

minister is teaching, another is labouring to counteract. And, if these are fundamental principles, as it seems to me they must be, then the denominational "house is divided against itself."

Unless there is some basis of union agreed upon between the several churches of our denomination, then there can be no successful co-operation in Christian work. Such a union can only be effected by an agreement upon some *standard* of faith and polity. I do not say that such a standard shall be explicit upon *minor* points of doctrine or polity. But it must declare and maintain what it considers as the *essentials* of doctrine and polity.

In order for this, it is not only necessary that the denomination shall agree upon certain articles of faith and discipline as essential, but there must be some *modus operandi* in maintaining those articles of faith and discipline. We come, therefore, to the second division of our question, viz., *How can the essentials of our faith and discipline be maintained?*

Surely such essentials cannot be maintained if each church asserts the right to believe what she pleases; to receive *into*, and eject *from* her membership whosoever she deems agreeable to herself; and to ordain or install as her pastor whoever she likes, irrespective of his moral and Christian character. For while an individual church may please herself in these things, she may, at the same time, sorely *displease* others, as well as bring reproach upon the whole sisterhood of churches.

To my mind, such a union can only be maintained by some concerted movement of the denomination. This movement, among Congregationalists, must be of such a character as not to deprive any individual church of her right to receive into her membership those who conform to that standard, or to eject those who do not.

This can only be done by some system of mutual advisement, and the "Council System" is the simplest and most effectual of any of which I have any knowledge, and this notwithstanding your reflections,—evidently without knowledge of facts,—in a late number of the INDEPENDENT upon the effects of that system in Maine.

Now I happen to have lived under that system in Maine for more than twenty years, and therefore, judge myself to have some knowledge of its workings and effects. And I can most emphatically assert that "red tape" has never been felt to be any part of the system of the Congregational churches in that State. On the contrary, I know of no body of Christians who are so harmonious in all their movements, and who are so devoid of anything like autocracy in their denominational workings. Nor do I stand alone in this opinion. It is the universal opinion of strangers who attend the "Maine State Conference of the Congregational Churches," that it carries the *palm* for Christian equality, and brotherly love and forbearance.

No has the "Council System" ever been regarded as a "formidable undertaking" in any of the "installations or dismissals of pastors" of which I have any knowledge. In fact, they were always looked upon as theological and spiritual treats, and were often productive of great religious awakenings.

Let us look, for a little, into the workings and advantages of the system. A church is about to ordain or install a pastor. She recognizes the sisterhood and co-operative fellowship of the churches. Letters-missive are sent to the neighbouring churches (there are about twenty in the county where I lived), inviting them, by pastor and a delegate, to assist in the service. At the appointed time the Council thus invited meet with the church. The position and doings of the church, as also the papers and statements of the pastor-elect are thoroughly investigated. If anything has been wrong with the church relative to their past pastor or otherwise, the advice of the Council is given upon it. And such timely advice is often very helpful to the church in its relations to the new pastor.

The examination of the credentials and views of the pastor usually cover a broad range. His Christian experience, his knowledge of the doctrines and institutions of the gospel, his views of church polity, etc., are thus not only laid before his own church, but are

fully understood by the sister churches. This brings the new pastor into his work with the confidence and intelligent co-operation of the neighbouring churches. The religious services throughout are usually of a high order, while the confidences and interchanges of sympathy are productive of great good to all.

The dismissal of a pastor is very much of the same character, and it is important not only to the pastor who is dismissed, but also to any church to which he may subsequently go, as it confers upon him the endorsement of the ministers and churches in the immediate vicinity of his last pastoral charge.

As to the benefits of this system, I may say I believe it would have saved our church in the city of Halifax, from installing as her pastor, an intemperate and otherwise immoral man, and her subsequent extinction as the result. Other churches in this Province have either become extinct or greatly injured through the want of some system of this kind. Nor is Nova Scotia alone in such disastrous results. The other Provinces have had their difficulties from the same source, while the blush of shame has covered the faces of the truest and best in our denomination. And I am sure our churches and ministers in the Maritime Provinces, are now experiencing a sense of security in the introduction of the "council system" never before felt.

But it may be said, if a church persistently does wrong, cannot the sister churches disfellowship without calling a council? Yes; but where there is no thorough investigation and understanding of the facts in the case, they will not. There are always some churches and pastors who will feel that, in the absence of knowledge, the matter must be looked upon *charitably* as the *rumours* are doubtless *largely exaggerated*. And worse still, there are always some who, hearing only one side of the story, will tell the church she has been *shamefully treated* by those who refuse to fellowship her. And so it comes to pass that what might have been prevented by timely knowledge and Christian advisement, results in the destruction of a church, and a reproach upon the cause of Christ.

Again it may be objected, that this system savours too much of Presbyterianism, which, to say the least, cannot be considered as very conducive to concord and spirituality, if we may judge of it where the system has had the religious moulding of a community for any considerable length of time.

I answer, there is a vast difference between a system of "Church courts," and one of Church councils. The "Church courts" of the Presbyterian Church are comprised of ministers and elders, who follow a case from the "Session" to the "General Assembly," while the opinion and wishes of the local congregation, are never authoritatively heard in the matter. In the "council system" of the Congregational churches, the pastors and delegates are chosen by the vote of the whole membership of the Church, and their opinion must be submitted to the Church for her approval. And, if a church feels aggrieved by the action of one council, she can call another of entirely different parties.

In the one system, the *officers of the "Church court,"* sit in judgment upon the doings of the pastor or congregation, while in the other, the *Church* sits in judgment upon the advice of a council.

J. B. HAWES,

Pastor of the Congregational Church,
Maitland, Nova Scotia, Aug. 30th, 1879.

News of the Churches.

REV. G. T. COLWELL supplied the church in Acton on the 7th and 14th inst.

THE new Congregational church at Shedden is to be dedicated on Thursday, October 16th, and following Sunday.

REV. W. F. CLARKE has been assisting the Rev. E. D. Silcox at Stouffville and Unionville for the past month and will continue to do so for a few weeks.

REV. D. MCGREGOR, M.A., has resigned the pastorate of the church in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. The resignation to take effect at the end of the present month.

WESTERN ASSOCIATION.—The Autumnal Session will be held at Paris on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 14th and 15th. The order is as follows: First Session on Tuesday at 3 p.m. In the evening the Secretary will preach the Associational sermon, and the Lord's Supper will be administered. Papers will be read on these subjects, "Readjustment of our Missionary Operations," by Rev. W. H. Allworth; "Denominational Aggression," Rev. J. Griffith; "The Sabbath, a Conservator of Righteousness in the Community," G. S. Climie; "Review of 'Dale on the Atonement,'" R. W. Wallace. Addresses will be delivered on "How to secure Family Piety," by Rev. C. Duff, M.A.; "The Duty of Christians to the Times," by Rev. J. Howie; "Work for Souls Invigorating," by Rev. W. Hay. These are all promised and sure, so the success of the session is ensured. Will the churches appoint delegates at the September Church meeting? Inform Rev. Mr. Allworth of your intended visit by October 6th at the latest, so that provision may be made for your entertainment. An autumnal hand-shake all round will do us all good. So be on hand.

Religious News.

It is reported that George Macdonald, preacher, poet and novelist, is about to visit the United States shortly.

THE ladies of the Congregational church of Marysville, Ohio, made \$3,500 for their church by publishing a book on cookery.

IN Duluth, Minnesota, not more than one-half the eleven churches are used for religious purposes. The town grew very fast at one time, and then declined as fast.

THE Crown Prince of Germany is not so popular as he ought to be, and this is mainly because, like his ancestor Frederick the Great, he never can refrain from sneering at the fools with whom he is brought in contact.

CAPT. ADAMS, of the whaler "Arctic," gives out no spirit rations to his sailors, and finds hot coffee is much preferable to grog as a sustaining stimulant under extreme cold. Ardent spirits were not to be given to the crew of the Polar exploring ship "Jeannette," which has recently sailed.

PRINCIPAL TULLOCH, it is stated, is to be invited to London as Dr. Cumming's successor, and arrangements will be proposed whereby he may continue to discharge his numerous duties in Scotland by residing there part of the year. If he accepts the invitation, it is believed that the proposal for the erection of a Presbyterian church on the Thames Embankment, which was abandoned some time ago, will be revived under Broad Church auspices.

A MINISTERS' Seaside Home is one of the latest features in English Congregational circles. The Rev. Urijah R. Thomas, of Bristol, is the chief mover in the matter. Assisted by a few friends, he has purchased "the Grange," at Morthoe, near Ilfracombe, Devon, which he opens for ministers of small incomes at very low rates. Now, he asks for £2,000 as an endowment fund. The charges are not sufficient to meet the expenses, and if the institution is to go on and be made available to those who most need it, something of the nature of an endowment must be secured. He makes the "Home" a catholic institution, opening its doors to clergymen of all denominations.

CASES of persecution of Protestants in Spain are multiplying. Two agents of the Evangelical Continental Society are on trial—"the one for burying a person, at the request of the relations, in a cemetery which the priests claim as their exclusive property; the other for holding meetings in a village to which he had been invited." The latter has been twice condemned to imprisonment and fine on this charge, and is now awaiting the result of an appeal to the Supreme Court. Figueras, an evangelist, was thrust into a dungeon for two days for holding a village service near Vigo. Two of Mr. Spurgeon's former students were assailed with stones, at the open instigation of the priest, as they were returning from a village where they had been preaching. At Camunas the authorities of the village seem to have decided on driving out all religious teachers. They have put the priest to flight, and the Protestant pastor is ordered to leave, on pain of death.

A NEW and beautiful Presbyterian church was lately opened at a cost of about £10,000, in Armagh, the primatial city of Ireland. The Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser, of London, preached on the occasion, and mentioned the following anecdote. After a sermon preached by him at the opening of a church elsewhere, a lady of fashionable position in society came to him. "Why should I have two watches while the house of God remains unpaid for?" He replied, "Really, I cannot tell why." She then said, "Well, I will give the better watch of the two toward the cost of the church." She did so, and a jeweller paid £52 for it, which was a sensible addition to the fund. Dr. Fraser added that at another collection, on the previous Sabbath, a lady who had not a piece of gold, and who did not care to give silver, took the chain off her neck and put it on the plate. She would lose nothing by that. They might say that these were impulsive women. Well, impulsive women might rise up to condemn illiberal men in the day of the Lord.