

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JANUARY 29, 1868.

thing to exclude a minister from the pulpit, find a church must have a good and sufficient reason for such an act. Dr. Pryor was not acquitted on the first charge.

Dr. C. interprets the silence of the church upon the question of the Council's decision being final, as an admission on their part that they regarded it in that light. We can tell Dr. C. that we were not silent.

Had Dr. C. been present at the first session of the Council, he would not now assert that the church agreed to abide by the Decision. At that session the representatives of the Church were asked whether they would agree to accept the decision as final, and they most distinctly answered in the negative, and the point was never afterwards mentioned.

In our first Letter we thanked Dr. C. for his promise "to use respectful language." It is painful for us to see that a man who has hitherto stood so high in our esteem should have broken his word so soon; and proceeded in the discussion of this subject, trampling upon his pledge to use respectful language—a pledge volunteered and written. This is the way in which the Dr. breaks his vow:—"Fraud and falsehood * * * they themselves, (the church) commit in view of the whole world." The church "of his first love," now wipe their mouth like the adulteress, in Prov. xxx. 20, and say, "We have done no wickedness." This then is the brand which Dr. C. would put upon the Granville Street Church—dishonest and guilty of falsehood, and pretending innocence like the lewd woman of Solomon's day. For this we have no retort. For this we have no rebuke. We say, "The Lord rebuke thee." Let us put in order the charges which Dr. C. brings against the church—1. The church has trampled upon the principles of church government. 2. The church has been inflamed with pride, and have manifested a spiteful and vindictive temper. 3. The church is guilty of fraud and falsehood, and wipe their mouth like an adulteress, in pretending innocence. To the first of the charges we can reply with facts and arguments which we are assured will convince the churches, that in our discipline of Dr. Pryor, although we may have erred, and doubtless did err in some matters of expediency, yet we honored and acted upon the principles of Church government, as understood by Baptist Churches in these Provinces, the United States, and Great Britain.

But the question arises how shall we as a church reply to the other charges—those of indulging in spiteful temper—practising fraud and falsehood—and acting like the adulteress in the Proverbs. It occurs to us that all that could be said should be somewhat in this manner. Dr. C. is doubtless a man of talent and learning, but is he in the place of Him, who only could have read our hearts while we were undergoing this prolonged trial? Is he commissioned by any power on earth or in heaven to brand us or any other church with fraud and falsehood, and with conduct like that of an adulteress? Is Dr. Crawley the censor of the churches, who can stand upon the pedestal of his own importance and surveying the churches around him, brand them with fraud and falsehood—and compare their conduct to that of the bad woman of Solomon's day? Over what church will he next raise the rod of his wrath? Over the very next one whose doings may "steam up in the community with its demoralizing influence." Dr. Crawley should point out some fact, or assign some cause other than his assumption before he condemns and asperses a church in this manner. We deny the charge. We have no fear of being judged in this way by our brethren and sisters throughout the land. You will judge us from what you have seen and known of us, and from what you may learn in the future. We have more confidence in our brethren, than to suppose for a moment, that they will decide upon our conduct, simply because Dr. C. has written in crimson characters his charges of enormous guilt against Granville Street Church upon his banner, which he holds aloft, and to which he keeps his finger pointed at every step in this his desperate undertaking.

Had we agreed beforehand to accept the decision of the Council, to what might we have bound ourselves? Let us in answering this, keep within the bounds of the possible. In what relation did the Council find Dr. Pryor to Granville Street Church when they came to Halifax? They found him excluded from the pulpit, and as a member of the Church they found him suspended. It is possible that a council might have "decreed" that the Church

should rescind the vote suspending his membership, and also rescind the vote by which he had been excluded from the pulpit, and require the church to retain him as their pastor and a member in full standing; or dismiss him regularly as a member, and give him a letter of commendation as a minister, such as is generally given. On the other hand, they might have pronounced upon him in language too strong, and required the Church to publish his conduct to the world. Neither of these possible conclusions would have been acquiesced in by the Church.

In our opinion a church of Christ is not bound to abide by the decision of a Council. To say nothing of the fact, that it has always been understood in this light by Baptists, the teachings of Scripture are plain upon this subject. The churches of the apostles' time were organized as independent bodies, and each church was instructed to look well to its morals and to the soundness of its doctrines and principles. 1 Cor. v. 5. 2 Thes. iii. 6. Titus iii. 10. Here are duties imposed upon the churches. Is it a matter of choice whether they shall discharge them or not? By no means. They are required to obey their Lawgiver—Christ. Can they say to others—Councils or other bodies—discharge these duties and bear the responsibility and we will be free? If they should say this, would they be free? Christ holds each church accountable for enforcing his laws.

Let us hear the opinions of others on this point. D. C. Haynes says when speaking on this subject:

"Besides, she (a church) may proceed contrary to its (the Council's) decision, if she deems it her duty." He says farther "The true place of other ecclesiastical combinations is in subordination to the church, and deriving their authority from her."

Dr. Hiseox says in his Baptist Church Directory:

"If the case (discipline of a minister) be doubtful and difficult, and the church divided in counsel and action, it will be judicious to call in private brethren as advisers, or to call a Council for advice, and add the sanction of their opinions to the action of the church." page 23.

Dr. Wayland says in his Principles and Practices of the Baptists, page 181:—

"Can it (the Church) concede to any representation the right to interpret for us the precepts of Christ? This would be to abolish the right of private judgment and convert us into Romanists, nor lastly can we commit the execution of the laws to representatives, since the power to enforce the laws of Christ rests with each church itself."

We call attention to the truth enunciated in the last part of this quotation. Dr. Wayland who studied Baptist principles on the ground where Roger Williams lived and died, is an authority universally respected on this Continent. No church could refer a matter for final decision to a Council unless it were some matter, the nature of which would not admit of their giving a decision contrary to scripture. In such a case a council might be told that its findings would be final. But we were putting into execution the law of discipline laid down by God in his word. And it was not the discipline of a private member merely, but of a minister as well. We could not, we dare not transfer this matter to a Council. God in his word gives us no authority to make any such transfer of duties which he has laid upon the churches. And it is evident from the language of the Council in their decision that they did not misunderstand the matter. Will Dr. C. still persist in his assertion to the contrary? Crowell in his Manual, for which Dr. Ripley wrote an introduction, says when speaking of the discipline of a minister when a Council is called:—

"The investigation before the Council should be thorough, and a full record of all the facts proved should be entered on its minutes with the names of witnesses; and a copy should be transmitted to the churches, who may proceed to an original investigation if not satisfied with that of the Council. If the offence is such as to require his exclusion from church fellowship, they can now proceed without embarrassment, in the same way as with any other member."

Yours in Christian fellowship,
By order, &c.
B. H. EATON, Clerk.

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

MAINE, January 20, 1868.

Dear Messenger,—

I must apologize for my long silence. In my last I referred to Thomaston but did not finish my notes concerning the place. During my stay there I endeavoured with some

ministerial brethren to visit some of the places of interest. Among others worthy of a few lines is Knox's house formerly the residence of Major General Henry Knox, Secretary of war, (under George Washington) who was deputed to receive the sword from the celebrated Cornwallis, when he surrendered at Yorktown. In the year 1793 Knox by purchase came into possession of the property of Thomaston and surrounding localities. He employed persons to erect this *once* fine mansion commanding a beautiful view of the river and village—The mansion is 3 stories high, the basement built of brick, the rest of substantial wood. The building was finished the following year, at the cost of fifty thousand dollars, a good round sum for those times. Though in a delapidated condition, yet I could see traces of its former beauty, &c. It is a fac simile of the old fashioned English buildings with a noble hall, stair-cases going up right and left all open. Several of us climbed to the cupola and enjoyed the scene presented to the eye—a little back of the main building, and on each side there is a range or wing of out-houses extending east and west, thus making a kind of crescent, &c. I was reminded of the indifference of the Americans to old buildings, they seem to have no regard for anything antiquated unless it *pays* in dollars and cents, and hence their leaving this old building to rot and decay.

We visited the State-prison, located at the upper end of the village. It was built in 1823, and remodelled in 1843, by constructing three tiers of cells one above another, substantially built of stone, entered by iron doors of open grates secured by an iron bar running the whole length of each tier and simultaneously bolted. In one part of the prison we inspected the Carriage-makers—Boot and Shoe and Blacksmith's shop, where quite a number work at their respective trades. The work examined was very good. In examining the cells we found some of them tastefully ornamented by pictures fitted into ingenious frames of their own make. The majority of the prisoners were young and of foreign extraction. Some murderers were very unprepossessing. One of the latter class was dying, and we regretted that he had no sense of his condition. He said God would take care of him and complained of the injustice of the jury that sentenced him. Was very sorrow to see men very busy in making additional cells for prisoners, there were already about one hundred and thirty seven prisoners. Oh that christians would work by prayer, personal effort and consistency of character for the salvation of souls.

The Baptist cause in this state has not as yet been favoured with extensive revival interest, here and there a few have been gathered and in some places they have been active in completing and dedicating places for the worship of God. On January 1st, though a snow storm raged all day, a commodious and chaste church in the stirring village of Turner was dedicated, the pastor preaching the sermon containing a history of the church—other ministers preached during the day and the building was crowded with attentive listeners. The building is beautifully frescoed, having circular pews nicely carpeted—cushioned alike, at the expense of the ladies of the Church. The house is warmed by a furnace, has a basement underneath with a lecture room and two ante rooms. Six thousand dollars worth of pews were sold the day after the dedication.

The members of the 1st Baptist Church, Portland city, after wandering about for 18 months, had the pleasure of attending the dedication of their Lecture Room in the basement of their present unfinished church on January 3rd. The main lecture room is as pleasant and convenient in all respects as such a room can well be. It is entirely above ground and well lighted. It will seat comfortably 500 persons, and, if necessary, perhaps 600 could be provided for. Besides these there are three smaller rooms for different purposes. The sermon of dedication was preached by the pastor on Isaiah lvi. 7, which was very appropriate, your correspondent having preached the last lecture in the old lecture room the evening before the great fire of Portland, had the pleasure of congratulating the church upon their entrance into the new lecture room. The services were very interesting. On the 9th of this month the Baptists of Brunswick dedicated their renovated church which has cost \$2000, altering the interior and making great improvements. It is well lighted. Bro. Small, of Bangor, preached the sermon aided by other ministers. In each of these places the members are looking for a revival. May God bless them.

A MINISTER.

We are deeply grateful to friends in various quarters—east and west—who have lately given us expressions of their confidence and sympathy. Those who have written in reference to the late attack on our reputation and the unpleasant discussion inflicted us, will pardon us for withholding their communications from publication at present. We consented that Dr. Crawley should, under certain limitations, make known what he regards as grievances, and that Granville Street Church should reply in defence of his attacks. We are fully sensible that some liberty is being taken with our consent. We are not willing to place unnecessary restrictions upon our correspondents, but think, it will be better to allow such developments as may be desired by these two parties respectively. After which it may be desirable that such parties as may feel disposed should take up the opinions expressed, and, over their own signature, offer such defence as may be deemed necessary, on behalf of what we regard as the principles taught in the New Testament for the guidance of Christian Churches.

We shall be glad, therefore, to receive suggestions or communications from our brethren with permission to give them publicity as opportunities may present themselves.

THE LEGISLATURE—The Legislatures of the Province of Ontario and Quebec are now in Session.

The Nova Scotia Legislature will meet on Thursday 30th January.

The New Brunswick Legislature will assemble on 13th February.

The Legislature of P. E. Island is summoned to meet on 4th of March.

The Dominion Parliament will reassemble on March 12 h.

NEWS SUMMARY.

Although at this moment there is, perhaps, less actual warfare raging in the world than for the past twenty years, yet wars and rumours of wars would appear to be the inevitable condition of fallen humanity. The only existing conflicts that we are aware of now in progress, are two; the civil war in Crete, which is one between the Greek population of that large Island, and their Turkish masters. Numberless barbarities have been perpetrated by the Turkish soldiery, and most probably retaliated by the Cretans. The issue of the insurrection seems still very doubtful. The other war is that which has been for some time past going on, with alternate instances of success and defeat on either side, between the Brazilian Emperor and Paraguay, a large and populous Republic situated to the west of Brazil, on the branches of the great river La Plata in South America. What was the original cause of quarrel we do not now remember, but it must have already cost a vast amount of blood and of treasure, and will end as all wars must do, in entailing ruin and misery on thousands. Europe is just now externally tranquil, but ambition and jealousy among the nations are busily at work; until some specious protest good or bad, shall again set them together, by the ears, to repeat the profitless and bloody drama, so continually enacted. The wise man's saying that you may "bray a fool in a mortar and his foolishness will not depart from him," would seem even more applicable to nations than to individuals. There are now in Continental Europe probably upwards of a million and a half of men actually under arms, the respective governments in the mean time making the most earnest protestations of their desire for peace. Surely the so much talked of prospects of the improving progress and civilization of mankind, is anything but a cheering one.

The Repeal agitation is going on—Meetings have been held in various parts of the country and resolutions passed in favor of a repeal of the Union. It is said that some of the members of the Dominion parliament will refuse to return to Ottawa at the session in March.

Our local Legislature will meet before our next issue. The future political movements of the people's representatives to the House of Commons will, we presume, depend in a great measure on the action taken in our domestic parliament.