act not of the Council, but of the Church, and they might have explained that they thus acted in deference to the grave opinion of wise and able brethren.

The true question then is, may it not be becoming a modest man in delicate and difficult cases to defer to the judgment of wiser men? If so the same might be becoming in a modest church. Would it not have been seemly in this case for the church under all the circumstances to have accepted as their own, in this delicate examination of doubtful testimony, the judgment of twelve impartial and able men, after so long and patient an examination. Should they not have considered the peculiar delicacy of the case, the youth and comparative inexperience of their most active members; but especially, should they not have reflected that they were without a pastor, that the church for such a purpose was mutilated?

This last want, the presence of a Council might supply. There was no need to wait till they elected a new pastor.

But notwithstanding all these considerations so weighty in reason, the point is strained into the form of a religious scruple. "We dare not defer this duty to others;" which in this case I have shewn means, we dare not accept the aid of wiser men than ourselves, although we solemnly engaged to do it.

Now only see what this involves. Look at the condition of some of our churches; they may be found in remote districts, sometimes consisting possibly of very worthy persons chiefly females with some three or four, or half a dozen males. Make the number greater if you choose. They live in a spot in the country where they have no opportunity of learning many things that tend to enlightenment and breadth of mind. A case of great delicacy and difficulty occurs among them. There are around them persons in neighboring churches of the highest intelligence, virtue and piety, who might lend them great aid in deciding this question. These persons are willing to do it; nay, they do in fact examine, and give their opinion. They pass their judgment ably and justly in a difficult question of fact. But the simple, honest church members cannot understand it. They are quite wrong in their simple ignorance, nevertheless they are obliged, according to the writer of the Granville Street Church letter, to reject this wise and experienced aid. They dare not accept it! It is their duty to stick to their ignorant notion; it is wrong for them to bow to superior wisdom.

And yet if these wise neighbours were only to become members of that particular community the whole matter would change. The circumstance of those names now standing on the Church record would work an instant revolution in the nature of right and wrong. Now they may accept these wise counsels, but not before.

I shall not believe till I see it, that any of our churches, except Granville Street Church, are going to accept a system of views so wholly unreasonable as this.

Still less shall I believe till I see it, that any of them will be of the opinion that a church heated and prejudiced, is in a fit state to pass a judgment on a minister's reputation which, if