

containing some doubts and denials, having reference to us as officers, and to our Church, which in justice to ourselves, require to be squarely challenged. We are unwillingly drawn to speak again by representations which mean nothing less than a denial of our right as a Church to do what is our own proper work. We find it hard to believe that a man of Mr. Clark's intelligence and good sense, should, of his own accord, seek to intermeddle with our affairs and side with a party. His kindly reference to our pastor and our church in the communication to which we refer, we accept, not as flattery, but as an expression of the feeling of his heart.

On the subject of the place and functions of an Ex-parte Council, Mr. Clark cites "Dexter on Congregationalism," "as one of the best authorities on our polity this side of the Atlantic." Let it be so. Kindly therefore allow us to cite Dexter; only in this instance it will be *Dexter grown wiser*. Seeing that we have before us as we write, his "Handbook on Congregationalism," written fifteen years after the publication of the work from which Mr. Clark quoted. In this later work, he (Dr. Dexter) writes, "I bring my statements into *better accord with what I believe to be the truth*."

Before citing this extract from this work bearing on an Ex-parte Council, let us once more remind your readers that in the matter complained of we gave open *letters of good standing* to every one of those members who differed from us, and in writing declared they could not work with the church as then or now—for the matter of that—constituted. If, as we believe, a number of them were actually *wheedled* into signing what purported to be signed only "after mature thought and calm reflection," then, seeing that we still left the way open for any who might choose to recede from the position therein taken, to return to their former position and work in fellowship with us, we think we did all that reason and Christian principle could in the circumstances exact of us.

Now let Dexter be heard as to the Congregational and common-sense ground to be taken in the premises; and as the italics are not ours but Dr. Dexter's, we sincerely hope that Mr. Clark and others with him will "mark, *learn* and inwardly digest" the italicised and the non-italicised statements. We give the section bearing on an

Ex-parte Council in its entirety, and not as *truth separated from truth*.

"A. Who may call a council? With two exception a council must always be called by a *church*. The first exception is that a company of believers desiring to organize into a church may properly invite neighboring churches by council, to advise in regard to, and fellowship their organization. The other exception is when a church, after having taken some action in regard to one of its members, which has impaired his fellowship with other churches, *unreasonably* refuses to grant him a review of the case by mutual council, in which contingency he acquires the right to call one *ex-parte*, on the ground that otherwise 'God should have left no means of redress in such a case, which could not be.' It is important to notice that this right to call a council comes into existence only when a church has *damaged the relations of one or more of its members to other churches*. So long as it leaves such persons in good standing, so that they may commune freely elsewhere—however much they may feel injured and aggrieved—they have no right to take the case to other churches because they have nothing to complain of so far as *other churches* are concerned; and it must always be presumed that when any church reaches final judgment in any given case, whatever injustice—if any—has been suffered by the way will be corrected, and there is therefore no just reason for interference. But if the matter has been *ultimated*, so as to throw any out of old rights and relations with the fraternity, and it be felt that this has been *unreasonably* done, a case at once arises in which that fraternity has interest, and therefore may rightly have something to say. Nothing, however, is more common in a Church than for a minority, which is simply thwarted in some cherished purpose, because it is not the majority, but which has suffered no impairment of rights, to propose to the majority to leave their 'difficulties' to a council; and, when the proposition has been declined, to have a good case for one *ex-parte*. They *have no case at all*. The church has no right to ask other churches to do what is its own proper work, and the aggrieved have no grievance which concerns other churches, because their relations with them remain what they always have been. Of course any church