

It would be difficult indeed to over-estimate the importance to you of the character of those who serve you in the gospel. We exhort you to exercise great care in selecting your pastors. You enjoy very great liberty in this particular, and it is incumbent upon you to exercise it with wisdom and self-restraint. The conditions of modern society, the standards insisted on by other denominations, the Congregational traditions of the past, the urgency of Apostolic precept, and the highest welfare of your families and your own souls, render it imperative that those who minister to you in holy things should be men who know God, possess an unblemished moral record, and be men of cultivated minds. Qualifications of a more superficial kind are less likely to be neglected, but these are vital, and should receive most careful scrutiny. Have regard in all pastoral settlements to the fellowship of the churches, and by councils of representative and neighboring churches you will be guarded from grave mistakes.

This year the Reverend and Venerable Wm. M. Barbour, D.D., is to retire from the Principalship of our College, after a long, active, honored and influential career in Pulpit and Seminary. Ten of those years have been spent in his present office. We congratulate him on the honorable completion of a great public career, and we call on all the churches to unite in earnest prayer to Almighty God, that He will so guide in the selection of Dr. Barbour's successor, as that a man may be appointed Principal who has understanding of the times, ability to inspire our students with true conceptions of the opportunities and responsibilities of the ministerial office, and such capacity and learning as will enable him to guide them wisely during the crucial years when they are being fitted for its occupancy.

The Union was highly favored this year by the visit of a fraternal delegation from the Triennial Council of Congregational Churches in the United States. The gentlemen selected and present at the Union were the Rev. Edward Hawes, D.D., of Burlington, Vt.; Rev. Smith Baker, D.D., of Boston, Mass.; and Rev. Frank S. Fitch, D.D., of Buffalo, N. Y. In appointing these brethren to visit us and convey their greetings, the churches of the United States gave us of their best. Their addresses were listened to with delight, and imparted genuine inspiration; and we trust that means may yet be found of establishing a closer bond of fellowship and helpful co-operation between ourselves and the larger and more influential body of Congregationalists to the south of our political boundary.