

der was reasonable and expedient, and might have met with apostolic approval, if it had been introduced, the subsequent alteration, whereby that presiding elder became the bishop, with new and enlarged powers, was plainly contrary to the tenor and spirit of New Testament legislation.

4. That by parity of reasoning, other additions to the christian system may be held apostolic. In Justin Martyr's time (about A. D. 151) the wine used in the Lord's Supper was mixed with water, and portions of the elements were sent to the absent and the sick. Were those practices apostolic? If so where shall we stop?

5. Our only safety lies in rigid adherence to New Testament principles, rules and laws as far as they can be clearly ascertained.—We must not be guided by surmise or conjecture. We must not be governed by expediency. It is perilous to assume super-apostolic wisdom. Whatever inconveniences may be supposed to arise from the Congregational mode of church government (and human weakness and depravity, if yielded to, would soon corrupt any forms), it is clearly the nearest approach to the pattern of apostolic churches, and most in accordance with the free spirit of Christianity. A body of believers, united together in love and purity, and resolutely determined to shape all their proceedings, as a church, by the written laws of the Saviour, as they may be discovered by diligent and prayerful inquiry, will be at no loss. But let them beware of substituting human tradition for the will of their Lord, and of bartering freedom for power—as is done by episcopacy.

Acadia College, Feb. 19th, 1868.

For the Christian Messenger.

Dear Sir,—

Letters have now been received from all the members of the late Council relative to the point raised by Rev. A. S. Hunt in his letter to you of Feb. 3rd. Seven of these letters have already appeared in your columns, and I am now directed to ask you to publish so much of the remaining four as bear upon the point in question; together with a few remarks connected with the subject of these communications.

A. M. Wheelock, Esq., writes thus

"As for the church being asked, whether they would receive our decision as final or not, I never heard of such a thing to the best of my knowledge. When the church received the Council I supposed as christians they were bound to receive the decision."

James E. Rand, Esq., says

"I beg leave to state that after a careful examination of the letters referred to and turning my thoughts to the various questions discussed at that session, I cannot call to my mind the slightest recollection of the question in dispute having been put to the representatives of the church by the Secretary or any other member of Council. Had that question been asked and an answer given as stated by Messrs. Rand and Eaton, it would have implied a want of confidence in the Council. Had such discourtesy been shown by the representatives of the church, I do not think it could be forgotten by any member of the Council."

Rev. Mr. Davis, writes

"I am sorry to say that I have no very distinct remembrance of what occurred at the moment to which your inquiries refer. There was much stir and excitement just then, and my attention was distracted from matters more immediately on hand. I am inclined to think, however, that Mr. Hunt's statement in his recent letter to the Messenger as to the *from* of the questions then put and the answers returned, is substantially correct. That is, I seem to recall both the questions and the answers; and have a strong impression that Mr. Hunt has correctly reported them. To this, however, I would add that I also recall the discussions that were raised in connection with those questions and answers as indicated in your letter and in Mr. Rand's as given in the Messenger, together with Mr. Hunt's letter. It was evident that you and he, as representatives of the church before the Council, were anxious not to promise on behalf of the church more than you were authorized to promise, and yet I was not fully awake to the importance of these discussions. I had a lively hope—a hope alas! which has proved to be but a fallacious one—that the decisions at which the Council might arrive, would lay a basis if it did nothing more for the settlement of your unhappy church difficulties. The existence of this hope made me impatient of everything which tended to hinder the Council from getting at what seemed to me to be its proper work; and so I was not sorry when our President "waived his hand," and brought these discussions to a close—their final one as it turned out to be."

Rev. W. S. McKenzie writes:—

"My recollection of the scenes connected with the first session of the Council is quite vivid, and supplies the following:—

When the Council was organized, Dr. Spurden turned to me, sitting near him at the table, and said—'Now, brother Secretary, what next?' I replied, 'We should now ask both parties whether they will recognize the Council, now organized, as their MUTUAL COUNCIL.' Dr. Spurden put this question. There was some

hesitation on the part of the representatives of the church. Mr. Rand seemed a little bewildered, and began to make some remarks about resolutions passed by the church, and called on Mr. Eaton to remind the Council of the purport of these resolutions. Mr. Eaton turned to me and said, 'you have the resolutions and can understand them.' We turned to these resolutions, but could not see that they contained the answer to the Chairman's question. They related to the composition of the Council, to the subjects for our investigation and adjudication. Meanwhile Mr. Rand, Mr. Eaton, Judge Johnston, and Dr. Crawley* were on their feet addressing the Chairman at the same moment, on points astray from the main question, and producing no small amount of confusion. Messrs. Rand and Eaton were maintaining that the resolutions passed by the Church July 12 and August 12 (I think these are the dates—I write from memory) constituted the basis of action for the Council. At length Dr. Spurden waved his hand for silence and said—'Brethren, the resolutions are all right. We understand that matter. But you do not seem to understand the question before you. The question of the Council is this—Do you recognize this Council as now organized as your Mutual Council? Will the parties please answer?' Dr. Pryor responded in these very words—'I do most heartily.'—Mr. Rand and Mr. Eaton requested a few moments to retire for consultation. They returned, and appealing again to the resolutions which had been under debate, wishing us to consider them as the basis of action, they responded—'We recognize the Council as organized.'

Dr. Spurden then said 'We are now ready to proceed to the investigation.' Then recalling his statement, he remarked 'I think the Council had better go into a private session.' The parties retired, and the Council settled upon the mode of conducting the examination. Now at no time during these preparatory proceedings did I hear the question put to either party whether they would agree to accept the decision as final. That members of the Council agitated this question among themselves, or that any one put it to Dr. Pryor, or to the representatives of the Church, I have no recollection whatever. I can say that I for one had not the remotest suspicion that either Dr. Pryor or the Church intended to set aside our decision. It was my business, as Secretary, to record the official proceedings of the Council, and not anything and every thing that came up at random. And as one, whose position required me to note every thing that should go on record in the Minutes of the Council, I am certain that the question in debate, was not distinctly and officially put to either party, and that no discussion arose between the parties and the Council on any question of that nature. Had it been thus, and had either party expressed an intention to set aside our decision, I should have recorded it, laid down my pen, returned to my home, and saved myself from the contempt which I could not have resisted had I remained to work in the face of such an intention."

In this connection one or two remarks may be made.

1. When the church entertained the idea of calling in the aid of a Council, different brethren once and again stated that they could not consent to such a course, if thereby the church would ultimately transfer to such a body obligations which they believed were by the Scriptures imposed upon the church, and the church only—other brethren as frequently made answer that calling in the aid of a Council would not, as a matter of course, infringe in any way upon the ultimate responsibility of the church in the case, but would aid in the exercise of that responsibility.

2. Accordingly the resolutions which were sent to Councillors invited them simply to "investigate" certain subjects and to "report" to the church their "opinion."

3. Two representatives of the church have each given a direct and explicit statement that at the first Session of the Council, the question was asked (not formally and officially from the chair, and on this account not likely to be recorded by the Secretary whose "business" was to "record the official proceedings of the Council, and not anything and everything that came up at random"—as he himself informs us.) whether the church would agree to regard the opinions at which the Council might arrive as final, and that they answered in the negative. Their statements are most fully and even minutely confirmed by Rev. S. March and corroborated by Wm. Faulkner, Esq. Rev. J. Davis also appears to recollect something of the discussions that occurred on this point. On the other hand Rev. A. S. Hunt, positively declares that no such question was raised, and that no such denial as that stated was made.

The testimony of nearly all the remaining members of the late Council who meet the point, is, that they have no recollection that the question was raised. It is of course unnecessary to point out how impossible it would be for a number of persons to recollect that certain things occurred which did not occur, or how reasonable it is to suppose that things which did occur were by others not noticed, or, if noticed, were forgotten.

4. Dr. Spurden says "I knew beforehand from their own avowal, that the representa-

*It is believed that Dr. Crawley was not present.

tives of the church would not agree to this, and that any attempt to force concurrence in a decision not yet given might stop proceedings altogether."

5. When the Decision was delivered and a vote of thanks proposed, an unanimous vote was withheld until it was distinctly explained by the President, that such vote would not compromise any member of the church in regard to accepting or not accepting the decision.

6. The Decision of the Council recommended the church to "reconsider," its action touching the transactions in the affairs of Miss Vass," which recommendation seemed clearly to admit that it was the duty of the church to exercise their own judgment in the matter, and as clearly advises the church to this course.

7. When the Clerk of the church was persevering in his effort to get the Minutes of Council, he, four days after the delivery of the decision, wrote thus to the Secretary of the Council: "They," the church, "wish to know by what steps you arrived at it, (the decision,) so that they may be able to decide conscientiously whether they ought to abide by it or not." (See "Reply" page 68.)

From these statements it is evident, that the Church regarded it as fundamental in Baptist polity that in such a case as was then under consideration, it could not transfer ultimately the duty of deciding for itself; that the Councillors were invited to report their opinions to the church; that the representatives of the church not only had no authority to agree to accept a decision, not yet delivered, but had they so agreed would have knowingly done violence to the solemn convictions of the church; that they did not do so but expressed their determination not to do so; that when the decision was delivered in the presence of the whole Council, the church unmistakably indicated what they believed to be their duty on this point, and no surprise was expressed by any member of the Council at the same; that the decision itself points to the subsequent exercise of judgment on the part of the church; and that four days after the delivery of the decision, the Secretary (Rev. Mr. Armstrong) on learning that the church intended to exercise such independent judgment, expressed no surprise at such a course.

After what has been stated above, it is hardly necessary to ask: Did the church do anything which might fairly be construed by the Council into a pledge to abide by the decision? In other words, Had they any good reason to believe before they entered upon their work that the church had impliedly contracted to accept the decision not yet given?

1. The resolutions upon which they acted certainly contained no such contract or pledge.

It surely is not so universally the practice for churches to accept the decisions of Councils as for it to be assumed that this church would do so.

The Church's acceptance of the Council "as now organized" did not, surely, amount to a pledge to accept a decision not yet delivered.

2. Rev. Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Hunt would have declined to act if they had supposed the Decision would not be regarded as final.

James E. Rand, Esq., thinks it would have implied a want of confidence in the Council to have told them: the church would not agree beforehand to accept the decision.

A. M. Wheelock Esq., thinks that accepting the Council was a pledge to accept the decision.

Rev. W. S. McKenzie would not have acted on the Council had the church expressed an intention to reject the decision. [He does not say what he would do in a case where a church would not bind themselves to accept a decision.]

Rev. Mr. Bill and T. R. Patillo Esq. say nothing on the point.

3. Dr. Spurden says that though he "had laid it down as a general rule not to serve on a Council unless the parties would agree to abide by its decision," yet in this instance "he knew beforehand from their own avowal that the representatives would not agree to this,"—to accept the decision.

Rev. Mr. March and W. Faulkner, Esq., recollect that before the Council began their investigation the representatives of the church expressly said that they would not agree to accept the decision as final.

Rev. Charles Randall says that he "never for a moment imagined that the Council went to Halifax to *decree*, but to investigate, report, and advise; subject of course to the action of the church, whose action would be final."

Rev. Mr. Davis "hoped" the decision might lay a "basis" of action for the church; thus agreeing with the Rev. Mr. Randall.

Yours, &c,
B. H. EATON, Clerk.

Feb. 25th.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, MARCH 4, 1868.

The latest English telegrams contain the news of the resignation of the Earl of Derby, as Prime Minister and leader of the Government. His retirement is in consequence of declining health, having been frequently of late obliged to abstain from his public duties by severe fits of gout. The management of Government now falls on Mr. Disraeli, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, leader of the House of Commons. Although a man of high ability, he is by no means so popular as Lord Derby, and will probably have some trouble in making up a ministry who will long hold office. The man who will probably assume a very prominent part in the cabinet is Lord Derby's eldest son—Lord Stanley. The finances and commerce of the kingdom are in a very healthy state, but as political parties are pretty equally divided, there will no doubt ere long be a sharp struggle for the possession of power, in consequence of the Premier's retirement.

Public attention in England is still chiefly engrossed by the expedition to Abyssinia. There are now ten or twelve thousand British troops under Sir Robert Napier in the heart of that almost unknown region, to enforce upon King Theodore the release of the English captives. The country has for some time past been in a state of great civil commotion, several of the powerful tribes into which the population is divided being in open insurrection against King Theodore. Some of them have openly welcomed the British army, and there is good reason to hope that the semi-barbarian ruler will be intimidated into giving up his captives—should not such be the case, the expense and casualties that may attend the expedition are much to be dreaded. The country is most difficult of access, being in fact a conglomeration of lofty mountains, fertile valleys, and most difficult passes. It lies in northern Africa just north of the equator, which it nearly touches on the south, and is bounded by Upper Egypt on the north and the Blue Nile on the west. The religion of the inhabitants is about equally divided between a corrupt form of christianity and heathenism.

In connection with Africa it is very satisfactory to learn, that the celebrated African explorer, Dr. Livingstone, is in all probability safe and pursuing his researches in the interior of the Continent, the story of his having lost his life in a skirmish with natives, having been fully ascertained to be untrue.

WHAT IS MAN? or Thoughts on the origin, nature and destiny of man: by Deacon Cornelius Connolly, of Jacksontown, N. B. This pamphlet is brought out for the purpose of meeting the old Sadducean doctrine, held by some—that at death man ceases his conscious existence until the resurrection. The pamphlet is well written and is calculated to be useful to many persons troubled on those points. It is published by Barnes & Co., St. John, N. B.

THE CANADIAN DOMINION TESTED BY THE EVIDENCE OF SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY, by J. G. Marshall, Retired Judge, &c.

Judge Marshall's pen is most prolific. He has sought here to shew

"That it is not the will of the Divine Ruler to establish permanently, extensive Empires and governments to rule over other nations and countries, but on the contrary, it appears to be His will and design, that each people, as to civil rule, shall be independent of every other power; and have and enjoy the government of its own affairs; except in some special instances, in which that infinitely wise and Almighty Ruler, for effecting certain purposes of justice, or mercy, toward mankind, is pleased to establish and uphold, but, only for a time, some powerful Empire, to rule over any certain number of other nations or countries."

He gives a fine summary of history—biblical and profane—from that of Ancient Greece down to the New Dominion, and comes to the conclusion, that, to prevent the evil which has befallen other nations, we should seek an entire separation from the Union.

We perceive by the *Sword and Trowel*, February. That a Mr. Haley of Derby, late of the Metropolitan Tabernacle College, was expected to leave England this month for St. John, N. B.—we presume to become pastor of the Brussels Street Church.

At the Annual Church meeting of the Tabernacle, (Mr. C. H. Spurgeon's) the number of members was announced as 3634; the clear increase for the past year being 224.