

J. T. Martin, Deacon of the Congregational Church Simcoe," was received by the Union as valid.⁴

II. It is stated that the Union in compliance with the request of a committee appointed on the matter authorized their Secretary to write Mr. Harris requesting him to meet them on Monday afternoon with respect to certain difficulties in the way of granting him a letter of dismissal," and that on Tuesday the same committee reported that Mr. Harris had not met with them nor sent any communication; that thus charges affecting his standing in the denomination were unanswered; that there was evidence of his having repeatedly, peremptorily, and discourteously refused the mediation of neighbouring Ministers and Churches in the recent difficulties; and recommended that therefore his name be erased from the roll and no letter of dismissal be now granted. This report was adopted on a division."

In reply to this we state.—1st. Mr. Harris did not receive the Secretary's notice of Friday the 11th June, requesting his presence in Brantford on Monday the 14th, until about noon on Tuesday the 15th.⁵ 2nd. No charges "affecting Mr. Harris' standing in the denomination" have been made known to⁶ him or his church, and surely it is inconsistent with the procedure of any court whether Civil or Ecclesiastical to take extreme action⁷ against an individual before notice is given him of the charges against him.

3rd. Mr. Harris did not "*discourteously* refuse the mediation of neighbouring Ministers and Churches," but upon the ground of *principle* refused to acknowledge the right of any party whatever beyond the Church to interfere in its affairs.

4th. This Church regards the action of the Union in resolving to erase Mr. Harris' name from the roll and to refuse to grant him a letter of dismissal upon the ground of "certain difficulties in the way" a violation of the fundamental principles of Congregationalism, being an attempt to adjudicate upon the internal affairs of a particular Church,⁸ whilst the 3rd article of the "Constitution of the Congregational Union" of Canada, declares "That this Union is founded on a full recognition of the distinctive principle of Congregational Churches, viz. the Scriptural right of every separate Church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs; and therefore that the Union shall not in any case assume legislative authority or become a court of appeal."

Moved by ——— seconded by ——— and *Resolved*.—That the Congregational Union acted unconstitutionally in refusing to grant to Mr. Harris the Letter of Dismissal required, he having sent in his resignation to that body, on the 18th February, 1858, and his church its resignation, on the 1st of March, 1858.—Carried unanimously.

Signed for and on behalf of the Congregational Church, Simcoe, Canada West.

WILLIAM WESTON, }
GEORGE COLINS, } Deacons.

(4). A very important omission is made here. The claim was reported by a special committee to be "*valid in their judgment*," and one to "*be allowed until cause to the contrary was shown*." That cause may still be shown, but this is not the proper place for doing so. Hence we omit what follows.

(5). It will be seen that allowance was made for such a possibility.

(6). We presume it was for this purpose that his presence was desired.

(7). As we understand the matter, that Mr. Harris was not *expelled* from the Union. He wished to withdraw his name, and it was erased accordingly. The expression that "no letter of dismissal be *now* granted," leaves the door open for meeting the "charges" aforesaid.

(8). The Union dealt with Mr. Harris simply as a member of their own body. These did not touch his relations to any church. So with "the Simcoe church"—there were rival claimants to that title, as member of the Union, which on that account was compelled to form some opinion on the question, however reluctantly.