

our treatment of the creed question, which is made against us by our brethren of other denominations. Moreover, there are those connected with other bodies, who prefer our polity above all others, but are deterred from essaying to unite with us, from the uncertainty they feel as to what would be regarded as doctrinal soundness on their part. For myself, I should greatly prefer our present vague attitude, the adoption of a plan similar to that pursued by our New England brethren. If neither the Saybrook nor the Cambridge platforms please us, let us construct one of our own, and let it be known what doctrinal points we regard as essential to the union of ministers in such an ecclesiastical body as the Congregational Union of Canada. I believe that there is a legitimate use of creeds. They are mischievous when they are minute; but when they simply specify what is fundamental to brotherly confidence and co-operation, I cannot see what reasonable exception can be taken against them.

Again, we are very hostile to ecclesiastical authority, except that which is wielded by the local church, and we urge against its exercise, that there is no necessity for it, since right principle will lead to right action. "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." In other bodies, provision is made for the supervision of pastoral changes, so that all things may be "decently and in order." We urge that this is an unnecessary and cumbrous arrangement, and that it puts into needless and serious jeopardy, the rights of ministers and churches. But, practically, it is too frequently the case, that "every man does what is right in his own eyes." Pastoral relations are hastily formed, and abruptly dissolved. Not satisfied with the rejection of ecclesiastical authority, we abjure fraternal counsel. The interests and rights of churches are held too cheaply. At this moment there are Congregational Churches that have been suddenly forsaken by their pastors, and in their bewilderment and desolateness they are asking is there not need of some provision against such occurrences, and they are casting wistful glances toward Presbyterianism as a system that forbids such abrupt sunderings of the pastoral tie. What has come of the consciences of some brethren if they do not sometimes reproachingly suggest the query: "With whom hast thou left these few sheep in the wilderness?" These things bring us to shame in the eyes of other denominations, and even in the eyes of intelligent men of the world; they burlesque our principles and do us immense harm. The entire weight of our moral influence as a body ought to be directed against hasty settlements and removals, and along with our just dread of the *authoritative*, we ought to show at least a decent respect for the *advisory*.

Moreover, when churches are destitute of pastors, what is there to forbid the exercise of sympathy and concern for their welfare, by tendering them at least a partial supply? Granting that we cannot do this authoritatively, does not the very genius of our system demand that we do it fraternally? On a system permeated by love only, the members should have the same care for one another which is exhibited in connexion with systems that have in them the element of authority. It is essential to the well-being of a body, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Instead of vacant charges being left to their fate, help should be tendered them; our churches should be taught to exercise a little self-denial, to be willing to spare their pastors now and then to supply existing destitution, and not left to nurture a species of religious selfishness, which is as "rotteness to the bones." The course usually taken by us is like leaving a babe or sick person to endure a period of hardship and neglect, sufficient in *ordinary* circumstances to terminate life; but should the victim survive, it will prove itself worthy of some degree of ultimate care and attention. This mode of treating

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