

When a man by such acts condemns himself, his just condemnation by others should not be held a thing impossible.

The church informed the Moderator and the Secretary of the Association that we were unable to carry out the recommendation of the Association, for the reasons now detailed. (Reply, pages 48-50). Had the church rested here it would, we believe, have discharged fully its obligations to the wishes of sister churches, and most unquestionably so to Dr. Pryor.

By order of the Church,  
B. H. EATON, Clerk.

No. 2.

Dear Brethren,—

We have corrected Mr. Armstrong's misstatement that the church "acquitted" Dr. Pryor on the charge of impurity,—have shewn that if Mr. Armstrong thus understood the resolution of the church when he acted as a councillor, he failed to even so much as hint at it, though we invited his opinion on that act, and instead of rebuking us as was his duty, he was silent. We have also corrected a wrong impression which his method of statement is calculated to give concerning the calling of the council which the Association recommended, and supplied a most significant chapter, omitted by Mr. Armstrong, in this painful history.

*The Independent Council.*—We have now to call your attention to the independent council which the church proceeded to convene after all hope of securing the council recommended by the Association, had failed. No pains had been spared by Dr. Pryor and his friends to give our brethren the impression that our action from first to last had been instituted and carried through under the influence of pride, and passion and hate. Never, dear brethren, was there a more unjust and false accusation. The entire record of all our proceedings has been printed and circulated, and this record can not, we believe, fail to convince unprejudiced minds, that our whole course of procedure is entirely inconsistent with the supposition that pride, passion, and hatred were controlling influences in our conduct. Conscious of having endeavoured, in the fear of God, and under a sense of our responsibility to the Head of the Church, to discharge aright our distressing duties, we anxiously desired that our conduct should be reviewed by impartial brethren; that if we had committed errors they might be pointed out to us, and wrongs thereby be righted; and if we had been falsely accused, the truth might be known. Nothing remained but to call in brethren altogether removed from us by distance of place—men whom we believed to be possessed of piety, sound judgment, and of acknowledged standing in the denomination. This was done. (Reply, page 50). The following were the brethren:—

- REV. CHARLES SPURDEN, D.D., Frederick, N. B.
- JOHN DAVIS, Charlotte, N. C.
- CHARLES RANDALL, Weymouth, N. S.
- THOMAS R. PATILLO, Senr., Esq., Liverpool, N. S.
- WILLIAM FAULKNER, Esq., Truro, N. S.

The resolution of the church inviting this council requested them among other things to inform us, after examination. Whether the action of the church was such as should have been taken under all the circumstances; and it required "that the Rev. Dr. Pryor be notified of the convening of said council, and invited to present his case before them, and be afforded the fullest opportunity to defend himself against all charges that may come before said council." The requirements of this resolution were fully carried out. This is the Council whom Dr. Pryor, Judge Johnston, Dr. Crawley, and finally Mr. Armstrong seem to suppose they have shewn unfit for the work they undertook, when they designated them an "ex parte Council" i. e. a council one half of whom Dr. Pryor did not select at will. But none will say that the church did not select an independent Council,—one free in every way, and under the most solemn obligations to do justice to both Dr. P. and the church. Dr. Pryor well knew it to be such a council. How did he meet it? Did he say, "Now, I shall be able to establish my innocence, and expose to the core the hate, and pride, and evil passions which have caused Granville Street Church to sacrifice so unjustly my character?" No. Not a word of the sort. These were his words:

"I protest against your authority to deal with anything affecting my character or interests." "I shall not, nor shall any one on my behalf, or with my consent, appear before you, in any respect to sanction your proceedings, should you venture to act; and I formally forbid your doing anything by which my character or interests may be affected either directly or indirectly." (Reply p. 61.)

Was this not passing strange? There

was every reason to believe that this was the only opportunity he could ever have of meeting his accusers face to face before a Council of impartial brethren, and yet he, an innocent man, unjustly condemned, treated so cruelly by the Church, and longing for honest men to hear and judge him, would not avail himself of the offices of these brethren. Why?

This Council said to him: "We beg to assure you that we are not animated by any feeling of partizanship; we come from a distance, two of us from other Provinces, and are under the influence of the kindest feelings towards yourself. The terms of your letter to us forbid us to hope that you will meet with us for the purpose of entering upon a thorough investigation of the charges made against your character, and thus availing yourself of the opportunity afforded by an impartial Council, of substantiating your innocence." (Reply p. 62.)

We may remark here that although our accusers condemn the Church for not calling a council early in the history of the case, it is difficult to see of what use a council would have been, since it seems plain that Dr. Pryor would have considered any council chosen by the church as unequalled to investigate the matter. In endeavoring to settle our own difficulties without the aid of a Council, we did not depart from the acknowledged practice of Baptist churches. Crowell (p. 78) says: "As each church is bound to understand the will of Christ respecting church order, fellowship and discipline, it should always, if possible, settle its own difficulties without calling in even the advice and influence of other churches."

This council were willing to investigate the following points:—1. The question relating to the calling of councils: 2. The mode of procedure on the part of the church, whether it was regular, &c.: 3. Whether the decision of the church, in the circumstances in which they were placed and in the light of the evidence before them, was not such as they ought to have given. But they were not willing to investigate the charges against Dr. Pryor, since he declined to meet with them. (Reply, p. 62). Bearing in mind the course which Dr. Pryor had pursued, we think the church would have been fully justified in requesting this council to proceed with the investigation of the three points enumerated above; but we felt that any investigation of these points would be unsatisfactory to ourselves and to others in Dr. P's absence. The council felt this also, and labored with Dr. Pryor in order that means might be devised to remove his objections. They asked him "Whether he would consent to such a mutual council, both in regard to the number of its members and its mode of selection, as they, in their judgment, might advise." (Reply, p. 62). But Dr. Pryor would not accept their proposals. Professing loudly his great anxiety to have such a council as the Association had recommended, and refusing to meet these brethren because they were not a "Mutual Council," he would not consent that they should interpret the Association's recommendation both for him and the church. A council of twelve, one half to be chosen by himself at will, (with one restriction touching his relatives,) was his ultimatum. That the council assured him they had every reason to believe such terms would not secure a "Mutual Council," was nothing. His ultimatum was his ultimatum. And yet the advocates of Dr. Pryor see in all this the unmistakable indication of innocence. [We may here state that the "Mutual Council" proposed by these brethren to Dr. P. was to consist of seven members, and that the mode of selection was not the one so persistently held by Dr. Pryor.] This council reported to the church the ultimatum of Dr. Pryor, without offering to the church any advice or recommendation in connexion with the same.

*Dr. Pryor's Council.*—Worried beyond measure, the church yielded their convictions to the importunities of the case.—They accepted the ultimatum of Dr. Pryor, though fully convinced that it neither expressed the intention of the recommendation of the Association, nor was consonant with correct principles of church discipline, nor at all calculated, theoretically, to serve the ends of truth and justice. The brethren selected by him were—

- REV. I. E. BILL, St. John, N. B.
- W. S. MCKENZIE, St. John, N. B.
- GEORGE ARMSTRONG, Bridgetown.
- A. S. HUNT, Cornwallis.
- JAMES RAND, Esq., Canning.
- A. M. WHELOCK, Esq., Wilmot.

The church chose Rev. S. March, of Bridgewater, in addition to the brethren composing the council which they had already convened. Here then, at last, Dr. Pryor had secured such a council as he would meet. Mark its constitution, and tell us if

you think the plan a sound one? The church had selected men with whom they had never passed a word on the matter, and most of whom were strangers except by reputation, to nearly all the members of the church. These men, moreover, had been provided with lodgings apart from the church, and officially advised as follows:—The church "from feelings of delicacy have thought it advisable that the domestic hospitalities, which they otherwise, as a matter of course, would have extended to your council, should be waived pending the investigation. They have also deemed it prudent that in any interview, other than those of an official character which may take place between the members of the council and themselves, the subjects under investigation should not be discussed. In thus acting they are only desirous that they may be free from even the suspicion of having, in private conversation, attempted to impress the minds and influence the decision of the brethren composing the council." (Reply, p. 54) Thus much was accomplished towards securing a suitable council. How was it completed? By Dr. Pryor himself selecting as many more.—Most of them, if not all, had been his intimate friends for long years, with most, if not all, he had diligently conferred previous to the organization of the Council, and as subsequent events most painfully developed, he cared not that any of them should be deprived of the domestic hospitalities of himself and his friends. Surely it would be at least safe to go forward now, and that without delay. But strange as it may appear, Dr. Pryor was prepared to forego even this council, fashioned not according to the desires of the Association or the church, but according to his own ultimatum, if for any cause he should desire to do so. In illustration of this statement, we may mention that Dr. Pryor called upon the Clerk of the church the day following the church's acceptance of his ultimatum, to learn if it had been ascertained whether one of the persons selected by himself could come. At this interview he said: "The presence of Rev. Mr. McKenzie, is *asine qua non*: without him there shall be no council."—Mr. Armstrong has said that the unwillingness of the church to be bound by the decision which the council might deliver, would seem to shew a want of confidence in the justness of their cause. We ask Mr. Armstrong what Dr. Pryor's course in reference to (1) the council recommended by the Association, (2) the independent council, and (3) his own council, shews? Does it point to confidence in the justness of his cause?

By order of the Church,  
B. H. EATON, Clerk.

No. 3.

Dear Brethren,—

Having now corrected the important misstatement made by Mr. Armstrong, and having supplied a series of omissions in his statements respecting the calling of the Council, we shall discuss at length the arguments which he advances in support of the binding force of the decision given by that Council. We shall attempt to shew impartial men that Mr. Armstrong's conclusion, that the decision bound the church, is not warranted:

1. By facts connected with the council.
2. By the "equality of choice" in its selection.
3. By the "acceptance of the council" when organized.
4. By the references to "arbitration."
5. Nor by scriptural principles of church government as understood by Baptists.

We believe you will agree with us in thinking that if the foregoing points are successfully established, the grounds on which he rests his case are "essentially disturbed," even rent to the very centre.

1. *Certain Facts which are fatal to Mr. Armstrong's conclusion.*—(1) The church did not design to authorize the exercise of any such authority by the Council. 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) The resolution which we sent to Councilors invited them to "investigate" certain subjects, and to "report" to the church their "opinion."

(3.) The church did not conceal in any way its views on this matter from the Council. 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. Here are extracts from the statements of these brethren:—

"Immediately after this we were asked (I think by the Secretary) if the Church agreed to accept the decision at which the Council might arrive? Mr. Eaton replied by reading a portion of the resolution of the Church which merely asked the Council to report their opinion to the church on the matters submitted. I immediately stated that we could not agree to accept the opinion of the Council, and was proceeding to show the unreasonableness and unsoundness of doing so, when being interrupted by some one, (Judge Johnston, I think it was) a colloquy ensued, in the midst of which the President waved his hand and said, in substance, that he thought we had better proceed with the business for which the Council had assembled. Hereupon the matter dropped, and was never to my knowledge referred to again.

I have a distinct and vivid recollection of what I have stated above. . . . Different members of the Church had repeatedly stated that they could never consent to be bound to accept the opinions of any Council, as they considered that they could not lay upon others a solemn responsibility which the word of God had specifically laid upon the church. Knowing as I did, the mind of the church upon this point, it is quite impossible that I could forget what was said on this subject before the Council."

T. H. RAND.

"The question whether the decision of the Council that the Church would call should be taken as final, had been raised in Church meetings; and all had consented that it could not be so regarded. The Church had, in a resolution passed July 12th, expressed their view of this matter, as implied in these words, which I take from that document; 'Investigate subjects and report to the Church their opinions.' In asking for an 'opinion,' did the church ask for 'a decree'?"

This was before my mind when the question was raised by a member of the Council, "Whether the Church would accept its decision as final?" and I directed the attention of the Council to the resolution of July 12th, as containing a reply. . . .

After I had pointed out this part of the resolution of July 12th, Mr. Rand began to discuss the point, to show why the church would not, and could not consent to bind themselves to accept the decision as final."

B. H. EATON.

(4.) Some members of the Council did not misunderstand the church on the matter. The following extracts are very explicit on the point under discussion, while among them will be found the most complete corroboration of the specific statements of Mr. Rand and Mr. Eaton:

"Some member of the Council, I think, enquired whether the parties concerned would consider the Council's decision in the matter as final; to which enquiry there were responses from several members of the Council, some in the negative, and others in the affirmative, as well as from the contending parties; Mr. Rand and yourself contending against the principle, as an interference with the rights and privileges of the church; and urging that the Council was only an advisory body.

I think Mr. Rand and yourself have stated the circumstances substantially as they occurred. For myself, I considered that the question was merely asked for the satisfaction of the person proposing it, and that it was not designed to affect the enquiry for which the Council had been convened; and therefore after some discussion the matter was dropped."

STEPHEN MARCH.

"To the best of my recollection, Mr. Rand's statement is substantially correct. I was not aware that either party was bound to accept the decision of the Council as final, and I must say, I did not entertain such an idea throughout the whole investigation. I was of opinion that the Council was an advisory one, but did not suppose either party bound to accept its decision."

WM. FAULKNER.

"I never for a moment imagined that we were there to decree—but to investigate, report, and advise, subject of course to the action of the church, whose action would be final."

CHARLES RANDALL.

"I have laid it down to myself as a general rule not to serve on a Council unless the parties would agree to abide by its decision, but I knew beforehand from their own avowal, that the representatives 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. I therefore waived my personal feelings on the subject, and did not put the question, because I thought it of the utmost importance that the Council, brought together with so much difficulty, should not be prevented by any question of that kind from proceeding to investigate and pronounce an opinion.

While I entertained the hope that the Church would abide by the decision of the Council, the representatives of the Church appeared to me to be very careful not to say or do anything which could fairly be regarded as a pledge to that effect.

C. SPURDEN.

"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 premise 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 decision at which the Council might arrive would lay a basis if it did nothing more for the settlement of your unhappy church difficulties. The exist-