

# THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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## EDITORIAL JOTTINGS.

THE month of September this year will be memorable in the Congregational annals of the United States, for three Installing Councils, which have contributed to the determining of what is the faith of the churches on essentials. The first was called at Wayland, Mass., September 5th, to ordain Mr. George C. Capron as pastor of that church. The second at Quincy, Ill., on the 19th, to install Rev. Frederick A. Thayer. The third at New Haven, Ct., on the 20th, for the installation of Dr. Newman Smyth.

AT Wayland the council consisted of eleven neighbouring churches, and a distinguished minister from Wisconsin, making eighteen members. The candidate claimed that the New Testament is not free from erroneous statements, even on religious subjects. Every man must judge for himself whether its teaching in a given case is to be received as true or not. Probation he saw no reason to think limited by death. Nor did he confine this statement to the heathen, or those who were ignorant of Christ here. It might apply to one who had enjoyed Christian instruction, and habitually listened to gospel preaching, provided only that he had not made a positive decision *against* Christ. He did not see why the means of grace might not be continued, and the converting influences of the Holy Spirit enjoyed for an indefinite period beyond death. These opinions the council emphatically condemned, and refused to ordain him, by a vote of sixteen to two.

AT Quincy representatives of thirty-six churches were present, and six clergymen without churches, making a total membership of sixty. A previous council, comprising only sixteen members, had been equally divided on the question of his installation, and had recommended the calling of a larger and more

representative body for final action. Dr. Z. Eddy, of Detroit, was Moderator. The candidate read a very long paper giving his views *and speculations*, and concluded by adopting as his own, the Burial Hill Confession of the National Council of 1865. The result was given in three resolutions:—*Resolved*, That this council, having examined the Rev. Frederick A. Thayer in his Christian experience and theological opinions, approve him as a brother of undoubted Christian character, of sincerity in the gospel ministry, and judged by his written statement and its subsequent explanation as holding theological views in substantial harmony with the faith of the Congregational churches. And while not accepting all his speculations, we unanimously recommend his installation over this church. *Resolved*, That the letter missive calling this council having raised the question of liberty within Congregational lines, we hereby declare our conviction that the area of such liberty is bounded by the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures. We would further express our opinion that the Scriptures do not teach the doctrine of a future or second probation. *Resolved*, That we do not understand the Rev. F. A. Thayer to teach the doctrine thus disapproved." Had Mr. Thayer kept *speculations* to himself until they had either become forms of faith, or been self corrected, some trouble and needless perplexity had been avoided.

THE third, at New Haven, had special interest from the fact of Mr. Newman Smyth having been the rejected by the visitors of the Andover Seminary. The council consisted of fourteen churches of New Haven, one of Hartford, one of Cambridge, Mass., and ten professors of Yale College, and ministers without charge, a total membership of thirty-four. Dr. Smyth presented a written statement of his faith, which the council accepted. This