

dence in connection with the call, will be laid before you, and the pastor elect will make a statement of his religious belief, preliminary to the usual public services in the evening."

The Council numbered sixty-four ministers and delegates, and was composed of gentlemen representing prominent churches and a great diversity of views.

By a three-fourths vote, the Rev. George A. Gordon was installed. The division is accounted for by the fact that Mr. Gordon very distinctly refused even to say that he thought a future probation improbable or the eternal punishment of any certain. Among the ministers of the vicinity on the Council are the names of Messrs. Withrow, Meredith, Wright, Duryea, Herrick, Webb, Twitchell, Leavell, Thompson, Plumb, Thomas, McKenzie, Thwing, Twombly, Tarbox, Thayer, Means and Merriman; with Messrs. Fenn, of Portland; Tucker, of Andover; Barbour, of New Haven, and Dr. Blagden, a former pastor of the Church. Who the sixteen were that voted against the installation we cannot say, but Dr. Webb refused to take the part assigned to him in the services, which were conducted by Messrs. Blagden, Wright, Tarbox, Tucker, Merriman, Barbour, and Herrick.

In reply to the question, "What is the purpose and end of the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?" Mr. Gordon said: "I answer that *it is the manifestation of the love of God, and that the end is the spiritual emancipation of the human race.*" This answer was substantially reiterated in reply to all questions on that point. Christ reconciles men to God by the truth he reveals and by His manifestations of God's loving character. Christ reveals God's righteousness as propitious to penitent sinners.

"Sin is man's disorder and wrong spiritual relation, and sin and punishment are linked together. Souls *may* sin forever, and so be in a state of moral death forever; but whether, as a matter of fact, any souls *will* so continue, I have no means of deciding."

Mr. Gordon said he did not know enough about the world to come to decide whether those who are impenitent at death remain so for ever, "or, ultimately, through the discipline of woe, become partakers of Christ's life." He said that his simple intention was "to assert the laws of righteousness as found in the Bible and in human experience." He distinct-

ly declared his opinion that the punishments of sin are "moral in their character," and that the judgment-day is that crisis in the transgressor's life "beyond which he will remain steadfast in sin."

IN connection with these statements it cannot be denied that grave questions are arising that seriously imperil the unity of the American churches. It is no secret that serious conferences have been held by orthodox men, to consider the course to be pursued. Their patience has been severely taxed, and this heavy weight suddenly thrown into the scale against them may precipitate a movement for separation. A letter written by one of the conservative brethren, a theological professor, speaks of "the possible, if not probable, future, when we *must* be arrayed against each other." It speaks plainly of "intimations coming to me from Boston in these days, which portend a wider separation and a deeper aversion between members of the Congregational fellowship than has been known in our day." It speaks with equal plainness and sadness of being "constrained to take positions, and make utterances, which you could not allow to pass without stern condemnation."

WE do not wonder. These are the concluding words of Mr. Gordon's address: "Finally, I profess myself an inquirer, a student of the things of God and the life of man. Christ and His scriptures are my supreme authority and guide. I count not myself to have apprehended the divine meaning of life. It is a vast continent on whose shores I stand. I feel the power of its sublime attractions upon my spirit. I would press on into it eagerly, gladly, solemnly, and reverently with those whom God may give me as my spiritual companions, my fellow-travellers and fellow-explorers among the unsearchable riches of Christ."

The pride of dogmatism is by no means commendable, nor will it be a glad day for the churches when the pulpit or the pew has reached that stage of self-sufficiency that no longer the need will be felt of learning in the school of Christ; on the other hand there is an old fashioned view of the position of a gospel minister which the church cannot very well afford to let go, which asserts: "I *know* in whom I have believed," and which takes a