

the accused man, ought I not to say every friend of justice, must have wished to see widely made known, so soon as possible. Thus, apparently, the Editor of the *Visitor* felt, and sought, therefore, to send it abroad, on the wings of the wind, in the form of a digest of the judgment of the Council, rather than a close technical adherence to its literal language.

I, for another, felt myself justified, may be obliged by truth, to say, everywhere, and to every body, as I had opportunity, "the Council has acquitted Dr. Pryor. They did so, in all that was of main importance,—in all that people would, generally, care to be informed of."

It seemed to follow, that the Church would, of course, adopt the Council's decision. But this they would not do. They were recommended to reconsider the sentence against Dr. Pryor, by which they had suspended him from church fellowship, i. e. to rescind their sentence,—that was of course the meaning of the Council.—Instead of this they proceeded to pass a formal act of excommunication!

Now here begins the darkest page in all their acts, and the one on which we, as members of the same community of churches, must necessarily feel ourselves called on to pass our judgment. Having referred the matter to twelve men mutually chosen, the Granville Street Church were bound in honor to accept their decision, yet they reject that decision, and proceed to act in a manner in the highest degree hostile to the decision of the Council, and to Dr. Pryor.

But, that I may not be tedious, I leave you to think of what has now been mentioned and to examine as carefully as you may, the reasons the church give for not complying with the judgment rendered. You may find their resolution printed in the appendix to Judge Johnston's letter. I think you will see, that these reasons are void of force, and unworthy of the parties uttering them.

Affectionately,
Your brother in Christ,
E. A. CRAWLEY.

ERRATUM.—Letter 1. line 1. For "increasing unworthiness," read, "increasing sense of unworthiness."

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters from Granville St. Church to the Baptists of Nova Scotia.

LETTER I.

Dear Brethren,—

No words can convey to you an adequate account of the great trial through which we have passed since last April. Our quietness was broken up as the stillness of midnight is destroyed by the sudden clap of thunder. Since then "trouble and anguish have taken hold upon us;" but our heavenly Father has heard our cries and listened to our supplications. It has been refreshing to us to hear from time to time that you have shared in our sorrows; thus fulfilling the Divine injunctions, "Bear ye one another's burdens," "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Hitherto we have refrained from placing before you any account of our proceedings relating to our late Pastor. At a meeting of the Church in October last, we discussed the propriety of publishing a record of our action, but decided not to do so. Now, however, we find ourselves called upon to give our reasons for our doings; which we shall do as briefly as possible. Not long ago Judge Johnston sent us a letter complaining of our conduct. That letter he has published to the world. To that letter we have considered ourselves bound to reply. That reply will be before you ere long. But now a second time we find ourselves arraigned at the bar of the public opinion of the churches throughout the land, and we might say throughout the world, and by a man of rare talents and learning, a man of devoted piety and generous and benevolent feelings—the Rev. Dr. Crawley. Whatever he may think, we cherish a grateful remembrance of his years of useful labor among us, and he still holds a high place in our affections. Being now called upon by Dr. Crawley's letters to you, to give our reasons for what we have done, we feel assured that you will give an impartial hearing to what we shall say in defence of a course taken in the fear of God, and for the purity and honor of the religion of our common Saviour. But we are not called upon simply to defend ourselves. An object of greater importance compels us to reply to Dr. C. through the *Christian Messenger*, and that is the duty to defend the Baptist principles which we think are assailed in this controversy. In the discussion of these principles you cannot fail to be deeply interested; and we pray that what may be written by Dr. Crawley and by us will have the effect of bringing our denomination to a

clearer understanding of the principles of their Church government. For ourselves, we do not shrink from the fullest discussion of all our proceedings. Some months ago we placed our conduct before a Council of twelve of your ministers and laymen. Their verdict is before you. Now our conduct will be placed before you. We ask an impartial judgment.

In Dr. C.'s first letter the principal matter to be noticed is our refusal to allow him to become one of the Council. When we met to select councillors we laid it down as a proper principle to act upon, that "the relatives and connections of Dr. Pryor should be regarded as ineligible, and that such persons only as were believed by the church and by Dr. Pryor to be unprejudiced, should be chosen." We considered this principle a wise and just one. We think it is a principle universally recognized and acted upon,—among judges, juries and arbitrators. Dr. C. is a relative,—the principle, but not Granville Street Church, rejected him. Dr. C. indignantly protests against what is implied in passing over him, which is, as he states, that he is "blind to evidence, and willing to pervert justice, &c." It is implied, we think, that a relative is spared the pain of pronouncing against a relative, and in case a favorable conclusion is reached, the world cannot say "It is a family acquittal."

But the principle we laid down out off another class of persons, namely those who had prejudged the case. Among this class Dr. Crawley held a conspicuous position. A few sabbaths after our trouble overtook us, Dr. Crawley was in Halifax, and having visited Dr. Pryor, so thoroughly convinced was he of his innocence during this interview, that he came away declaring that he was willing "to stake his existence" upon it. Publicly at the Central Association, he expressed the same opinion and condemned the Church. Who would even imagine that a man having thus committed himself would ever dream of sitting upon the Council? It is not wonderful that Dr. Crawley felt a great sympathy for Dr. Pryor, as he found him tortured in the first outburst of the affair, but it is surprising that he should have come to a conclusion then, before hearing evidence on the case; and it is an extraordinary demand upon the "church of his first love," and not very complimentary to it, to ask the church and the denomination to endorse an opinion formed under such questionable circumstances.

So determined has Dr. C. been that this opinion of his should become the opinion of the Church and the denomination, that he procured letters from Cambridge, Mass., testifying to Dr. Pryor's good conduct while there, and then became Dr. Pryor's advocate before the Council, and threw himself into his defence with all his great energies, insisting at every step upon Dr. Pryor's innocence. Now he seems determined to force this opinion upon the denomination through the *Christian Messenger*.

We must express our deep sorrow that a multitude of stubborn facts and suspicious circumstances stand in the way of our forming the same opinion as that at which Dr. C. has arrived.

We are thankful to Dr. C. for his pledge "to use respectful language," especially when we think of this in connection with a letter which Judge Johnston sent in manuscript to the Granville Street Church, which Dr. C. recommends to the readers of the *Messenger*. Some of the epithets of this production are similar to those poured upon us from the tongue of the Judge during the time which he occupied in discussing this matter before the church. It is severe from his pen, but was like fire from his lips. Here are some samples from this extraordinary letter, "Lifted up with self conceit," "inflamed by pride," "obstinate in self will," "vindictive and spiteful in temper," "Pride interposed to sustain opinions," "Love-sickness at the sight," "The blood-bound called off from his prey pants to renew the pursuit, it is his instinct." This must suffice. We repeat that we are thankful to Dr. C. for his pledge that he will use "respectful language."

Dr. C. says "An old minister * * * has been suddenly struck down in Halifax by an obscure accusation, the truth of which appears in the strongest degree improbable." "Obscure accusation" &c. To meet this we must simply state facts:—For more than two years before the calamity burst upon the community rumors had been afloat prejudicial to the moral character of Dr. Pryor, and occasionally they came to the knowledge of some members of the church, but the informants were rebuked with indignation, and a deaf ear was turned to such reports. But on the morning of April 24th, Dr. Pryor was caught coming out of a house in Pleasant Street where he had been staying for two hours in the depth of night, with a young woman not of good repute, whose husband was abroad, and against whose

character Dr. Pryor had previously heard bad rumors. She was not a member of any church, but had been excluded from a Baptist Church in Boston; and she seldom attended any place of worship. It was subsequently, and occasioned by this, ascertained that Dr. P. had been paying this woman more than weekly visits—sometimes three or four or more visits a week—for three years. All this has come to the knowledge of the church by Dr. Pryor's own statements, and upon the testimony of a number of reliable witnesses, whose evidence cannot be shaken.

In addition to this, when Dr. Pryor's accounts of his business transactions for Miss Vass, which amounted to about seventy thousand dollars, were examined by a committee appointed by the Church for that purpose, it was found that there was a deficiency of some thousands of dollars. Dr. P. has not been able to show how this loss of money can be accounted for. And in the face of all this Dr. Crawley calls it an "obscure accusation."

Other points in Dr. Crawley's letter will be noticed hereafter.

Yours in christian fellowship,
By order and in behalf of the Church,
B. H. EATON, Clerk.

For the Christian Messenger.

DARTMOUTH, 17th Jan., 1868.

To the Editor of the *Christian Messenger*.—

Sir,—In your issue of the 8th inst., you have this paragraph,—"We have not been favored with a printed copy of Judge Johnston's letter or should be happy to send it to the brethren who have requested us to do so. We forbear comment."

And in the *Messenger* of this week, you take occasion from an allusion by Dr. Crawley to my letter, to tell your readers that, notwithstanding it professed to have been printed for private circulation only, it "has, in its printed form, been sent broadcast over the province—EXCEPT TO MEMBERS OF GRANVILLE STREET CHURCH." This exception being made notable by ominous capitals, which I have retained in this citation, very imperfectly represented I admit.

Seeing that the original letter had been in possession of the Church, some considerable time before a copy appeared in print; and that every member had heard it read, or had access to it, I do not comprehend what right you had to notice, in the manner you have done, the fact that I had not sent a copy to you, or to the Members of Granville Street Church. I might not think you or them entitled to that attention at my hand—if attention it had been; or perhaps I apprehended the attention might not have been duly appreciated and that the propriety of thrusting it upon them individually would be questioned—which you say has been the case elsewhere. However this may have been I cannot think you are the appropriate judge of the persons to whom printed copies should not have been sent.

But in view of the mode you have adopted, the enquiry arises, What does it really mean?

Why this notice of comments forbore—these giant letters, the emblems of laboring indignation—these unexplained hints of some outrage on propriety.

Surely you cannot mean covertly to convey the idea that I have sought to conceal from the members of Granville Street Church that which I was making known to others concerning them.

Any of your readers who have been led into such a misapprehension by the Delphic style of your communications, I beg to undeceive, by informing them that more than six weeks ago, I sent the original letter under my signature to the Pastor, to be read to the Church, and its receipt and the intention to answer it have been officially communicated to me by the Clerk of the church; and thus every thing which a printed copy could convey, Granville Street Church already possessed, in more authentic form.

As however, I have no other desire than that the printed copies should go into the hands of those who may be interested in the subject, and disposed to give it impartial consideration; should any such persons apply to you, I shall be happy to send them copies, as soon as you may favor me with their address.

I beg that you will do me the justice to publish this letter in the next number of the *Christian Messenger*—the organ through which the allusions I have noticed have been given to the public.

I am your obedient servant.

J. W. JOHNSTON.

[We have no desire to occupy our space with this controversy, or we might shew that there is a serious difference between Judge Johnston sending a manuscript letter to a church, and his publishing to the world that letter, containing grave charges against individuals by name, without giving them any intimation of so doing.—Ed. C. M.]

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JANUARY 21, 1868.

"The Dance of modern society."

A correspondent in our last, made reference to the practice of dancing, &c., and quotes a remark that many Christians in the U. States are accustomed to indulge in that amusement. We have heard this statement before, and would not be much surprised if it were true, and yet we think it hardly fair that this should be taken as a characteristic of United States Christians. Indeed if we may judge by their religious publications respecting the matter, we should say they were as much opposed to such practices as Christians are here or any where else. We have before us in the last number of the Baptist Quarterly, published at Philadelphia under the auspices of the Am. Baptist Publication Society, an article of great ability on "The Dance of Modern Society." That our correspondent and readers generally may form some idea of the views propounded we make a few excerpts:

"We propose an unusual compliment to the dance—we propose to discuss it. We cheerfully lend it dignity for the purpose. We pledge ourselves besides to put it permanently beyond the need of borrowing again. For we are about to vindicate for it a dignity all its own—the dignity of being exceedingly evil—a dignity which, however modestly worn, we think it possesses in a degree commensurate with the magnitude of its littleness in every other respect.

We purpose, then, to discuss the dance as practised in modern society. We purpose to discuss it earnestly, but temperately, with intense convictions certainly, but without prejudice, and with sentiments of sincere respect towards those who honestly differ from us in opinion.

The candor which we shall aim to maintain will not, accordingly, be the judicial candor of indifference. We appear as advocates, and we do not expect, as we shall not attempt, to avoid the vehemence of advocacy. We volunteer our office on behalf of several imperilled interests, all of them valuable, and one, at least, vital. It is the cause at once of Health, of Economy, of the Social Nature, of Intellectual Improvement, and of Morality that we defend. We undertake to implead the dance, in their joint behalf, as the common and equal enemy of them all.

We shall summon the accused to answer in the forum, not of passion, however clear and authoritative, but rather of reason, of conscience, and of common sense. If the dance can escape conviction here, it shall be welcome, for us, to go out of court, and take its chances of living down, as best it may, that ancient and sacred suspicion against it, which, thank God, not all the gibes of the world, and not all the sophistications of religious sentimentalism have yet availed to extinguish in the bosom of the Christian church.

"It is an ill augury for a Christian age to be spending brain and breath upon the question how to amuse itself. But if Christian teachers allow themselves to be caught with this wile of the devil, and submit to waste their earnestness in pitiful casuistry upon points of what? and when? and where? and how much? and how? in the art of amusement—whence, we implore to know, may we hope for the voice that shall re-animate an abject and oblivious age? *If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?*"

The truth is, the most of those who clamor so unappeasably for amusement, are precisely that class of persons who need it least. They are the cloyed, the sated, sons and daughters of pleasure, those who feel the "fullness of satiety"—who sigh, like the Eastern prince, for a fresh sensation, and languidly offer a prize for a new device of diversion. God forbid that ever an association calling itself Christian should enter the competition to supply it! These jaded voluptuaries need nothing so little as amusement. What they need is the bracing tonic regimen of wholesome, honest, useful work—such as the teeming dispensary of Christianity is never at a loss to supply. They might well mistake the thrill of unaccustomed and