

work, but these were not sufficient to occasion the whole difference. The company established two sections, the Temperance and General. The records of eighteen years showed that in regard to the two the claims were as seventy to ninety-nine, or an excess of twenty-nine per cent. in favour of the Temperance section. A large number of similar companies have since been formed, and the results, so far as we can learn, are similarly favourable.

A RATHER remarkable article, lengthy and suggestive, appears in our esteemed contemporary, the *Hartford Religious Herald*. The article is entitled "Confessions of a Congregationalist." There is no doubt but that reference is intended, more than appears on the surface, to the present trial of the Andover professors before the three "visitors" for heresy, where the anomaly is that in a *Congregational* college the churches have no functions, but a board, self-perpetuating, has entire control. The writer begins by disavowing all sectarianism.

He must be an extraordinarily narrow man who believes that his denomination possesses all the advantages of all denominations, and none of the disadvantages of any. We may safely say that the Episcopal Church has developed æsthetic worship; the Presbyterian Church, conservative force and doctrinal organization; the Methodist Church, aggressive home missionary zeal; the Friends, simplicity, and individual, as distinguished from collective or churchly, piety; and the Congregationalists, liberty in thought, worship and Christian life. This is not because Congregationalists are greater lovers of liberty than their neighbours, but because they prefer the giving up certain advantages of organic unity to secure the advantages of local self-government; and they cannot possibly take on the advantages of organic unity, which some among them covet, without foregoing the advantages of local self-government, that is, ceasing to be Congregationalists.

A church which is not tethered to either a liturgy, a creed or a method, may not only adapt its service, its teaching and its work to the varying conditions of different communities, but it may try all sorts of experiments, liturgical, practical and even doctrinal, without producing that injury which experiments on a wide scale are always apt to produce, even when they are finally partially successful. Thus, a few years ago, Dr. Edward Eggleston tried in East Brooklyn the experiment of a "Church of Christian Endeavour," which was to be independent of all other churches—for I believe it was not even ecclesiastically Congregational, though it was so in fact—the only condition of admission to which should be an endeavour to live a Christian life, and the instruments of which should be a great variety of social attractions for the young. The experiment did not prove permanently successful, and the church has gone back to

more conservative, or, if the reader please, more conventional methods, under a more conservative pastor. If it had been necessary to debate the introduction of these experiments in a national council before they could be introduced, the whole denomination would have been agitated by the debate, and it would not have known half as much about the value of the method as it knows now, from this one unsuccessful experiment, which is not likely to be speedily imitated. For if Dr. Edward Eggleston, with his fertile mind and strong personality, could not make it succeed, it is safe to say no one can. We are not likely soon to have another "Church of Christian Endeavour."

THUS also urges the writer, in matters of theological difference, without committing the entire body to a new departure, and rendering the denomination in twain, let proof be invited as to the fittest means of doing the work. If Mr. H. W. Beecher's evolution theology is the most effective means of leading souls to Christ, promoting revivals and maintaining spiritual life, by its fruits it must be judged; but if, with Mr. Beecher's splendid genius, it fails in arresting sin and leading to God in Christ, then its condemnation is made more sure than any wrangling in church courts and overwhelming majorities could make it. Leave God to condemn—He most assuredly will when lies are to the fore.

THE writer now enters upon his confessions, and here is what he says:

I have written thus far as though Congregationalists believed in liberty and local self-government. But this is not true; and now begins the true and proper confessional part of this paper. The Congregational churches are full of men who do not believe in Congregationalism, and who are conscientiously endeavouring to deprive their denomination of that which alone gives it a right to exist. Congregationalism is the doctrine that any body of Christian believers is competent to determine its own creed and administer its own affairs; these men do not believe that the local church possesses any such competence, and they want to find some method of protecting it, by outside intervention, from false doctrines and injurious methods. Congregationalism is democracy applied to ecclesiastical affairs; they do not believe in democracy applied to ecclesiastical affairs, and are forever trying to find some way of constructing an oligarchy or an aristocracy to take care of the churches and to be the guardian of their faith. Congregationalism is the doctrine that error is dangerous so long as truth is left free to combat it; they have no living faith in the power of truth to destroy error in a free fight and a fair field; truth must have the field all to herself. Congregationalism is the doctrine that God's method of inculcating truth is the method of a free discussion, in which, by the attrition of many minds, by many experiments, with some failures and some successes,