

culties, and success is certain to follow. It is a well directed labor that succeeds.

If our College is not forming the men to bravely do the work in the line required in our rural districts, we had better adopt some other plan of preparing men for the ministry in our mission churches. For it is in this part of our work we have greatly failed. If we continue in the same line of action in the future that we have adopted in the past, we shall not have a church in this northern section of our country, from Owen Sound to Toronto, in a very few years.

M. S. GRAY.

### THE EX-PARTE COUNCIL.

SIR,—The INDEPENDENT for May contains a letter from my old friend Mr. H. J. Clark, respecting the Ex-parte Council, lately held by some of the Toronto churches, in reference to the recent trouble in the Western Church. I am in perfect accord with what Mr. Clark says in the beginning of his letter, as to the undesirability of publishing accounts of church squabbles or difficulties in the columns of secular newspapers, and further I think it is well to keep them as much as possible out of the pages of religious periodicals, as their appearance there, frequently provokes rejoinders that tend to no ultimate good to the parties implicated in them.

Had Mr. Clark in his letter, confined himself to the dispute between the Council and the Western Church, I would not have interfered in the matter, but as he has seen fit to bring Zion Church, of which I am an old member, into the arena, I feel it incumbent on me to say a few words in explanation and defence of the action sustained by Zion during the course of the recent painful occurrences.

Mr. Clark having stated what the Council did with respect to the dispute they undertook to investigate and settle, proceeds to arraign and condemn Zion Church for its conduct in the matter, and expresses himself pretty freely against it. He says that had it acted otherwise than it did, he could "have respected its action." This appears to mean that on account of its action, he does not respect it. The tendency of his remarks seems to me to imply that Zion Church did not give its

true reasons for not joining in the Council, but resorted to an unworthy subterfuge to evade the difficulty that had arisen. If this be Mr. Clark's idea, I must decidedly say that he is quite mistaken in his impression. Zion Church never acted otherwise than in an honorable and straightforward manner in all matters in which it has been called upon to engage. It has not shrunk from speaking out, when it was necessary to do so, and I think I can go further and say, that it has always been on the right side of every question in which it took part.

It would occupy too much of your space to go fully into the details of the unhappy events that have transpired in the Western Church. A brief abstract, as far as I am acquainted with them, will be sufficient for the purposes of this letter. If I shall make any mistake in my narrative, I am open to correction.

The "expelled" members of the Western Church, wrote to Zion Church as well as to other churches stating their case, and requested that a Council should be called to consider the matter in dispute. Zion replied that it did not believe that it had such power to call a council, but if one were called by the Western, Zion would, if requested, send delegates to it. The other churches decided to call the council, and invited Zion to take part in it. Zion declined to do so, unless the Western would attend the meeting. Zion did not think it was in accordance with Congregational principles for one or more churches to interfere in the affairs of another church without its consent or invitation. I may say for myself, in addition to the assertion of this, as I believe, fundamental principle, I was strongly of opinion that if this Council were held without the co-operation of the Western, it would do no good, but on the contrary, increase the unpleasant feeling that already existed between the Western and its expelled members, and I think the result of the Council and its published decision has amply proved the correctness of this opinion. In my judgment it would have been well if that Council had not been held.

I cannot see the correctness of Mr. Clark's statement, that "the principle laid down (by Zion Church) is surprising," and that "logically carried out," would render any church "unable to cut off an immoral member if he declined to defend him-