"I will make crooked things straight."

MY STORY

ABOUT THE

HOLLIS ASSOCIATION,

BY SAMUEL LEE.

FITCHBURG: N. H.

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Correlation is a marked feature in the divine administration. If there are ends to be attained God employs an agency appropriate. And he who confines himself to the guidance of God's providence and word and Spirit, will find himself and the work for which he is especially fitted, brought face to face. Every year of a long life has given me a more and more profound conviction of this truth. And to be frank, I think this principle applicable to this pamphlet and its author. Congregationalism needs vindication and protection, and there are certain men, who, if they are to be made ripe for heaven, need, whatever may be their wants, just that treatment which nobody but that "unbearable" brother Lee would administer—that cool, determined, good natured brother who wishes to do them good on what he considers sound "orthodox" principles.
MY STORY.

Ministers of the Gospel are but men after all. In certain particulars they are superior to most men. In others they are not. To err is human. To err is ministerial. The records of the Hollis Association furnish evidence of this fact. It is doubtful if there can be found elsewhere in the pages of civilized history, within a sphere as limited, an equal amount, and in such strange combinations, of the intensely serious, ludicrous, outrageous, honest.

Others have attempted to tell the story of my connections with the Hollis Association. I propose to tell my own story. And I propose to do it with perfect frankness.

I united with the Hollis Association in May, 1836. My relations to it were a source of great pleasure and profit. I almost never failed to attend its meetings. And no member was more uniformly prepared (in my poor way of course) for the parts assigned him. And I may add, that no other ten members furnished so many themes for discussion. And I may be excused if I repeat a remark of Dr. Burnham, made some time since to a brother in my neighborhood: "Brother Lee has done more to make the meetings of the Association pleasant and profitable, than all the rest of us put together." My apology for saying this will be found in the facts to be related and that may have had intimate connections with it.

A prominent object of the meetings of this Association is mutual criticism. And it is understood that he who gives the closest criticism renders the best service. I acted on this principle both in giving and receiving,—with the exception, for many years, in the first particular, of Rev. Dr. Davis, of Amherst. Upon his productions, I bestowed all the commendation I could, and very little criticism. Thus passed a quarter of a century, a bright and sunny period of my life.

My trouble with this body of good men, whom I respected and loved, began on this wise. In the spring of 1861, my poor wife left our family to reside with her father in Bedford. Oh the darkness of that day! At the meeting of the Association soon after, the subject came up for consideration. The question, Have Associations a right to discipline their own members, was assigned to brother Clarke, of Amherst. I was not present. I attended the next meeting, and heard the dissertation. Its answer was affirmative. The Association, except brother Day and myself, accepted the opinion. My opinion was this: A Ministerial Association is simply a Club, in no sort an ecclesiastical body and has no judicial functions. If a member of an Association
has been guilty of immorality, and the members are in possession of evidence in point, it might be their duty—not as an Association, but as Christian brethren, to inform the Church with which said member was connected, of the facts known to them. That Church would have the right, and it might be its duty to inquire into the case, and if necessary to prefer charges, call a council, and administer discipline if the charges were proved. Brother Day endorsed my opinion, and said the Association had no right to put its members on trial before themselves as a judicatory. Here the matter dropped for the present. The leading spirit of the onslaught, however, was not at rest. But nothing could be done at present. It required about two years to get enough of rumor in circulation to renew the attack—though Rumor has a hundred tongues and an iron voice. About this time a "member" of the Hollis Association had an interview with Rev. Dr. Wallace, of Manchester. The opinion was expressed that brother Lee's case should receive attention. But the "member" aforesaid remarked that brother Lee would be rather a difficult man to manage, and no one of the Association wished to become the agent in the proceeding. This statement did not chime with the ideas of the great and good Doctor. He wasn't afraid. And besides, to break the ice in such a matter would furnish an opportunity for the exercise of his "zeal for the Lord of Hosts." Dr. Wallace then brought the subject before his own (Derry and Manchester) Association, and they voted to request the Hollis Association to see to their brother Lee, who "lived apart from his wife." All this sublime array of apparatus was put in requisition, in trying to get hold of an humble individual who had nothing to conceal, and was desirous of having everybody know the whole matter. When this paper was brought to the Hollis Association, I told the brethren that the request was for what they had no right to do; and that they ought not for a moment to entertain such a document. To do so was, so far, to become partaker in the abnormal action of the Derry and Manchester Association. And besides it might be said that the action of the Derry and Manchester Association under the promptings of my friend, the Reverend Dr. Wallace, had the appearance of officiousness. I lived in the midst of the church of which I and my wife were members. The facts of the case had transpired here, and would be known as they would not be known elsewhere. If there was anything wrong in my case, my own church would be responsible for the attention it should receive. But they were not offended. And next, if it could be the care of an Association, my own, and of which I had been a member for more than a quarter of a century, should attend to it. This foreign paper then was virtually an impeachment of the Congregational Church in New Ipswich, and, hypothetically, of the Hollis Association. But the Hollis Association took the reproof very meekly and tried to profit by the same. They entertained the admonition and referred it to a committee, of which Dr. Davis, as the leading actor in the case, was chairman. I then requested a copy of the Derry and Manchester paper, as what I should have of course. And to save them all trouble, I wrote the copy and laid it on the clerk's table. When out of the room a few minutes, the question, as I learn, was debated. One member said, as a reason why I should not have a copy "Bro. Lee is shrewd and familiar with the principles of Congregationalism and would be difficult to manage, and unless we are careful, he will escape our hands." I name this to show how successfully the tongue of slander had been employed, and also the state of mind in which these brethren were proposing to sit as
judges. Their opinion was made up, and the only question remaining was, How can he be caught? Not one of them had said one word to me on the subject. The Committee asked me to meet them and talk about it. I told them, that while I should be most happy to meet them as brethren and to tell them and the whole Association as brethren, the story, I should not say one word to them on the subject as a Committee, to be reported officially to the Association. They replied that they would meet me as brethren and not as a Committee. I met them, i.e. two of them, Dr. Davis was not present—for substantial reasons, I doubt not. I made a statement of the facts of the case. And with it the Committee expressed themselves satisfied. They recommended to me that I should make to the brethren of the Association "a little statement" and, if I objected to addressing them as an Association, they might take a recess.

This result did not suit Dr. Davis. So at the next meeting of the Association the Committee recommended that the Association hear brother Lee. I objected for the reasons already given. But at length it was proposed that I should talk to the question "with a view to enlightening the Association with regard to their duty towards him (me) in the premises." That presented a different issue. After what I had said, to ask me to talk to the Association as in any sort a competent tribunal to try me, would be unavailing. Their proposal could mean only that they might think it their duty to confer with the church of which I was a member, and recommend its action. There would have been a degree of irregularity even in that. They should act as brethren and not in their corporate capacity, and to make it a matter of record—which would be to "publish" it. Besides, if they had had the secret purpose to proceed to any action, they would feel obliged of course—so I reasoned—to prefer charges and hear me in defence. But that could not be, for I should have refused to be tried by them as a court. But in reply to the question in this form, which really implied the admission of the principles which I had avowed, I consented to tell them an outline of the facts in relation to myself and wife.

The sum of what I said was this: Mrs. Lee was insane. An intelligent Christian lady and loving wife, she was a victim to the wildest hallucinations. We had kept house only with the greatest difficulty while I was in health. I became very dangerously sick. For months there seemed but a step between me and death. Physicians informed us that the only ground of the feeblest hope of recovery, was in the most careful and watchful observance, day and night, of certain prescriptions. Mrs. Lee's "notion" in the case was that this was all wrong. And she was determined to take the care of her husband into her own hands. She would not receive prescriptions from the physicians. In this she was honest and conjugal affectionate. Her determination became a frenzied desperation. Of course I was obliged to confide myself to my daughter's care. The effect of this, as all will see, must be to drive to madness the wild spirit of an insane but loving wife. Was it not her duty and her privilege to take care of her sick husband? And though it was a daughter that took her place and watched over the pillow of her dying father, she could not endure it. She was frantic and desperate. We feared for our lives. For months we lived in this fear. When able, I visited different Insane Asylums, and was told that there was but one course to be pursued. Her disease was hopeless of cure, but as a means of relief she must be separated from her family.
and from all care of it. Mrs. Lee's aged father and her brother, Hon. Z. Chandler, United States Senator, concurred and co-operated in the transfer of Mrs. Lee from our family to that of her father, at Bedford. Mrs. Lee, previous to the transfer, wished to talk the matter of our domestic troubles over in the presence and with the advice of certain ministers and their wives, and of certain brethren and their wives, of our own church. The persons named by her were invited, and after hearing all she had to say gave their written opinion in the case. They advised the separation on the ground of insanity, and expressed surprise that it had not been effected before. In conclusion I said to the Association, that I attached no blame to my dear wife, nor did I think that God would treat her as morally responsible. I had evidence that her wildest hallucinations were, to her, veritable realities. And she was solemnly and awfully in earnest in doing, or rather in attempting to do for her sick husband, that which must at once have terminated his life.

I speak with perfect freedom of Mrs. Lee's insanity. The day in which insanity is a term of reproach has gone by. Science has taught us that it is as really a disease as is consumption or fever, and to be judged of by the medical profession, not by ministers.

The case, as I have stated it, was again referred to the same Committee. They had been appointed to examine into my case. At a subsequent meeting at which I was not able to be present, they made their Report—Dr. Davis premising, I am told, that the Committee found nothing to the prejudice of brother Lee's Christian character. This Report is testimony. On the strength of it as testimony together with some verbal statements, the Association accepted the Report as follows: (So says the Record.)

"The Committee to whom was submitted the memorial of the Derry and Manchester Association, relating to the separation of Rev. Samuel Lee and wife, respectfully report that they have considered the case and deem it a proper subject for the consideration of this body. They accordingly advised that Brother Lee be permitted to make a statement of the history and reasons for his course in separating himself from Mrs. Lee. The Association at New Ipswich gave liberty to Mr. Lee to make his statement, which was done in full with explanations in answer to inquiries by the members. In view of the whole subject as presented by Mr. Lee to the Association, the Committee came unitedly to the opinion, that neither the evidence nor the reasons assigned by Brother Lee are such as to justify a separation from his wife, and they exceedingly regret to learn that he did not adopt a different course. We lament the unhappiness which this separation has occasioned and the scandal which it necessarily brings on the cause of the Redeemer. We therefore earnestly and affectionately recommend to Brother Lee a reconsideration of his action and an effort to undo the wrong involved in this violation of the marriage covenant, by inviting his wife to return and live with him.

We also recommend that a copy of this paper be furnished to Mr. Lee with the sanction of the Association."
however undesigned. So far from being based on my statement, it utterly ignores that statement. It directly contradicts facts known to the Committee. And the great omission, more than all the rest, to refer to the fact of insanity! Insanity constitutes the whole case—to which whole case, the Report makes no allusion.

As well, when years ago the inexorable sword of death had cleft me down from head to foot, leaving the one-half of me standing and to stand alone,—as well might Dr. Davis have represented to the Association that I had turned my wife out of doors, and not only so, but carried her by physical force to a pit previously dug and then by physical force put her into it, and buried her beneath the resistless pressure of fifty cubic feet of solid earth, and make no allusion to the fact that she was dead, and that her remains were carried with tenderness and tears to their resting place, a Christian grave. This is no exaggeration. Such representation would have been no grosser violation of truth, or a more ruthless, or more gratuitous thrust at my bleeding and agonized spirit.

Mrs. Lee and I never quarrelled nor approached it. A quarrel has moral character. The excited utterances of insanity have not. I know not that I ever uttered an angry or a hasty word to my wife. I had no more reason to do so, than I should to address such language to the storm that beat in my face.

The above Report was adopted by the Association and entered on their Records, and thus “published,” and sent down to be read by generations when I should be in my grave.

When I received an official copy, I knew not what to make of it. Was there a member of the Association weak enough, not to say wicked enough to fabricate such a lie, and that could be so easily proved false. And if so, how could the votes of the Association be secured. There must, I thought, be some mistake. So I went to the Association to ask an explanation. I asked what was or could be the nature of the proceeding in adopting and sending to me that Report; was it advisory, or was it punitive? And was it intended, in it, to impeach my moral character? Dr. Davis, in reply, stated the number of meetings in which my case had been up, and thought they had spent time enough on Brother Lee. Not one word of explanation was given!

Up to this point it is not claimed that I ever uttered one word to the Association that was not courteous and fraternal.

The right of self-defense will not be denied. God has implanted the principles that prompt and approve of it in our nature. I had a “divine right” to say that that Report was from beginning to end an unmitigated falsehood, and that I was perfectly innocent of the thing charged upon me. I had the same right to vindicate myself at whose expense soever it might be, and to do it with emphasis. Said one of the Committee who presented the Report, “It would have been proper for you, if you thought the Report not correct, to have said so in a few kind words!” (which, by the way, I did virtually by asking explanation before reading my Protest). That is, if Dr. Davis had met me in the road and presented his pistol and taken my money, and when afterwards asked for explanation, had given none and persisted in keeping the money, it would have been proper for me to express my dissent, “in a few kind words.” But if I had called it highway robbery, I suppose I should have been “suspended” and my words pronounced “unbearable.” Suppose “a few kind words” had been said to me when I asked an explanation of that monstrous Report.
In accordance with my own theory, as above expressed, I had prepared a
Protest, written with some care as to the import of my words. I did not ex-
pect to read it. I could not but believe that explanations would be made.
But when the snap of Dr. Davis' refusal was heard, and others were timidly
silent, I concluded that necessity was laid upon me. I read my Protest. And
I assure the reader that I had an attentive audience, and nothing interrupted
the silence save a solitary grunt from Dr. Davis. No one called me to order
while reading or objected to anything I said. Even Dr. Davis seemed a little
subdued and softened, and rose and made explanations. He declared most sol-
emnly that it was not the design of the Committee in their Report to implicate my
professional or Christian character. It was designed as 'kind and fraternal advice,'
but, "no impeachment of the motives of Brother Lee"!! I asked what they wished
me to "reconsider"; was it whether I should retain in my family a maniac, at
the risk of life? No, said Dr. Davis, we didn't think she was insane. Then, I
replied, you wished me to reconsider the question of my wife's insanity: was
that all? Repeating my words, his reply was, "THAT IS ALL"!!

I then stated to the brethren that I was happy to learn they did not intend
to say what I had understood them to say. I would accept this verbal explana-
tion of their intention, though I claimed that I had put the necessary con-
struction upon the language of the Report. Yet after what had been said I
withdrew my Protest and declared it entirely irrelevant to what I learned were
their intentions. Not only so; I thanked the Association for what they had
intended to say in the Report sent me.

Was this the end of the unhappy affair? What more could be done?
And I ventured to ask for a written explanation like what Dr. Davis had
given verbally. Their Report I said was, by all to whom I had shown it, and
they were many, understood as I understood it. Dr. Davis became emphatic:
"If we do that, he will show that Protest, and say, when he read that, we
be ked down"!! Still I urged the request. I asked if the words of Dr. Davis,
written by myself as they were uttered, might be subscribed by the Clerk or
the Committee. But the ipse dictum had gone forth, and my request was not
granted.

A word as to the import of that Report. Dr. Davis wrote it. And either
he knew or he did not know that my moral character was impeached by its
language. If he did not know it, I submit to the good people of Amherst that
he is not, intellectually, a competent religious teacher. On the other hand, if
he did know that such was its import, while saying to me what he did, the
inference is too obvious to need statement. To a member of the Association,
who knew the parties well, and who was not present at the meeting, I showed
the Report and repeated Dr. Davis' statement in explanation. The brother
stood amazed for a moment and then said with emphasis, He lied! stood a
moment longer, and with a stronger expression of amazement, and raising his
hand he brought it down heavily upon the table by the side of which he was
standing, and repeated "HE LIED!!" I state this to show that others under-
stood the Report as I did.

I have asked the opinion, as to the import of the paper, of many eminent
men of the different professions, such as college presidents, clergymen, law-
ners, &c. Their answer is emphatic and uniform. Said an eminent lawyer
and Christian gentleman, whose written opinion I have, "The man of whom
this is true should not be found in the ministry, or the church, and could not
have a place in good society." And there is not a man of ordinary education
and common sense in the community who would say in writing that my Christ-
ian and professional reputation was not wounded, murdered, and the Report
a brand of infamy upon a minister of the gospel.

How then explain the vote of the Association? I know of but one hy-
pothesis, viz: that one paper was read to the Association, prefaced with loving
words about Brother Lee; and that another paper by some means went to the
Records and thus to me. This hypothesis saves the consistency and the com-
mon sense of those brethren for whom I have so much love and respect. When
the lawyer above referred to had read the Report, and I had told him that Dr.
Davis said, in the presence of the Association, that the Report intended "no
impeachment of the motives of Brother Lee," with a look of surprise and sor-
row he exclaimed, "Why will ministers of the gospel make themselves (here
he hesitated and finally added) blockheads. Another Christian and talented
lawyer to whom I presented the same facts said, he could not understand how
it was possible. I met him on the street the next day when he said to me, he
"could not get it through his hair," that a company of educated Christian men
could say and do such things. Substantially the same has been said by I
know not how many. I then submit that the hypothesis above stated is the
only explanation. That other entries upon the Records to my disadvantage
are nakedly false I certainly know. May not this belong to the same category?
And I may add that the hypothesis above expressed, accounts for the estimate
which the brethren put upon the severity of my Protest. They heard it from
the standpoint of their intentions in the Report, and of the form it had when
adopted by them.

After the explanation of the Report, and my acceptance of the same as
satisfactory, and the withdrawal of my Protest, the regular business of the
Association proceeded for hours and was closed. I was officiating as Moder-
tor. I had been appointed one of the Delegates to the next meeting of the
General Association. I was sad to know that my brethren would not give me
in writing what they said verbally, yet as the statement was made in the
presence of so many witnesses, I could but feel that it would be available.
Every imputation to the prejudice of my moral character had been denied, and
it was conceded that my only fault was an error in judgment as to the insani-
ty of my wife. But on this point I was sustained by the opinions of eminent
physicians in different Insane Asylums. And I had myself made insanity
somewhat of a study. I was not then greatly wounded by their verdict on this
point. Indeed I must own to a sense of the ludicrous as furnished by such a
Report to express the grave verdict of a group of clergymen on such a question.
I had told them the opinions of eminent experts in the medical profession, yet
they had transmuted themselves into a medical council to decide the question.
Most of these reverend doctors did not know the patient personally, or had had
no opportunity of late years to learn the state of her mind. The men, their
business, their Report and their explanation of it! If I sinned in thinking
I saw here some of the elements of the ludicrous, I fear I shall not be forgiven
for I have more than a "moral inability" to repent.

Just as the Association was about to separate, Dr. Davis presented the
following, and moved its adoption:

Whereas, the Association have addressed a fraternal communication to
Rev. Samuel Lee, a member of this body, respecting his separation from his
wife, to which he has replied in an abusive and defiant manner, thus defeating our Christian intentions, therefore resolved, that we withdraw our fellowship from Brother Leo as a member of the Association, until he shall give evidence of a more just appreciation of his relations to us and a more becoming spirit in view of a friendly and proper expression of our Christian sentiments, by withdrawing the document which he has this day presented to this body."

The reader will notice the very high, not to say bombastic praise which Dr. Davis bestows so liberally upon his own offspring, the Report of Committee.

And in passing, I must pay my respects to the logic of this new specimen of Dr. Davis' literature. It proceeds on the assumption of the old school doctrine of "imputation." I am to suffer a penalty for what the Association has done. The protasis states an act of the Association in its treatment of me. The apodosis states the penalty which I am to suffer in consequence. Whereas, the Association has done so and so, therefore I am to suffer so and so. The little incident or sequence referred to in the protasis is not to be considered a part of it.—The "defiant manner," and the "just appreciation" of my relations to the Association are, I suppose, correlates, and must mean that I do not recognize their authority and their power to exercise judicial functions. If not, what does it mean? It certainly cannot mean that I defy their power to injure me, for I have all along told them they were murdering me, or rather permitting Dr. Davis to do it with the use of their name and signet.

I said at once that the Protest was not before them, I had withdrawn it. Dr. Davis exclaimed, "He has no right to withdraw it till the vote is taken.!! I replied it had been withdrawn hours before the Resolution was introduced. But he pressed for the vote. Observing the excitement and confusion of the meeting, I thought my memories would be poor, and therefore wrote the following:

"I hereby say to this Association, that I am most happy to have their action in my case so interpreted as to not implicate my Christian character or motives. I hereby say that what I have said is inapplicable, and withdraw the same."

By dint of pressure by Dr. Davis, the moderator pro tem. had been brought to the act of putting the vote, and I rose simultaneously and read the above written withdrawal. Of course no one could now vote that I be suspended till the paper is withdrawn. It had been withdrawn verbally again and again, and finally in writing—which writing would not—forget. And there was no vote. Who will say that in these circumstances he voted? Yet it was entered on the Records as voted unanimously! But while there was no vote, there was excitement such as I never saw before in a meeting of ministers. If I were not speaking of men of the sacred profession I think I should call it a "row." But a clerical "row" would imply incongruities. Lest I should be suspected of hyperbole, I will give a specimen of what was done. When the question of my suspension was up, Rev. Dr. Clarke rose to his feet with a spasmodic leap and attempted to speak. Before uttering a sentence, he choked and dropped into his chair. In a moment he sprang to his feet again and attempted to speak, but failed as before. He tried a third time and with the same result. The meeting then "broke up," and we were soon out of the house. In the yard, I approached my brother Clarke, in the hope to allay his excitement. I laid my hand gently upon his shoulder and said "Brother." With a jerk he turned his face square upon me; and such a face! Those pendant corners of the mouth, those beetling eye-brows, those flashing eyes! What changes can
come over the "human face divine." But, as I have the reputation of being coolly calm when others are excited, and sometimes a little determined, I may confess that I persisted in my effort. I patted him on the shoulder and said "Brother Clarke! be calm, be calm." He attempted to speak and failed as in the house, when he whirled upon his heel and went from me a few steps, but stopped suddenly, turned quick and approached me. I put my hand upon him again and patted him, and imploringly and tenderly said, "Oh my dear brother, be calm, be calm." But I was compelled to witness the same abortion as in the other cases. And he went away from me without giving me the slightest intimation of what he wished to say.

At the next meeting of the Association I stated that I had received a certified copy of what purported to be a record of a vote passed at the previous meeting, suspending me from the Association, &c., and asked what it meant. Certain faces changed color. I said to the brethren, that I was cool and carefully observant, pen in hand, of all that transpired at that meeting, and I knew certainly that no such vote was taken. No one contradicted me, or pretended that I was mistaken. But I was requested to leave the room, which I did. I was in due time certified of the vote soon after taken.

I must here state that, previous to this meeting I had said to a member of the Committee, that I intended to claim my seat at the General Association, and if any member of the Hollis Association made objection, he would be asked for his reasons, and that would bring our trouble before the State—which I was desirous to do. He begged of me not to do so, and said all would be put right in the Hollis Association. I pointed to that record of the Report. He said he "was sorry it was there, it ought not to be there, and he would do all that he could to have the Record erased." Accordingly I went to the meeting above referred to and asked that the Record should be cleared. To this the vote refers.

"Whereas, the Rev. Samuel Lee has this day presented a paper containing a request, with which we consider it inconsistent for us to comply, and whereas he still manifests a want of appreciation of his relations to us,

We hereby reaffirm the vote passed at our last meeting concerning his case, and do now consider him suspended from all connection with us.

If at any time Brother Lee has any communication to make touching his relation to the Association, he is requested to make it in writing, through the Scribe."

This vote was decisive of the truth of my statement; but what a blundering procedure, absurd and self contradictory. It virtually asserts that there was a certain vote at a previous meeting, and then reaffirms the same. Why reaffirm a good and regular vote? And if there was no such vote, why reaffirm it? To "reaffirm" what was never affirmed is absurd. To pretend to repeat what was never said we call a lie. This vote presents, to the men who passed it, two sharp horns of a dilemma. Either there was, or there was not a vote at the previous meeting. Take either horn brethren, "T will pierce thee to the heart." It should be stated that only a fraction of the Association was present at this meeting.

What to do next was now the question. My first thought was to refer the case to a civil court, as a means of settling certain principles in relation to the functions of voluntary associations. I could not doubt that a jury would agree on the following points: That the whole movement was an officious intermeddling with the domestic affairs of one who had not asked their advice, or
aid in any way: That it set aside and trampled down the fundamental principles of Congregationalism: That the Report of Committee was a sheer fabrication; and that it was prompted by malice: That one form of the Report was read to the Association for their votes, and that another form went to the Records and to me.

I avowed my purpose to the Association. As a consequence they proposed a special meeting to consider the case, but it was deferred till the next regular meeting and I was requested to be present. The proposition at this meeting was to substitute for the words "this violation of the marriage covenant" the words "the separation from his wife," so that it would read "to undo the wrong involved in the separation from his wife." This alteration was proposed by a freshman by the name of Parsons, who, though a stranger to me, seemed to find congenial employment in the business on hand. I asked the reverend gentleman the difference in the two forms; and if he meant sin by the word "wrong." He hesitated and wriggled, and finally answered simperingingly "γ-ε-ο-s." This was a step in advance of the Report as explained. Dr. Davis had said directly the opposite. Which was I to believe? Dr. Davis was present and did not correct this young practitioner.

On reflection however I abandoned the project of a law suit. My health forbade; it was doubtful if I should live till the case could come on. And then some of my friends, Dr. Burnham especially, protested against the exposures implied in a suit. It would injure the reputation of the ministry. He insisted that all the past should be buried, and we start anew.

I then asked that the case might be submitted to referees. Dr. Hooker, then a member, favored this and assured me he would advocate the measure. I placed in his hands the following paper:

TO THE HOLLIS ASSOCIATION:

Brothers: At the suggestion of one of your members, Dr. Hooker, I prefer the following request, viz: that the differences between us be submitted to a Reference, the members of which shall be chosen with the approval of both parties.

If there are objections to such a Reference on the ground that it will give publicity to the painful facts of our history for several years past, or for other reasons, then as what might be best for the Association, best for the sacred profession, and best for Christ, I propose the following:

1st, That without any attempt at explanation we just "bury the past," referring it to the judgment of the great day; and that we start anew, in the hope of greater harmony in the future. The party that has most to forgive, will have an opportunity to exercise most of the spirit of Christ.

Or 2d, That as most of the members are new, or were not actors in the matters of dispute, we will have a talk over the case in the presence of the Association in the hope that we shall all have so much of the candor and kindness and forgiving spirit of the gospel, that we shall come to a reconciliation.

Fraternally yours,

SAMUEL LEE.

This paper was laid on the table and lies there still.

In a fraternal interview with the Scribe of Association, some time afterwards, he said to me that my treatment of my wife was not the trouble now, also, that the Association was "sorry they ever meddled with it," also that "the language of the Report was unfortunate." What then is the trouble, I asked. "The severity of that Protest." And he added, "Brother Lee, can't you say that that Protest might have been a little too severe?" That would be satisfactory. The whole case is then reduced to this—The possibility that a Protest against a Committee's Report that was so "unfortunate," which I had
read to the Association, but had unqualifiedly withdrawn after explanation, might have been "a little too severe." On the ground then of this possible "little" I am to be banished from the Association and branded with infamy. This looked very much as if the managers wished for some excuse to drop the painful load without the humiliating act—as Prof. —— expressed it—of "swallowing their own words!" And I say distinctly that my self-respect forbade me to become an actor in any such pitiful business. They had beaten me openly and uncondemned, and they must as openly come themselves and fetch me out. I could not sacrifice my self-respect.

It occurred to me that I would take the Association at its word literally. They claimed that I had been suspended till I should withdraw my Protest. So I addressed them the following.

"TO THE MEMBERS OF THE HOLLIS ASSOCIATION:

Some of you claim that the condition of my reconciliation to the Association is the withdrawal of the Protest which I read at Amherst, to a Report of a Committee dated February 12, 1864. The writer of that paper to which the Protest referred made explanations of the design of the paper with which I was entirely satisfied, and so said to the Association. Not only so, I thanked the Association for what they intended to say, and withdrew the Protest. If it will gratify any member of this body that I should do so again, I am willing to do it, and hereby do repeat the withdrawal."

This was done on the principle of "reaffirming" regular and completed acts—not however to endorse the principle.

But this literal compliance with their own proposed conditions did not satisfy.

August 2, 1870, I attended the meeting of the Association at Mason. I claimed that I was a member, and that the record of the vote by which I was suspended was an error, not to say forgery. No such vote was taken. The moderator decided that he must follow the Record, but would consider Brother Lee as a corresponding member. The clerk said "ten words" would make me a member. I asked him to write the "ten words." He wrote, "Dear Brethren, I respectfully ask you to forgive and forget the past." I asked what was to be forgiven? What was my offence? He replied "Censuring the Association." I then wrote as follows and read it to the Association.

"Brethren of the Hollis Association: I find that the essence of my supposed offence, as a member of this body, is censure of the Association. I have not and have had no censure to pass upon the Association. If there is a word that I have said that could bear that construction, I unsay it with all my heart. My opinion is that the Association has misjudged in some particulars. My censure is of the Committee as such, to whom my case was referred. I love the Hollis Association. I am sorry that they have acted under misin-formation. But I do not blame them, and I pray them for Christ's sake to terminate this unhappy case by which Christ is wounded in the house of his friends."

It was objected that while what I had said might satisfy the members present, yet there were members not present that would not be on friendly relations with me—referring to the Reverend Doctors Clarke and Davis. Are relations of personal confidence in all the members, the condition of membership in a Association? When a member accused Dr. Davis of lying, which of the two should retire or in modern phrase "be retired?"

I wrote to a brother not now a member, asking him to state definitely what was my offence, for I did not know. "My transgression was sealed up in a bag." Instead of definiteness, his reply makes no allusion to my treatment.
of my wife, but confines my offence to the Protest. That, he says, was "ungentlemanly and the animus of it was unchristian." The "animus" of that paper was to deny the guilt imputed to me, to assert the falsity of the Report, and to help the good brethren of the Association to see that their whole procedure in the case was irregular. Was it "unchristian" in me to assert my innocence? And must a "gentleman" lose caste unless he pleads guilty to every charge that may be brought against him? Some time after, I wrote to Brother Clarke making the same request, and asking a definite answer. He too, says not a word of my domestic troubles, but says the Protest was "ungentlemanly, unbearable, unchristian." It seems then that I am not enough of a gentleman to associate with Brother Clarke and his companions. And my words are "unbearable" to brother Clarke. The words of the Savior were "unbearable" to the Pharisees, and they put him to death, and the words of Stephen to his hearers, and they gnashed upon him with their teeth. What word was "unchristian" I am not informed.

What confession now can I make that will meet the wants of such brethren? What is the proper answer to such twaddle? (Sit veula). Shall I say that my Protest may have been a little too severe and thus atone for that "great transgression" for which I have been suspended from the Association, as "ungentlemanly, unbearable, unchristian"?

Finding all these efforts made by myself unavailing, I suggested to the Committee of Discipline of my own church—a standing committee to attend to public offences—that there were obligations resting upon them. If I were guilty of what was imputed to me, the church ought to examine the case. The Committee accordingly addressed a very respectful request to the Association to inform them what was my offence and what the proof of the same. That paper was treated with contempt. No action, I am told, was taken on it; certainly no reply was made. There was no other act in the case that seemed to me so outrageous, and that so called for the notice of the Churches. Every form of indignity had been practiced upon a solitary member of their own body, but under Congregational polity to enm the Church that addressed to them a respectful petition, might be called "unbearable."

I then took the ground that the Report of a Committee appointed to investigate and report a case, was testimony, that the testimony then on which the Association had acted when they adopted the famous Report was false, and I asked a hearing—I could not say a rehearing. I received the stereotype answer, No. I then addressed the following to the Association:

TO THE HOLLIS ASSOCIATION:

Dear Brethren,—Growing infirmities admonish me. I have long had the feeling that I cannot die till I have made you a more definite and formal statement than I have yet made, of certain matters important both to you and to me, and I must add to Christ.

When my case as living separate from my wife was brought before you by the Derry and Manchester Association, you referred the matter to a Committee with instructions to investigate and report. They did so and their Report was made the basis of your opinion and action. That Report was testimony. It was, I am sorry to say, both your misfortune and my own, that this testimony was received and acted upon in my absence. Yet so it was, Feb. 2, 1864.

In a critique upon the general subject of that Report and your action upon it, I stated informally, that it was wholly untrue; and hoped that that would be sufficient. But it has not been so. And the Report is to this day referred to as authority. I must then resort to a method more direct and formal as a means of disenchanting both the Association and myself from the evils we now suffer.
A solitary member of the aforesaid Committee, is all that is now with you—Dr. Davis of Amherst. But he was Chairman of the Committee and wrote the Report. And he has been immeasurably more than all others the instigator and responsible actor in the whole matter.

That Report, as furnished to me officially by the Clerk, is, from beginning to end, a series of falsehoods. Its statements are in direct contradiction

1. To facts.
2. To what were known to Dr. Davis at the time to be facts.
3. To what he has stated definitely to be the opinion of the Committee of which he was Chairman.
4. To what Dr. Day, a member of the Committee, admitted to be facts.
5. The omissions of that paper as a report of the case, are more ruinously false, than the positive falsehoods above referred to.

I have a deep interest in making the truth of what I now say appear. That fabrication, as it now stands on your Records, is murderous to my Christian reputation, and thus to my ability to render service to the Master while living, and, when being dead I shall yet speak.

And you, too, dear Brethren, have an interest in having the unfortunate case as it now stands, put right. Dr. Davis said to me in presence of a full Association, that it was not the design of that Report to impeach my motives or injure my Christian reputation. You by your silence at the time, virtually indorsed that statement. Should that statement and that Report ever be put side by side before the public, you would suffer, and the ministry would suffer fearfully. I happen to know what thinking men say on this point.

In the above statement it is not my design to speak of the motives of Dr. Davis, but simply of his acts. You are not a competent tribunal, before which to try your members on questions of moral character. Your own Committees as such you can, of course, call to account.

The statements now made of the case of Dr. Davis, I stand ready to substantiate, at such time as you shall select.

With respect and love, I am,

Very truly yours,

SAMUEL LEE.

July 28, 1871.

The reader will sustain me when I say that the above paper is specific and unambiguous. There is no room for doubtful or various constructions under which either party can hide and screen himself from responsibility. And I am unqualifiedly committed to substantiate my statements. Every thinking man will say that Dr. Davis will, must demand an investigation. Not to do it is to admit the truth of what is charged. And on the other hand, for me to fail to prove what I say, would most effectually dispose of me and my cause as before the Association. The Committee and the Association would stand acquitted and above suspicion, and the accuser become dead, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. I was denied a hearing.

Soon after I ceased to attend the meetings of the Association there were great changes in its membership. The new members heard the story of my assailants, but not mine. Among the methods I employed to ascertain the kind of impression made on their minds, I wrote to Brother Perry of Hollis certain inquiries, the answer to which revealed the fact. My brother in a magnanimous and Christian manner, dealt plainly with me, from his own standpoint. He states the case thus: “You accuse the Association, or some member of it, of making a false record in respect to your suspension. And secondly that you make a distinction between the Committee who were appointed to investigate the matter between yourself and wife, and the Association that accepted their Report. • • • I cannot understand how your acute mind, acute on other matters, does not see that when a body accepts a report of a committee of their own appointment, the body itself is as guilty as the com-
mittee." That is, if a party in a civil suit after trial, informs the Court that he is prepared to show that the testimony on which the jury based their verdict was false, he accuses the jury and the Court that acts upon that verdict of perjury! Bro. Perry adds: "Evidence of sincere repentance for having made such charges against your brethren, would do much towards healing their lacerated minds, and restoring you to their confidence. Were you to say in a communication to the Association that your first communication [the Protest] was all wrong, that you sincerely regret that you ever made it and ask forgiveness, I verily believe it would reconcile them and restore you to your former standing." By "them," must be meant the Reverend Drs. Clark and Davis.

The kind severity of this letter is worthy of my good Brother Perry. The logic of some of it, and which he took second hand from Dr. Davis & Co., I do not endorse. But it shows what representations are made of the case to the new members.

I now suppose I had done all that could be done, by way of settling the difficulties among ourselves. But one thing more occurred to me. I sent a paper to the Association saying that their action was to me a profound mystery, and must proceed on the assumption of what was unknown to me, I therefore requested that they would appoint a Committee of Conference, that I might meet, and in the hope that we could understand each other. I have heard nothing from it. Dr. Davis could need no extra shrewdness to see what would be the effect of such a conference.

In conclusion I owe it to myself and to others to say, that some of the members of the Association are not in any sort to be held responsible for the facts above related. That noble brain that was laid in the grave of the venerable Dr. Moore, of Milford, was crumbling under the action of extreme old age, when these troubles began. He attended but few of the meetings, and assuming that the spirit of other men was as pure as his own, accepted the representations of the aggressive party. He however unsaid it before he died. He told me he did not vote for my suspension. Especially the same was true of my very dear brother, Dr. Burnham. He expressed to me the deepest sympathy, and insisted that the difficulties should come to an end by "burying the past." He said he had written to Dr. Clarke to that effect. He wrote to me but a short time before his death, a most affectionate letter of sympathy. To my proposal to him to have the case submitted to a Reference, he objected as he did to a civil suit, that it would bring the matter more before the public, and would thus greatly injure the Christian ministry. And in this connection, I will also state that Dr. Day a short time previous to the attack of his disease that proved fatal, wrote me a letter in which he expressed his regret at what had been done by the Association. It was the infirmity of Brother Day, that he never stood on his own, but always on the feet of the majority. Somewhat reluctantly, he had been drawn into this affair, and committed, and it was hard to "back down." I wrote to him a frank and strong statement of the doings of the Association and of himself as a member. In his reply of Feb. 8, 1869, he says: "I am sorry, and deeply so, and have been from the beginning, that there was ever any occasion in the judgment of the Association for your separation. I have felt this the more as you alluded to your declining health and advancing age. We all have unavoidable trials enough laid upon us direct, by the hand of our Heavenly Father without those from the hands of one another. And especially, it is painful after we have tried to serve our
Master through the meridian of our days, to have the decline of life darkened by overhanging clouds which are unnecessary." He then goes on to say that the feeling in the Association was such as to forbid much hope of reconciliation. He adds: "I will however say this, and can say it most sincerely, that I am sorry and deeply pained that your last days, after a long and I hope useful ministry, must be embittered by an affair of this kind." These were his last utterances to me. In my letter to which this was an answer, I told him frankly my opinions of the course pursued by the Committee and sanctioned by the Association, and I told him my plans for the future, and that they would involve the ruin of certain parties. He doubtless saw the correctness of my opinions, and what would be the result of the course I intended to pursue. A friend of his told me that the fatal disease of the brain that carried him away, was preceded by gloom and evident trouble from some causes he knew not what. He alluded to some things in his condition, but thought they could not account for the depression of his spirit. The thought occurred to me at the time, that possibly it might be in part the effect of his unfortunate implications with the Association. Oh, my brother! My heart bled for thee in thy affliction, and the yearnings of my soul followed thee in thy wondrous and mysterious flight. God bless thee in the world to which thou hast gone.

After what I have said it will not be inferred that I do not love and respect the Association. Most of them are, at present, new members, and comparatively strangers to me. I have a good report of them as men of talent and of deep and earnest piety. But of those who were members with me, with a solitary exception, I am war my the friend, and should be happy to be their fellow laborer. Some of them made great mistakes. But there are many palliating considerations. Several of them attended but a part of the meetings of the Association, and depended for their views of the case upon the man who could use such language as that of the Report of Committee and not suppose my moral character implicated. If then these members thought me "ungentlemanly, unbearable, and unchristian," and that I had been suspended by a unanimous vote, when no vote was taken, it would be only the legitimate effect of faith in a man very liable to make mistakes. And I wish to specify Brother Clarke as a Christian in whom I have this confidence. I think he takes great pains to be "gentlemanly" and courteous. He "dears" every body and especially the ladies, and I have stated certain facts of his conduct at the meeting with Dr. Davis, first, to show a little of the style of things that could be tolerated in some better men than myself, though not in me. And secondly, to furnish a criterion by which to estimate the excited statements of Brother Clarke. Some men understand the good brother. President Lord asked me how Brother Clarke treated me. I told him, with terrible acrimonious severity. He said "he expected that of course. He treated him the same way and tried to have him turned out of his Association. Dr. Clarke was heir to an unfortunate idiosyncrasy, and indulgence in the direction of the same has, I think, resulted in "partial" insanity. When much excited he has no more reason than a whirlwind. Hence I lay not these things to his charge. He has spent a long life in hard toil for the Master, and is entitled to the gratitude of those who are coming after him and entering into his labors. And so of others; they erred, but I have no doubt they were honest. And the feeling of some of them is that I am suffering the most flagrant injustice. One of them, not long since called it "outrage." And another, a few days since said
he would introduce the subject to the Association and insist that I should have a hearing, but supposed it would create a "row"—referring to the two prominent actors.—Yes, I love the Hollis Association. Pleasant are the remembrances of a quarter of a century of profitable membership.

Now then I have told "My Story." I have endeavored to state things just as they are. The serious I have endeavored to represent as such, the ludicrous I have not attempted to divest of its true appearance, while the outrageous and monstrous wear their own garb. I have stated facts. Whoever draws inferences from these facts to the discredit of the writer or Dr. Davis, or any body else, must be responsible for his own logic. It is a melancholy picture. I have not desired the woful day when it must be given to the public.

I must bespeak a charitable construction of what may seem to be the conduct of certain members of the Association during this onslaught. They are amiable, scholarly, Christian; but timid, and at the bark of a bull dog, they are paralyzed and become passive. Resistance they cannot make, and they become negligibly responsible for what they would gladly have otherwise.

This class did not embrace all the dissentients. My own late pastor, Rev. B. F. Ray, than whom, a man of more elevated manliness and Christian honor, combined with profound and confiding piety, cannot be found, became very positive under the influence of certain things said by Dr. Davis at a meeting of the Association when my case was up. Said he to me, "I turned to him with scorn and asked him if he held to condemning a man without a trial." And from that time he ceased to attend the meetings, as he would not have any connection with such outrageous proceedings.

It now remains that I give to the reader the "unbearable" Protest, which on the failure of the primary, was made the adopted cause of these belaborings. I give it verbatim. It is said to be severe. May I be forgiven if it is not. But in what does that severity consist? In the naked facts which it states—and for which facts I am not responsible. It was written on the assumption that the certified copy of the Report was the same as that voted on by the Association, and that my learned brethren really intended to say what they did say. On this hypothesis, I have not one word of it to unsay. And I cannot ask pardon for assuming that an Association of educated ministers, Doctors of Divinity, the chosen pastors and religious teachers of the Churches in Southern Hillsborough, knew enough of the English language, to say what they intended to say. The moment my brethren assured me that such was not the fact I unsaid every word of my protest. I am not ashamed of my construction of their language, nor of my criticism upon it. I am proud of it. From the specimens left us of Paul’s way of doing this kind of business, I believe he would endorse it all, and would have said the same or severer things in circumstances the same. Possibly he might have prayed the Lord to reward the actors according to their works.

I am reminded by a mistake of a good man a few days since to say that "falsehood" is not necessarily lying. And it should be remembered that I did not say these things about my brethren in their absence but to them, and in a fraternal meeting, the object and the practice of which was the keenest criticisms possible. To say it was severe, is to praise it and its author. I claim to be at too wide a remove from Dr. Darwin’s mollusk state, to construct shapeless, meaningless, mucilaginous sentences—in any circumstances and
least of all in those in which I was placed by their act, for they had nailed me to a cross with roughest, rudest nails, and left me there in that position of agony and infamy to die alone. It was from that cross I uttered this language. Severity! It is a misnomer when applied to anything that could be said in such a case.

It should be kept in mind that the Report came to me in the name of the Association. I must therefore in form address my Protest to them. Still the stroke is designed chiefly for the Committee.

PROTEST.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE HOLLIS ASSOCIATION:

Brethren:—Since your last meeting I have received a communication from your Scribe, purporting to be a copy of the record of certain action of the Association at that meeting, in relation to me. A part of your record I think I understand. Another, and what it would seem was the only part of much consequence, I do not understand. It seems to have been the design of your Committee whose report you adopted, to be adroitly vague and obscure. That they intended to curse me,—to fix upon me the deepest brand of infamy is perfectly evident; but for what, is left to conjecture. The paper as a whole is to me a profound mystery.

Such parts of this more than Delphic communication as I think I understand, I propose to criticize. And in doing so, I propose to use "great plainness of speech." I do not intend to leave you in doubt of my opinion of your conduct.

When the venerable father Howe of Hopkinton, Mass., preached his half-century sermon, he reminded his people that he had often administered severe rebukes; but added, "You have always had the good sense to know you richly deserved it." I trust this will be true of my present audience.

Your proceeding in my case is a violation of the Constitution of the United States and of the State of New Hampshire. The Constitution of the United States declares that the accused shall be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; be confronted with the witnesses against him; and have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor. All these have been denied me. The Constitution of the State of New Hampshire says, "No subject shall be held to answer for any crime or offence, until the same is fully and plainly, substantially and formally, described to him; or be compelled to accuse or furnish evidence against himself. And every subject shall have a right to produce all proof that may be favorable to himself; and to meet the witnesses against him face to face, and to be fully heard in his defence." Now in my case you have violated every one of these particulars. Do you say this all has reference to civil trials? True, but not to them alone. I do not believe that an ecclesiastical court that should violate the Constitution of the State, would be tolerated. Besides, are not these parts of the Constitution the essential and eternal principles of propriety and rectitude, applicable to trials of every class? No man can deny it.

It is a violation of your own Constitution. You are a component part of the General Association, and its Constitution is your Constitution. Its language is, "This General Association wholly disclaims ecclesiastical power or authority over the Churches or the opinions of individuals." That of Massachusetts is the same. That of the General Association of New York is, "Its meetings are for consultation and advice, and not for the exercise of any legislative or judicial powers." And this is a fundamental principle in all ministerial bodies in the Congregational denomination. Your act in my case is judicial. You have by a formal vote pronounced me guilty of violating (though you do not tell me in what) my marriage covenant. It is an act of "power and authority." It as effectually deposes me from the ministry as would the formal act of a Council. You may say that you claim not this right or power,
You have it not. Your action therefore is libellous; and every man of you that has voted in my case is liable to indictment for slander.

You have said to me in vindication of your course that every corporate body must have the right of self-purification. I deny the premises and therefore the inference. A man and his wife are a corporation. But the husband, though knowing that his wife is an adulteress, cannot by his own act eject her from her wifehood. A religious society is a corporation, but cannot at a society's meeting try and expel a bad member. So of a town. So of a business partnership. If a Council deposes a member of this Association, and he is no longer "an ordained minister," in the language of your Constitution, you then can drop his name from your list; but till such deposition, you have no right thus to expel him. The power of self-purification is not directly in your hands. You can in a proper manner secure the calling of a Council, and bring the case unofficially before it. You as a corporation have the same moral right as has every individual minister, who thinks another minister deserves discipline; and no other.

It is a work of supererogation. In your superabounding holiness, you have done more than your duty. Christ teaches that while the law of marriage as instituted in Eden contemplated it as a permanent institution, yet after the fall the hardness of human hearts rendered expedient and necessary a law of divorce. And accordingly it was a part of the law of Moses, and is a part of the Gospel of Christ. Paul, so far from making a separation of husband and wife, prescribed the duties of the parties when separated. But these "holy brethren" of the Hollis Association forget that I and—themselves excepted—the rest of mankind, have not yet been restored quite to the Edenic state, in either character or condition. And they are, as it seems to my imperfect vision inappropriately administering upon me the law of Paradise. That the Gospel of Christ as addressed to sinners, and the law of Christ's house as to be composed, in part at least, of men and women imperfect, is not sufficiently elevated to meet the exigencies of those brethren, is perhaps to be expected. But I would respectfully ask of them, in their dealings with me, to come down so far, if it be possible, as to apply to me no higher rule than that of the Gospel of Christ. I will forgive their perfection in the past if they will now amend it into harmony with the Gospel. Perhaps in the Millennium or New Jerusalem state of the world the law of divorce will be repealed. If not,—like the Fugitive Slave Law after the close of the war, it will be only a dead letter. I am happy that I am condemned, only as I am tried by a standard higher! than that of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

Your treatment of me is in advance of your treatment of others. To them you do not, as to me, apply your paradisical standard that is higher than that of the Gospel of Christ. Are there any of your Churches in which are not to be found those who are living separate from their conjugal companions, or did so before one of them died? There gather around the communion table, and are to be found at the prayer meetings of my pastor at least nine. And so far as I know, except in my case, insanity is not assigned as the reason. It is incompatibility of temper. Yet who ever heard of such cases being made the subject of Church discipline? There are several ministers known to most of us, who in this respect, have done as I have done, and for the same reason. But they are not censured. Why not? It must be that they are not members of Associations as Edenic as is the Hollis Association. They are tried only by the Gospel.

Your treatment of me is an officious intermeddling. Mrs. Lee first proposed a separation and named the conditions. I accepted the proposal and the conditions. And after protracted consideration we entered into a written mutual agreement. We had also the advice and sanction of friends and relatives. Her father and brother co-operated with her. Now if Mrs. Lee and myself are sane in this transaction it is nobody's business. A man and wife have a right, if both are agreed, to occupy the same bed or not, and no one has the right to call them to account. So of the same house or not. Paul allowed such separation "with consent," and "for a time" to be determined by the convenience of the parties. 1 Cor. 7:5. This Association take the ground that Mrs. Lee is sane, and as I suppose, know I also am. If so, then this venerable body is officiously meddling with
what is exclusively Mrs. Lee's and my own business. Perhaps in their perfection as aforesaid, they have done their whole duty, and having time and power to spare, are benevolently doing the duty of other people. But they are doing it very bunglingly. And I am yet rather of opinion that every man had better do his own duty perfectly, and with that be satisfied.

Your act is presumptuous, yea, fool-hardy. I affirm Mrs. Lee insane,—a case of delirium quoad nec. Now insanity has its science. I have, for obvious reasons, devoted some attention to that science. I have of course had every possible opportunity to observe the facts in her life. Again, certain clerical friends and their wives, who were invited by Mrs. Lee's request to hear our story in each other's presence, pronounce her insane. Some of these invited had special reason for becoming acquainted with the manifestations of insanity. And finally I had consulted several able physicians; some of whom were connected with Insane Hospitals, and whose emphatic verdict was that she was not only insane but hopelessly so. And that the only thing to be done for her was to remove her from the particular cause of irritation—which in this case was her domestic affairs. But over the heads of all the aforesaid persons, the sane members of this august body presumed to judge, and they decided that Mrs. Lee was not insane. Were they competent? Did they know the science or the facts in the case? As to facts, one member of the Association had seen and conversed with Mrs. Lee on the subject of our separation. He had written her letter with ordinary correctness. And Rev. Mr. Savage of Bedford had said that her Christian deportment was quite unexceptionable. Do these brethren know that a quickened intellect and unwoanted zeal in religion are often attendants upon insanity? No: for the gentleman from Amherst gravely enlightened the Association by a statement of the above facts in proof of Mrs. Lee's sanity. And the members drank it in without filtration. Brethren, you are no more competent to give a verdict on this subject, than so many members of an infant school. And if you will devote one-half the attention to this subject that you have devoted to me personally, I will say so. And for you to set aside as of no value the verdict of such men as have expressed an opinion on this case, and to substitute an opposite one of your own, and to make that verdict of your own the basis of a proceeding that is to murder me and entail disgrace upon my children;—that is to take all my influence out of the scale of Christ and throw it with a vengeance into the scale of the devil;—that is to make the entirety of that influence, not only as long as I may live, but when being dead I may live, an acrid poison;—that shall make that influence for evil more extensive than has ever been my influence for good,—for I shall have a celebrity I never before attained,—to do this is,—I repeat the word,—fool-hardy. It is heinous sin. And I have no such command of language as would adequately rebuke it. If your guilty course had taken my life; if it had merely destroyed my soul in hell it had been comparatively a small thing; for a man's influence is ordinarily worth more, and in many cases very many times more than his soul. You have it not in your power to tear me from the arms of my Savior, and deliver me to Satan, but you have delivered my influence to Satan, and must bear the responsibility of such an act.

Your treatment of me personally—in this matter has been in violation of every principle of Christian manliness and honor. It has been mean. No honorable lawyer would practice it. No honorable lawyer but would despise it in others. And in the estimate of such, and of all magnanimous laymen, these clerical perpetrators will sink to such a depth of disgrace that their pulpit will not lift them out of it. I name the following particulars:

When the paper from the Derry and Manchester Association was presented to this body, I asked, as what should be mine of course, a copy of it. I was refused by a formal vote. And when the question was under discussion, the venerable moderator gave as a reason why Brother Lee should not have the copy, that he was shrewd, familiar with the principles of Congregationalism, would be difficult to manage, and unless the Association were careful, would escape their hands: they must not therefore let him have a copy! For shame! "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon." When the question as to the proper course to be taken by the Association was under consideration, I denied that you were an ecclesiastical body, or had
judicial functions, and you could not therefore entertain the paper from the Derry and Manchester Association; but you did entertain it, and appointed a Committee of three to consider and report at a future meeting. That Committee invited me to meet them. I was willing to meet them and talk with them on the subject as brethren, but not in their official capacity as representing the Association. We talked freely. They then wished me to make a statement of the case to the Association. I refused: I would make a statement at any length, the longer the better, to them severally or all at once in their capacity as brethren, but not as a corporation. The Committee thought, that as there was a good deal of feeling in the community on the subject, I had better make some little statement; and as I objected to doing it to the Association, they could hear me in a recess and unofficially. But when again I met the Association this Committee insisted that I should address the Association as such. I refused, but I was frowned upon and the pressure was continued. At length I consented to comply with their demand—"under protest," that I might not concede their right to demand it, or to assume judicial functions.

Now what I complain of thus far is, in addition to the fact that the Association should take any official notice of the case, that I should be denied a copy of the Derry and Manchester paper—for it was to the matter of that paper that the Committee were to devote attention, and the Association to act, and I of course to talk. It "seemed to me unreasonable" that the Association should make and treat me as a culprit, "and not withal to signify the crimes laid against me." And now, I complain that the Committee deceived me. They wanted only "a little statement." And it could be made to the brethren at a recess. The Committee had heard my story. Could I suppose they were intending to report grave charges against me, and yet would ask me to criminate myself? They could but know that I understood them to ask of me what would give the Association some ground, from their personal knowledge of the case, to say to the Derry and Manchester Association that there was nothing demanding any formal examination, and thus give the go-by to the officious and ab extra matter of the aforesaid "paper." I supposed I was dealing with honorable men—a part of them at least. I did not know that Rumor had gotten in their pregnant brains, or rather hearts, a verdict that wanted only an excuse to be born. And that this deceptive process was to bait me and lure me on till the net could be sprung over me. One of the actors in this pernicious process acted in character. But another of them was about the last man in the world to whom I should have supposed such meanness possible. And in losing my confidence in him, I have lost what was dear to my heart.

But what next? I was to talk to the Association; but to what point was I to talk? I knew not. I supposed it to be something in that famous illegitimate "paper," and that had been denied me. And so far as I could remember the contents of it, it was about this: The public knew that I and my wife had separated, and there was a rumor that something was not right about it. And there was a suspicion—I suppose it was on the admitted principle that women are better than men—that I was most in fault. It was to this nameless, shapeless, unknown something that I was to talk. And I suppose it was expected that I should talk very definitely and very logically.

It will be seen that I was not accused of anything. No effort was made at proof against me on any point. I was called upon to prove my own innocence! And not only so, but my innocence of I knew not what—"In the lowest depth, a deeper still," as Satan said. This is no exaggeration. I knew not what I had done or was supposed to have done that was wrong. And I suppose the reverend fraternity that insisted that I should talk, knew no more than I did. And I do not know to this day what is, or is supposed to be my sin.

After talking awhile, I said to my sage auditors and judges that I knew not how much or what they wished to hear; I had told them but a small part of the volume of facts embraced in the case. I would say more or not, as they wished; and added that they were bound to accredit what I had said, and regard it as the facts of the case important to be known, or else to allow me to say more and to bring witnesses. They refused to do either. The Committee in their Report ignored my whole statement,—showing, as I am now convinced, that it was not what I said that was important, but the fact that I had
addressed them at all as an Association. They now had a fair pretext for a Report and action on my case. They had heard me on the subject.

You listened to and acted on what was claimed to be rebutting testimony at a meeting when I was not present. Nothing is more obviously right than that, in the language of the Constitution of New Hampshire, any one shall have the right ‘to meet the witnesses against him face to face, and to be fully heard in his defence.’ Thus you see that those principles held most sacred in civil relations and which are among the ‘first truths’ of rectitude and justice, have been ruthlessly and shamefully trodden under foot by you as my persecutors.

The Report of your Committee,—what shall I say of it? The mildest thing that can be said is, that so far as it has any meaning, it is an unmitigated falsehood from beginning to end. It is not even ‘flavored’ with truth. There seems no attempt to keep up even the appearance of truth. Its falsity stands out in perfect obviousness, and without an effort at concealment. ‘The shame of its nakedness appears’ glaringly.

They advise that Brother Lee be ‘permitted to make a statement,’ &c. And the Association gave liberty. ‘Permitted?’ ‘Liberty?’ That committee knew that I not only did not ask permission or liberty, but that I absolutely refused to say one word to the Association on the subject. It was only after I was dragged long and soundly, that I at length consented ‘under protest’ to do so. And there are few acts of my life of which I am more ashamed than that consent. I assure this revered and august court, that to yield under brow-beating is not one of my easily besetting sins. And I should not have yielded then but that I had a very different opinion of some of the prominent actors in the onslaught, from what I now entertain of them.

In this statement was made ‘in full’ I told you I was not prepared for a full statement—that a volume was yet unfolded.

‘In view of the whole subject as presented by Mr. Lee,’ &c. Now my whole statement in all its great facts as important in the case, was set aside. I told the Association that Mrs. Lee was insane—had become more and more so till finally she had become a maniac, and attempted to take the lives of some of the family—that I consulted eminent physicians whose lives were devoted to the insane—that my course was in exact conformity to their instructions—that that course was the best possible for her as well as my family—that I had in it the cordial co-operation of her venerable father and her Honorable brother. ‘In view’ (!) of this statement, this sage Committee come to the conclusion that it is not ‘such as to justify a separation.’ Believe this who can. It was left out of view.

The committee ‘lament the unhappiness which this separation has occasioned.’ Who is unhappy? Every representation of Mrs. Lee is, that she is very cheerful and happy. And I cannot say that my family are less so, than amid the confusion and fear that preceded the separation. I am indeed alone—O how painfully alone; but not more so than before the separation. This part of the report is a creation.

So far then from being ‘in view of,’ it is in utter disregard of and in direct contradiction to my statement.

During the discussion of my case by the Association I have been honored by the affix of such appellatives as ‘lawyer,’ ‘shrewd,’ ‘artful,’ and the like. Now I would ask if it is not a fair presumption that such a man would not be likely to furnish, in his statement of the case the material for his own condemnation. According to my reverend and consistent judges, I am at the same time both wise and foolish; so shrewd that they cannot catch me, and yet rushing headlong into the net that they have spread, or rather myself spreading a net with which for them to enclose me. ‘Consistency is a jewel.’

I repeat: That report is an unmitigated falsehood—if not designed yet pre-eminently fitted to deceive any and all that may read it. If the hearts of its fabricators are saved, it must be at great expense to their heads. And vice versa.

I come now to your fearful vote on that false report. There were present thirteen members, one of whom, my young Pastor, had nothing to do in the matter, leaving a jury of twelve. Of this twelve only six were present when I had my talk with the Association; the other six had only heard rumors. It
is due to one of the last named six,—Brother Sanborn of Mont Vernon,—to state that he had the common sense and the conscience to refuse to act or take any responsibility in so disgraceful an affair. Now what shall we say of the two classes of actors, the Six and the Five? The Five merely voted on a Report that was to damn to personal ruin and disastrous influence upon every good cause, an aged minister, who had worn himself out literally and prematurely in the service of Christ, when they knew nothing about the case save what they had heard from the lips of Rumor—who, according to Virgil, is not a very reliable witness or reputable companion for honest men. The Six voted for the Report when they knew better. To the Five I would recommend the principle of Father Moody,—"When I know not what to do, I will not do I know not what." To the Six I would apply the language of the Savior, "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive." I will apply to Brother Sanborn—

"Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he."

I have one thing to say to you severally and personally. In your personal treatment of me you have violated the plainest principles of the Gospel. Not one of you has taken the first Christian step in an effort to learn whether I was right or wrong; and if wrong to reclaim me. Not one of you ever introduced the subject to me or made the first effort to correct what, it seems, you so firmly believed to be wrong that you were ready to vote your censure without evidence. Is this the way to treat an erring brother? Is it doing as you would be done by?

Your Report has taken the most injurious form possible for me. You know perfectly that my poor wife has put into circulation all kinds of stories.* I am supposed by the public to have been personally cruel and abusive to my wife: I am represented as an adulterer, and as having put away my wife that I might the more freely indulge in sin. Your Report is a general and wholesale condemnation of me. The public have a right now to believe that all these stories are true—that I am a vile wretch, only to be loathed, and to be expelled from the society of the virtuous.

And your Report bears as hard upon Christ and his cause as upon me. I have stood in the pulpit more than the third of a century. I have preached in all your pulpits, and in some of them week after week in revivals of religion. And I have had the reputation—whatever else I was or was not—of being honest, outspoken, and with my heart on my lips. Now if the public are to believe that all this time I was a bad man and a hypocrite, it will shake their confidence in all ministers—in each of you severally. It will shake the confidence of a great multitude in religion itself. It will bind the chains of sin more tightly around them and render more fearful, how much more—the only influence by which they can be disentangled. It will carry them down to hell.

Who is responsible for this? God is witness that I am not. You alone are to blame. You have utterly neglected the plainest principles of Christian duty in the matter. You have sinned against God—sinned with a high hand. And I doubt if there can be found elsewhere a record of such high-handed injustice, save in the registry of the Inquisition.

And all this outlay upon me and upon Christ was gratuitous. I had told you that in no part of my life had I been more seriously deliberate, more prayerful, or more conscious of having acted right and with the approbation of God. I told you that the proposition for a separation was first made by Mrs. Lee, and years before it took place; that it was a subject of frequent remark; that the terms were just such as she proposed, and were in writing and subscribed by us both; that the separation was with the approval of both her friends and mine that it was what men of all the professions advised; and that I was then and now am perfectly sure that it was best for her, best for me and my family, best for all.

* I wish to correct this statement. This was the representation made to me by parties who wanted capital for their enterprise; and I suppose it might be true. I now think otherwise.
Now grant that you in your superior wisdom were, from mere rumor, able to judge more wisely than all we with our perfect opportunities; you might at least have given me the credit of honesty and the desire to do right, and thus save the cause of Christ. Said a good lady, wiser much than her reverend, vain, headlong, though honest husband, “If the Association would only say that Mrs. Lee were insane; or if they would only say that they believed you to be conscientious in what you had done, it would put the matter all before the public, and it would save religion.” And it does seem to me brethren, that you must have been exceedingly rabid in your desire to stab me, or you would for Christ’s sake have omitted to do it. Christ is to suffer more than I shall. My days are few; and I have been able to understand what Paul meant when he said, It is the smallest thing for me to be judged of you or of a human tribunal. I am profoundly conscious of having done right, and of having the approbation of God. What to me, a few years hence, will be the disgraceful record upon your book? No more than it is now to Paul that he was accused of almost every crime and called by the hardest names. I have some constitutional independence, and care less than most persons for the opinions of men. And I have a blessed religion that teaches me—teaches my heart and gives birth to thoroughly practical conviction of the brevity of life and the little importance of the good or ill of life. My hopes and my frutious are from the sphere of the unseen. You may then do any thing to me if you will not involve in your infestions the cause of Christ. But as you now proceed, your infestions fall not upon me alone or chiefly. Your poisoned arrows pass easily through the scarcely substantial interests that are mine, and

“Where passed the shaft no trace is found.”

But they fasten and rankle in the body of Christ.

And I wish to ask with emphasis, Why am I to be thus stricken down and murdered with all the incidents to Christ of your act? Why? I understand that Mrs. Lee in a recent interview with the chairman of the Committee, expressly and emphatically denies that she makes any adulterous or other immoral or unchristian imputations. She complains only that we are separated. [This is testimony given in my absence and as reported to me.] Now then, taking Mrs. Lee’s representation of the case, why do these sage judges think I separated from my wife, or rather allowed her to separate from me? They are, of course, from her testimony as well as mine, shut up to the one hypothesis that I assign—her insanity, dangerous to me, and demanding as the only conclusion, saving her from hopeless mania, that she should be separated from what was to her the irritating cause of her developments—her family cares and responsibilities. Why then, I again ask, inflict this capital punishment upon my ministerial and Christian character when Christ must be so deeply wounded?

I have one more thing to say. I have felt that the circumstances in which I have been placed for some years past were such as should have made my brethren slow to practice such severity upon me, and such as called instead for their pity. It is known to you that I have buried two wives and two children; that a third wife is, as I claim insane, and for the last two years she was in my family was a maniac, with a tact and skill to torment that seemed superhuman; that during these two years my own health utterly failed me, so that I could no longer discharge the duties of my profession. Indeed I was supposed to stand by the side of my grave. I was subject to those terrible fits at night that rendered it not improbable as I went to sleep, that I should not again awake. Now it was at this time that the wildest manifestations were made by my poor wife both at home and abroad; and that the faction of the church that had seceded were most active in spreading the monstrous stories that she put in circulation. And the feeble old man of sixty, with one lobe of his brain partially paralyzed, and all of it so congested that he could not lie down when he slept at night, and with the whole nervous system reduced to its minimum of vitality and power, was represented as licentious and adulterous.

Now I say, I was more entitled to the sympathy of these my brethren than deserving of their censure. And it would have been much more Christian in them to have come to me, and at least asked kindly and privately of my wel-
fare, and if it must be so of my sin as they supposed it, than to have waited three years and then hurl themselves with all their weight and the momentum acquired in those years, upon their unsuspecting victim. I have often applied to you the language of the man of Uz. "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, oh ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." My condition has made its mute appeal to you in vain; and you have been, like Job's misinterpreters and antagonists, hard hearted. I commend to your serious perusal the 143d Psalm.

Brethren, I have assumed the right of a Christian to admonish his brethren. I have told you as plainly as I could what I think of your outrageous proceedings. But I have one thing to say in your favor. You have been doing the devil's work; but you have done it awkwardly and bunglingly. The legitimate inference is that you are not familiar with that kind of employment, and that the service of the devil is not the business of your life. I do not believe the devil would have employed such incompetent hands were his object simply to injure me. And he does it, I think, because he knows that he shall also inflict a greater evil upon each one of you, and a greater still upon Christ. I am happy to find you so awkward in the service of Satan. I hope the community will give you due credit for this fact.

Yours under outrage,

SAMUEL LEE.

April, 1864.

P. S. The above was written, not till I had been for some three months informed of your action in my case, and therefore not hastily. It was designed to be read at your last meeting, but I was not able to be with you then. I have thus had another three months in which to think on the subject. But the result of that reflection is not that I would erase one word. I think it to be just what I should say to you.

You may say that it implies a low estimate of ministers. Precisely that. I have had a growing conviction for many years, that the great want of the age is a better ministry.

—Ministers as a class have but very little common sense. They are somewhat learned, but they have not an average amount of common sense. I recognize the propriety of the remark of Judge ——, made not long since, that "There ought to be at the Theological Seminary at Andover, a Professorship of Common Sense."

—Ministers are sadly wanting in piety. They have orthodox beliefs; they have some religion, but very little piety. Of the childlike spirit that largely appropriates the grace of God in Christ Jesus they are almost destitute. They are not "led by the Spirit" in the high and blessed sense of that term. Men who are under the guidance of that wisdom which is given to confiding and expectant prayer, would never have perpetrated the heinous act upon which I have had such painful occasion to comment.

Brethren, my prayer is that you may repent of this sin, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

July, 1864.

In conclusion I have one word to say:—

To the Hollis Association, Doctors Clarke and Davis excepted: You have before heard "the, other side," and now my story. Will it be best for you, best for Christ, that you should be longer partisans in this unhappy affair. Will it not be most for the credit of the gospel that we are all preaching, that, right here, we should stop and bury the past and start anew, and in the hope of sufficient grace to work and labor together as friends to each other and to Christ. This last I address to you all. God give you wisdom. And my brethren will allow me to suggest that this may be a favorable time, to settle more definitely the principles of Congregationalism as applicable to ministerial Associations. Suppose they read John Wise’s "Churches Quarrel Espoused." They will learn not only what is Congregationalism, but also that
the Pastor of the mother church in Ipswich used a sharper scalpel than he of the daughter church in New Ipswich.

—To the churches of this region: As Congregational churches, all ecclesiastical authority is vested in you. You have a right and it may be your duty to institute an investigation into the doings of any clubs or voluntary association to which your Pastors belong. The Hollis Association, as constituted when I ceased to attend its meetings, claimed the right to put its members on trial before itself on questions of immorality or heresy, and enter on their Records and thus publish a verdict of acquittal or condemnation. This is Presbyterianism. More than that, Presbyteries are composed in part of laymen. It is Popery. It is Priestly domination. It is even more intense than that. Here is a private irresponsible clerical club, in its secret sessions, and in the absence of the victim, hearing testimony, and voting a verdict of condemnation which is a brand of infamy, upon a member who is a member of a church, and might have been the Pastor of that church. Will the churches allow themselves to be served by Pastors under such liabilities? I believe in Ministerial Associations, as what may be of immense importance to the Pastors of churches. I subscribe to all that the venerable Hooker of Hartford has said on this subject. But let the members meet as brethren and nothing more. I have contended earnestly for the faith in this particular, but a majority under the leadership of Dr. Davis were either against me or had no opinion on the subject. The reader will have noticed that in the resolution for my suspension it was because I had used “defiant” language, which could refer only to the fact that I had repelled all their claims of authority over me. And my suspension was to continue “until he shall give evidence of a more just appreciation of his relations to us,” i.e. recognize their authority over me. We have no right to criticize an authoritative tribunal to its face. And it was my close criticism of the Association to its face, that was so “unbearable” to a few members. My Protest proceeded on the hypothesis, “All we are brethren,” and that I had the same right to “reprove, rebuke and exhort,” that Paul had to do that to Peter because he was to be blamed. I am a Congregationalist to the bone. And when my good brethren attempted to act the Cardinal over me, their inquisitorial practices found in Brother Lee certain untractable materials that were not so easily “worked.” He had a little too much of Paul in his composition.

Brethren of the churches, laymen: “Think on these things.” You know that I have always been the uncompromising advocate of lay influence and responsibility. I think you have some responsibility in this matter. Suppose you should, some day, hear that your Pastor had been branded with infamy by a vote of the Hollis Association in its secret session, pronouncing him guilty of some flagrant immorality, while you have not been consulted, or if you had made a respectful request for information, have been snubbed.
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Lee, Samuel
My story about the Hollis association.