

THE RESULT TESTED.

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A REVIEW

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS OF A COUNCIL

AT

GEORGETOWN, MASS.,

Aug. 15, 16, and 22, 1863.

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BY

REV. EDWARD BEECHER, D. D.,

AND

REV. CHARLES BEECHER.

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And they departed from the Council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.—  
ACTS v. 41.

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# P R E F A C E.

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The following Preamble and Resolutions were adopted by the Church in Georgetown, Thursday, August 13, 1863, by a vote of twenty-seven to twenty-one.

CHARLES BEECHER, *Moderator*.

*Whereas* the Council recently held in this place advise the dismissal of our Pastor, Rev. Charles Beecher, charging him with heresy and violation of covenant:

And *Whereas* the following are regarded as principles of Congregationalism: that a minister is amenable to his Church;<sup>1</sup> that his trial should be conducted with the utmost regard and deference to his station;<sup>2</sup> the same steps being taken as with a lay brother;<sup>3</sup> that it is out of order for a Church to receive a complaint till assured that said steps have been taken;<sup>4</sup> that charges should be distinctly specified in writing;<sup>5</sup> that Councils are limited in their proceedings and powers by the letter missive;<sup>6</sup> and can issue no case of discipline not instituted in the Church, and so described in the letter missive:<sup>7</sup>

And *Whereas* the first steps of discipline have not been taken; nor complaint against the Pastor regularly entered before the Church, nor process instituted by vote thereof, nor any regular step whatever of a case of discipline taken, therefore,

1. *Resolved*, That it was not the design of this Church to invite a Council to issue a case of discipline, but to investigate our affairs, learn our spiritual state, and use with all concerned the healing influences of prayer, persuasion, argument and instruction, from the Word of God, in order if possible to reconcile all parties in fraternal concord.

2. *Resolved*, That if errors of doctrine on the one hand, or of conduct on the other, were discovered, requiring discipline, the Council was not authorized to recommend dismissal, till trial should have been had, nor to issue the case as though process were already commenced, but only to advise the institution of such process by this Church, in a lawful and orderly manner.

3. *Resolved*, That this Church regrets to be compelled to say that the Council has failed to do that for which it was invited, and has attempted to do that for which it had no authority.

4. *Resolved*, That in respect to the Atonement and Eternal Punishment, the sentiments condemned by the Council are not the sentiments of our Pastor, as evinced by extracts from numerous discourses, exhibited to the Council.

5. *Resolved*, That this Church is advised that the doctrine of Divine Sorrow is held by many divines of unimpeachable orthodoxy, such as Dr. Pond, of Bangor, Prof. Haven, of Chicago, and the Moderator of the adjourned session of Council, Dr. Fiske. This Church

<sup>1</sup> Upham, § 135. Congregational Dictionary, p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> Upham, § 141.

<sup>3</sup> Upham, §§ 137, 138.

<sup>4</sup> Congregational Dictionary, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> Rules of Church, v. 4; Congregational Dictionary, p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> Upham, § 153.

<sup>7</sup> Upham, § 138.



cannot but notice, also, that the Council do not explicitly condemn the doctrine itself as a fundamental error, but the Pastor's "manner of teaching" the same.

6. *Resolved*, That the Congregational Churches, by their continued fellowship of Rev. Edward Beecher, D. D., have practically decided that pre-existence is not a fundamental error; that the Council at our Pastor's settlement so judged; that the Essex North Association has recently, after protracted discussion, re-endorsed the decision, and that this Council sanctioned it by allowing Dr. Beecher a seat, and by intimating that the Pastor might hold it as an "academic thesis," provided he would "keep it in abeyance." As this Church cannot suppose the Council mean to sanction hypocrisy, we are compelled to the conclusion that they do not regard pre-existence as fundamental error.

7. *Resolved*, That in impeaching the Pastor's honor, in the matter of creeds, and virtually charging him with perjury, the Council announce principles subversive of Congregationalism. Our Pastor accepts the creed of his Church "for substance of doctrine." No Congregational minister can lawfully do more. He is under the most solemn engagements to the Great Head of the Church to preach the Word of God, and try all human creeds thereby. We are constrained to regard the action of Council as an open apostacy from the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, as enunciated by the Westminster Assembly in these words:

"The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures."—Chap. 1, § 10.

8. *Resolved*, That in view of all the facts and principles involved in the case, after prayerful consideration, this Church can find no better words with which to reply to the advice of Council than those recorded Acts iv. 19: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

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# THE RESULT TESTED.

## CHAPTER I.

### WHAT IS A COUNCIL?

A Council is a representative body composed of ministers and delegates of local churches. It is the keystone of the Congregational system, distinguishing it alike from Presbytery and from Independency, as the normal mode of influence, fellowship and co-operation among equal and associated churches.

The right use of Councils, then, is of the highest importance. To pervert or in any way dishonor them, is a public wrong to all Congregational churches, weakening their confidence in their own system, and exposing them to attack in the presence of rival denominations.

That there is a tendency to the perversion of Councils, appears from the following extract from a leading religious journal:<sup>1</sup>—

The question is often asked by intelligent laymen in our churches—"Of what use are councils? They apparently accomplish nothing, by advice or influence, different from the preconceived plans and aims of the parties calling them. Why have them?" The question is eminently pertinent.

For while the *original end* of such councils, in our polity is well known to have been, the assistance of parties in perplexity concerning ecclesiastical matters—the examination of candidates for the pastoral office, or the dismissal of incumbents, on inspection of causes,—the council in each case giving advice by their unbiased judgment of facts presented, and their advisory action having no binding force, unless previously the parties bind themselves to adopt it; *now* their *chief end* seems to be, to lift the responsibility of action from the churches, and dissipate it, so that no one shall feel accountable for any wrong doing, or pernicious result. Within a few months, I have noticed the action of three different councils, two for the dismissal, and one for the settlement of a pastor. In each case the council was simply an automaton, moved by the will of the parties calling it. Ostensibly they were summoned to consider the case, and advise the action they thought best; and if favorable to the desires of the parties, to consummate the action; if not, to declare their convictions with equal candor and fidelity to the truth. But in each case referred to, the council chose simply to consummate a given action, without questioning, and evidently in opposition to the best judgment in the case. \* \* \*

Now, if councils are to act contrary to their convictions, or if they are refused access to facts necessary for competent judgment in the case, then their decisions cease to be of any value to the churches. If good men, learned, respected and sound, are willing to yield the principles of truth and good order,

under mistaken notions of toleration or expediency, then let councils cease, and let the churches do the best they can without them. Certain it is, that far more trouble in our churches has recently been caused by councils which have lacked moral courage to seek for the truth and stand by it, than good has resulted, either from the respectability of the names composing them, or from the constrained advice they have given.

If in addition to such abuses the idea goes forth that Councils are under no recognized standard of law or equity; that they are capable of being used for assaults on character and standing, without any adequate safeguards, then, the utmost possible will have been done to discredit and destroy the polity of which they are the key.

It is not our purpose, in our present limited space to attempt a full discussion of the principles by which Councils should be regulated. A few of the more obvious will be stated, and such general remarks thrown out as are seasonable for present use.

1. Councils are purely advisory and possess no juridical power.<sup>1</sup>

2. Councils "are limited in their powers and proceedings by the letter missive."<sup>2</sup>

3. All Christian discipline must originate in the local church, and be conducted according to the laws of Christ, Matt. xviii. 12-17. Councils are not designed to supersede the jurisdiction of the Church, but simply to illumine, direct, and aid in the proper discharge of their proper duties,<sup>3</sup> even as Paul though an Apostle, did not take the work of discipline out of the hands of the church at Corinth, but only directed them in its performance.<sup>4</sup>

For a Council to attempt to *try* and *condemn* a church member for heresy or any other offence, against whom no process has been instituted in the local church, is an act of usurpation.

4. The Bible in all its parts, devotional and spiritual, as well as doctrinal, is the constitutional law of practice in Councils. The demands of the Sermon on the Mount, of John xv., of 1 Cor. xii., and similar portions, are as absolutely binding as any particular proof texts of speculative orthodoxy.

5. As Councils have no judicial power, and

<sup>1</sup> Congregational Dictionary, pp. 114-121. Upham § 154.

<sup>2</sup> Upham § 153.

<sup>3</sup> Upham § 138. Congregational Dictionary, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. v. 1-7.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Recorder, July 17, 1863.



their influence depends wholly on the conformity of their results to Scripture, reason, and equity, their main work should be careful and thorough INVESTIGATION of facts and principles, with ample time for mature deliberation.

6. Councils ought to give light by being in close and vital communion with God, so as to diffuse around them a sense of His presence, and by leading the community to Him in actual exercises of confession of sin, self-examination, and earnest prayer for the Holy Spirit.

7. "The decision of a Council is of no force till received and ratified by the inviting church."<sup>1</sup> In the immortal words of Richard Mather "THE DECREE OF A COUNCIL HATH SO MUCH FORCE AS THERE IS FORCE IN THE REASON OF IT."<sup>2</sup>

By these principles, the system warns all Councils not to yield to passion or prejudice, but to keep near to God and his Word, and the eternal principles of natural equity. In proportion as they do this they are strong, for no man can refute the truth.<sup>3</sup> In proportion as they do not do this, they become weak, and it is the privilege and the duty of any church or member of a church to refute and expose them.

## CHAPTER II.

### GENIUS OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

The genius of Congregationalism is to base all ecclesiastical power on spiritual life in the individual soul. The work of God in regeneration and sanctification is his most glorious work. The tie of sonship to him, and brotherhood to each other thence resulting, is the most sacred and inviolable. The sacredness of this divine relationship, Congregationalism with peculiar jealousy, vindicates as the sole basis of Church organization.

A true local Church, is a result and an embodiment of the Gospel, and its peculiarity is, not that it is without any law, but that it is under the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And as all ecclesiastical power is confined to the local Church, so it is essentially evangelical and spiritual, as opposed to legal. Hence it is the genius and the glory of Congregationalism to rely, like the gospel of which it is an outgrowth, more on the healing power of divine light and love in holy men, than upon precedents and technicalities.

The Gospel works through the divine sacrifice of Christ, and the infinite patience, long-suffering, forgiveness, and love of God in Christ. It is the avowed purpose of the Gospel to bring the Church into the same state of

mind, so that she may be in full sympathy with God, and exert a loving, patient, forgiving, healing power like that of God.

The system demands of those who administer it, that they be in this state of mind at all times, but especially when they administer it. An opposite spirit is hostile to moral life. It is infectious. It is pestilential. No assumed or pretended orthodoxy can make good the loss of this healing power, or avert the infection of diseased passions and emotions.

According to the New Testament this healing power can be and ought to be carried to a high pitch. Against all the infection and provocation of moral evil, the Christian can be and ought to be "strengthened with might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." He can avail himself of all His vital power who has said, "ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me and I in you," and again, "because I live ye shall live also."<sup>1</sup>

The effect of this healing power, as used by the Church, is like its effect when used by God. It softens, it subdues, it averts the need of resorting to law and penalty, and courts and trials.

A Council is designed to increase the healing power of one Church by adding that of others. Other churches are brought in to concentrate new vital power in a focus. Hence every Council should tend to produce a revival of religion, for a revival is nothing but an unusual development of divine healing power. And as ministers and church members would prepare themselves to go into a revival, so they should prepare themselves to go into a Council. And the more difficult the case, the more grace should be in exercise, and the highest demands of the Bible as to holy fellowship with God be met.

In thus making Councils a revival or healing agency, and the Bible their all-pervading law or constitution, more than in any thing else Congregationalism is peculiar. The Bible is peculiar, unlike any other code of laws, in that it is alive with God. "The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow;" and just in proportion as the Bible is the only law, the system is peculiar.

A Council is not a body of lawyers, to conduct trials, but a body of consulting spiritual physicians, whose great medical text-book is the Bible. There are their *materia medica*, there are their rules as to symptoms, and as to discovering the state of the patient, there are their prescriptions. To disregard these, and to introduce nostrums of their own, is malpractice, and may be soul murder.

<sup>1</sup> See also Eph. iii. 1-21 for a full charter of the resources of the Christian in this respect.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Sides' Convention Sermon, 46 and 48.

<sup>2</sup> Church Government, 62.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 8.



When ministers and churches are invited to aid in a revival, they feel their special need of the presence of God, and of self-examination, confession of sin, humiliation, and earnest, constant prayer. Can any one say why this is not equally, if not more necessary, in a Council called to meet peculiar developments of the powers of evil, and to resist and overcome them? When, if not then, do they eminently need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might?

### CHAPTER III.

#### HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

A glance at the history of the Society will show that the case presented to the consideration of the Council was one of peculiar complexity, delicacy, and difficulty, demanding the application of no ordinary measure of divine healing power.

Mr. Braman was settled in 1797, against formidable opposition, being the sixty-fourth candidate. About half the people were Arminians, and half Hopkinsians,<sup>1</sup> and not knowing on which side to place the candidate they gave him a pretty fair majority.<sup>2</sup> The Hopkinsian party, whose protest is still preserved,<sup>3</sup> withdrew and united with the Baptist Society, "leaving us," says Mr. Braman, "a comparatively small congregation to assemble in this house. In this small body there was for a while a good degree of union. But afterward difficulties and dissensions arose. I have waded through a sea of troubles, all of which it might not be advisable to mention."<sup>4</sup>

The consent of Mr. Braman to the settlement of a colleague pastor,<sup>5</sup> was not obtained without a struggle which threatened for a time the organization of a new society.

The second colleague pastor, Mr. Prince, was settled in February, 1847, but not without opposition. The parish vote on the call was forty-six affirmative, twenty-eight negative. Ten days after, a remonstrance was sent to the candidate signed by Samuel Little and forty-seven others. This remonstrance<sup>6</sup> was laid before the Council, and the remonstrants presented their objections in a manner so forcible, that it was not until after a protracted session from 9, a. m. to 5½, p. m., that the theological examination was reached, and then not till an individual had become personally responsible for the candidates support.

<sup>1</sup> "Reminiscences of the last Century." Georgetown Watchtower, September 4, 1846. By Jeremiah Spofford, M. D.

<sup>2</sup> The vote in the church was nine in favor, to three opposed.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, A.

<sup>4</sup> Jubilee Sermon, pp. 14-18.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. Enoch Pond, Jr., 1842.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix, B.

In the following year, 1848, a correspondence ensued between Mr. Prince and fifty-eight members of the Society,<sup>1</sup> in which they vainly endeavor to obtain his resignation, or the advice of a Council. On February 8, 1857, Mr. Prince requested a dismissal, assigning ill-health, and "the fact that his salary was altogether inadequate to his support," as the grounds of his request. His resignation was accepted without opposition on the part of his friends.

The latter part of Mr. Braman's ministry including the pastorates of Mr. Pond and Mr. Prince, was a period characterized by anti-slavery agitation, and other reformatory movements. Probably few communities can be found in which the agitation on these subjects was more radical, or the difference of sentiment more marked. And although not every opponent of Mr. Prince may have been progressive nor every supporter conservative, nevertheless the parties on the whole were of opposite sympathies and tendencies in this respect.

Mr. Beecher, an uncompromising abolitionist, came in under the auspices of those who had demanded, and against the wishes of those who had resisted church action against slavery. No protest was made before Council, no open opposition manifested. It is well known, however, that from the outset he became the object of depreciation. Whatever in his personal habits, political and theological views, and style of preaching, could be criticized, was laid hold of to his disadvantage.

In March, 1860, the sermon on the Divine Sorrow, (which was laid in by the petitioners,) was delivered, and soon after published. Great exception was taken to this, and for a time, it seemed as though the opposition would come to a head, on a purely theological basis. Such, however, was not the fact.

When President Buchanan, December 14, 1860, rebuked the North for its love of liberty, and called the people to observe a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, for the sin of opposition to slavery, the pastor preached a sermon against the proclamation, and the church adopted resolutions<sup>2</sup> refusing to comply with his request, and denouncing him as in treasonous conspiracy with rebels. Against these resolutions a protest<sup>3</sup> was drawn up and signed by twenty-three names, every one of which is found on the recent petition for a Council. That paper was the stepping-stone to this. Yet the advocate of the petitioners was understood to deny that politics or reform had any thing to do with this movement.

In the summer of 1861, the plan of calling a Council was started by the opposition and a paper circulated for signatures. The plan,

<sup>1</sup> Appendix, C.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix, D.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix, E.



however, was laid aside for the purpose, as facts indicate, of having recourse to the Association. A reporter was employed to take down one of Mr. Beecher's discourses on the Atonement, with a view to its publication in the "Traveller." To this Mr. Beecher objected. Subsequently, however, at the request of the proprietors of the "Traveller" he consented to the publication of two of the series, "Redemption a Return," and "The Fall in Adam, not taught in the Bible."

Immediately on their appearance, and with every indication of a concerted plan, they were brought before the Association at its August meeting, 1862, and strenuous efforts made to procure a sentence of virtual disfellowship. After discussion at three successive meetings, the Association, with no sympathy for pre-existence, refused in the most significant manner to declare it a fundamental error.

Meanwhile, the pastor continued to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, and to labor in good faith, to the best of his ability under the circumstances, for the salvation of souls. In May, 1863, the Sabbath school was reorganized, under the charge of its present devoted superintendent, Mr. Cotton, principal of the High School. Soon after, the pastor was informed that several of the pupils of the High School were in an interesting state of mind, and various indications of interest were developed in other directions. He entered into the work with energy and hope, with cheering prospects of a glorious harvest. It seemed, however, as though the approach of a revival was the signal for attack.

On one and the same day two very different communications were placed in his hands. The first is as follows:—

HIGH SCHOOL, June 12, 1863.

Our Dear Pastor,—We would like so much to have you write each of us a letter. Your kind words last night did us much good and I think encouraged the others also. A part of our number, I trust, have found the Saviour, and experienced some of the precious joys which are given to His followers. But every thought, word, and action seems sinful, and we sometimes fear we have deceived ourselves. In prayer, however, we find sure relief from doubts and fears. We have not enough faith, neither do we love Jesus as we ought. Our repentance is, we fear, not deep enough; yet we are resolved never to give up, for each glimpse which we obtain of the peace of religion, only makes us the more eager to press onward. Will you pray for us? Hoping you will comply with our requests we remain your affectionate friends.

Signed by four young ladies of the High School.

The second was of an opposite character:—

To our Pastor, the Rev. Charles Beecher:

Dear Sir:—The undersigned, members of the Congregational Church in Georgetown, beg leave to submit to your consideration the following statements and request:—

It seems to us that several doctrines preached by our Pastor are not in accordance with the "faith once

delivered to the saints," and held generally by the churches of New England.

The points on which we have special difficulty are the doctrines of pre-existence of the human soul, of the Atonement, and the state of souls after death. We are pained to be driven to the conclusion that on all these subjects the teachings of our Pastor are either not according to sound doctrine, or are very obscure and confused, and we have failed to comprehend their meaning.

There is an unhappy division in the church, many of its members feel that they are not instructed and benefited by the preaching which they hear, and it is our conviction that the interests of religion in the society are suffering much from the condition in which we find ourselves thus placed. The dissatisfaction we believe is increasing, and unless something effectual is speedily done for our relief, we have reason to fear that the interests of our church and society will suffer irreparable injury.

In view of these distressing facts, we most respectfully request yourself and those who sympathize with you, to unite with us in calling a mutual ecclesiastical council, to investigate our affairs and give such opinions and advice as their wisdom shall dictate.

[Signed by twenty-seven out of sixty-three male members of the church.]

After prayerful consideration, the Pastor consented to call a Council, in the hope that brethren of unprejudiced minds, and full of the Holy Ghost would come here, so to "investigate" both his teachings, and the conduct of the petitioners, and all "our affairs" as to deepen the religious interest and engage the whole church in carrying it forward.

It was on this understanding of the matter that his argument before Council was written, and his defence conducted. It was for this reason that he distinctly avowed his surprise to the Council at the course they were taking, and his unpreparedness for any such style of proceeding. He was inexperienced enough to think the Council invited to "investigate" would really "investigate;" he was unsophisticated enough to anticipate nothing but the most kind, considerate, and fraternal treatment at their hands.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### "WHAT THE COUNCIL OUGHT TO HAVE DONE."

The course which the Council ought to have taken was, first to intensify the power of spiritual life in themselves by earnest prayer and communion with God. The healing power is of God, yet he does not exert it arbitrarily, but through chosen ones in whom he dwells, and the more he is in them, the higher the healing power. There is great and malignant power in sin, to be overcome. The power of Satan is in it. We can overcome it only by God in us. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in them."



Then they should have brought themselves into sympathy with the most vital parts of the community, those nearest to God, and most in fellowship with him, in order, through them, to exert a healing power. It should have been the policy of the Council to strengthen the vital powers of all, so as to give energy to throw off disease.

They should next have "investigated" the Pastor's teachings, as embodied in his written discourses. There was no need of spending a whole day in asking witnesses what those teachings were. The original manuscripts were at their service. If Dr. Braman, or the petitioners, had presented to Mr. Beecher written specifications of the points they proposed to prove, he would have placed the original sermons before the Council, so that they could have known the exact words he uttered. Personally, or by committees, the Council could have studied all his teachings. They could have ascertained, by fraternal conference, whether he evinced a humble and teachable spirit, and whether he desired to be instructed by the brethren; and if they found error demanding discipline, they could have recommended the institution of process in the Church, in a regular manner.

They ought, in like manner, to have conferred with the petitioners, to ascertain whether they were in a spiritual and heavenly frame of mind, whether they had obeyed all the rules of the Church to the letter, and performed all their covenant vows, and whether they were willing to perform their whole duty as members of the Church. Whether they were in sympathy with the existing revival, or opposed to it, and what the real nature and prospects of that revival were. They ought to have paid attention to the Pastor's allegations on this point, especially as they were not denied. Surely questions like these are a part of "our affairs." Surely they could not, with any fairness, "investigate our affairs," while ignoring these entirely. The Council, by doing these things, and by entering into the blessed work of God just commencing, and calling the whole Church to follow, could have exerted a mighty and benign influence.

It was not simply a case of theological disagreement. It was primarily a society feud of long standing and wide extent, into which the doctrinal sentiments of the Pastor had been drawn. They ought to have studied the case more widely and thoroughly, with more prayer, deeper humility, closer communion with God, a fuller baptism of His spirit. They ought to have been willing to take all the time, and all the pains necessary to effect a radical cure. To do any thing effectively in such a case, any thing but harm, time was indispensably necessary. If the object was really to heal the hurt of the daughter of Zion, not days, but

weeks, and months, were worthy of being expended.

The interests involved were not those of this world merely, but mainly those of eternity. They affect the honor of God, and the welfare of his kingdom. To give crude, superficial, or false opinions on matters so grave, on the alleged plea of want of time, or any other trivial reason, is insulting to God, and treacherous to his cause. No civil government would for a moment admit trivial excuses for malfeasance in office, much less will heaven's eternal king, from those acting in his name, as pastors and delegates in the highest interests known to man, or even to the angelic hosts of heaven.

## CHAPTER V.

### WHAT THE COUNCIL DID.

The Council assumed jurisdiction as if a case of discipline were before them. They assumed, without discussion, that Mr. Beecher was on trial. They speak of him as "brought to trial and condemnation."<sup>1</sup> They spent the day in hearing witnesses, all of them parties in interest. They suffered their testimony to exhale unrecorded. They permitted Dr. Braman to ask leading questions, in the answers to which the witnesses had evidently been carefully drilled. They allowed all the witnesses to be present during the examination of the several witnesses, and overhear the testimony.

They listened to the Pastor's written statement, but asked him no questions, appointed no committee to confer with him fraternally, and made no expressions of love and respect. They allowed the written declaration of 248 persons, that the opposition was "unscrupulous," to fall dead.<sup>2</sup> They listened to Dr. Braman as advocate of the petitioners, permitting him to conduct the case as if it were a trial, very much according to his own will. They gave opportunity for the friends of the Pastor to testify, but took no active measures to elicit information. They were passive as though a judicial body. They did not actively institute and carry forward an "investigation" of our affairs.

After private session, they appointed a Committee to prepare a Result, with the understanding that they were to make further investigations on the ground, to afford time for which the Council adjourned for one week. This Committee declined to see leading members of the society, who waited on the day following nearly two hours, for an interview, in order to represent more fully the actual state of affairs. They spent the forenoon by themselves, and went home in the afternoon.

<sup>1</sup> Reply to Protests, § 9.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix, H.



Perceiving thus an evident indisposition thoroughly to investigate the case, one of the writers of this Review determined to do all in his power to supply the deficiency. Especially he devoted himself to labors in the revival, and to ascertaining the spiritual state of the community. On the reassembling of the Council, after the handing in of the Result, it being suggested that it might be well to give opportunity for further statements of facts, he availed himself of the opportunity, and endeavored to state the condition of the revival, and to enforce the duty of a more interior view of the true state of the community, in order to judge what course to recommend. He also stated what he regarded to be the nature and laws of a Council as a Congregational body.

He endeavored to introduce a paper from young converts,<sup>1</sup> in order to show the feelings of those most deeply interested in, and profited by Mr. Beecher's preaching. Also papers from members of the Society, pledging themselves to make good any pecuniary deficiencies that might occur in the Society, provided the Pastor should remain.<sup>2</sup> Also others designed to rebut the allegation that his stay would be injurious to the Society.<sup>3</sup>

An earnest effort was thus made to turn the course of the Council into a proper Christian investigation of Mr. Beecher's views, and of the state of the community. Statements were made from personal observation in revival labor, of the state of things, and the Council was entreated to come into sympathy with the work of the Lord, to judge spiritual judgment, and to enter upon a work of moral healing.

All was in vain. All new evidence they refused to accept, on the ground that the parties had already been heard, and that if one side was allowed to produce it, so must the other. To this it was replied, that duty required us truly to understand the case, and not merely to save time, and that it was criminal in such a case to act ignorantly, or in the dark. They then allowed members of the Council to state facts that had come to their knowledge, but excluded all documentary or oral testimony from the parties, or from without.

This discussion occupied the forenoon and part of the afternoon. At last the discussion of the Result began, and notwithstanding various protests, it was so limited in time as to make it a mockery, and to render certain great errors and injustice, in the Result. The time assigned to the writer was the longest. But though he passed over the document in the briefest manner, only pointing out one by one its errors, and arguing against their imputation to his brother, stating his real opinions on the points at issue, and requesting time for full proofs,

yet he was able to go but half way through the document, before his time had expired. Then he gave a general protest as to the rest, and alleged that it was full of errors which he wished time to disprove. Others, especially Rev. Mr. Campbell, and the Moderator, Rev. D. T. Fiske, clearly declared the wrong of urging through such a document without full discussion. But it was all in vain. The result was predetermined. A want of time was alleged, and the decision was precipitated in such haste, in order that some might reach the railroad cars in season, that they quite forgot to read and approve the minutes of the whole of the last and most important day. In consequence, there is no authentic record of them in existence.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RESULT<sup>2</sup> AND THE LETTER MISSIVE.<sup>3</sup>

The question is, how the Council gets a trial for heresy out of the Letter Missive. Let us examine. They say, "This Council is called by the Church in Georgetown, 'in deference to the wishes' of certain petitioners in it, 'to consider the matters contained in their petition and give advice thereon.'"

So far, the Result is correct. The Letter Missive simply refers to the petition already given.<sup>4</sup> Now for the analysis of said petition. The Result continues: "The petitioners say, 'It seems to us that several doctrines preached by our Pastor are not in accordance with the faith once delivered to the saints and held generally by the churches of New England. The points on which we have special difficulty are the doctrines of the pre-existence of the human soul, of the atonement, of the state of souls after death, and divine sorrow.'"

Why does the Result stop short here? Why does it not quote the rest of the paragraph, viz.: "We are pained to be driven to the conclusion that on all these subjects the teachings of our Pastor are *either* not according to sound doctrine, *or* are very obscure and confused, and we have failed to comprehend their meaning."

Evidently this omission was absolutely necessary to give color to the idea that the Letter Missive had placed the Pastor on trial. If this had been quoted, the Result would have carried evidence on its very face that neither the petitioners nor the Church had any such idea.

Nor is this the only omission of the kind. The Result goes on describing the petition, "They also represent that there is a division

<sup>1</sup> Appendix, G.    <sup>2</sup> Appendix, H.    <sup>3</sup> Appendix, I.

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of the final vote, see Appendix, M.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix, K.    <sup>3</sup> Appendix, N.    <sup>4</sup> See page 8.



in the Church, a want of interest in the preaching, and a decline in the welfare of the Church." And is this all? Why does the Result not state precisely what the petitioners ask for? Is not that the very thing on which the scope of the Letter Missive depends? The Council was limited by the Letter Missive. The Letter Missive was limited by the petition. And what is the most important element of the petition? Is it not the object for which they ask a Council? Obviously. And why then omit it? Because it was absolutely necessary to do so to give color to the idea of a trial. If the Result had quoted the object for which a Council was asked, viz:

"TO INVESTIGATE OUR AFFAIRS," every child could have seen that a trial was not intended. The idea of a trial cannot be entertained without supposing the petitioners meant to put themselves on trial, as well as the Pastor, which is absurd.

Therefore the Result stoops to garbling the petition, and disingenuous suppressions, and special pleading, in order to parade Mr. Beecher before the world as "brought to trial and condemnation!"

Now what are the facts? Had the petitioners taken any of the private steps, Matt. xviii. 12-17, necessary to bring the case before the Church? They confessed scornfully that they had not, and evidently felt under no obligation to obey Christ in that matter. Did they expect to put Mr. Beecher on trial before a foreign judicatory, over the head of the Church? They did not so represent it to those whose signatures they found it a little difficult to secure, of which the following certificate is evidence:

"The undersigned hereby certifies that he did not sign the call for a Council because he was opposed to Mr. Beecher, but in hope of settling our difficulties aided by their action. MOSES CARTER.

"GEORGETOWN, July 20, 1863."

Other documentary proof of the same nature could be furnished, but it is unnecessary. It is well known that Deacon Perley in obtaining signatures, represented the Council as a healing measure, and that the idea of discipline, was not suggested. And in open Church meeting he has since solemnly declared that he represented the matter exactly according to truth. Therefore it is certain that the petition was not intended by the petitioners themselves to EXPRESS the idea that a trial was designed. Such an idea could only be put on it in virtue of some secret understanding or compact, between individuals here and individuals elsewhere. By no lawful methods of interpretation could any Church invited infer that a case of discipline was pending.

If such was the fact with regard to the petitioners themselves, it must be still more clear what was the intention of the Church.

On this, however, we need not argue, for the Church herself has spoken:

*Resolved*, That it was not the design of this Church to invite a Council to issue a case of discipline, but to investigate our affairs, learn our spiritual state, and use with all concerned the healing influences of prayer, persuasion, argument and instruction from the Word of God, in order if possible to reconcile all parties in fraternal concord.

Nothing more than this is needed to invalidate the whole proceeding. Viewed in the light of the Letter Missive, and the settled principles of the system, the whole action of the Council is null and void. Its Result, whether true or false, a perfect nonentity, *vox et preterea nihil*.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IS THE RESULT A RESULT?

A Result implies "investigation." This Council was called "to investigate." Did they "investigate?" Did they investigate either the teachings of the pastor, or the behavior of the disorderly petitioners? The Result speaks of "a long and patient hearing of two days for and against the objections of the petitioners." Not a word about the "objections" of the Pastor. Not a single inquiry whether the petitioners had indulged in wholesale slander, and trod the covenant and rules of the Church under foot. The Council must have "investigated" their case with singular delicacy not to be aware of their having done so; above all to compliment them for having "endured well."

Did they then "investigate" the teachings of the Pastor? Is it investigation to receive the recollections of enemies respecting his sermons, and reject his quotations of the sermons themselves? To open their ears to slander, and shut their eyes to manuscripts? Did they ask the Pastor any questions? Did they confer with him fraternally? Did they by committee or otherwise, try to exert any influence on him?

Of his carefully written defence, the Council make no use except to say that its admissions and concessions sustain the objections of the petitioners. A remarkable statement, that will receive notice hereafter. Even the sermons laid in by the petitioners as evidence against the Pastor were not read. One member of the Council since testifies that he had never read them. There is no evidence that the others had. The Council was in no humor for investigation. The Council apparently, despised the teachings of the Pastor, too entirely to deem them worth investigation. They could not spare time to investigate teachings so absurd. Business would suffer.



The cars would start. Four hours and a half seemed an unconscionable time to allow a man arguing on the most solemn themes of eternity, arguing in defence of his life, as it were, against the most awful "condemnation" the Council could pronounce. INVESTIGATION, calm, deliberate, thorough, of her affairs, the teachings of her Pastor, the behavior of her members, the very thing the petitioners asked, and the Church invited the Council to give, is the thing of all others the Council refused to grant, as the Church has solemnly certified to all by saying:

*Resolved*, That this Church regrets to be compelled to say that the Council has failed to do that for which it was invited, and has attempted to do that for which it had no authority.

Yet this document goes out as a RESULT; the result of deliberation. The Council make the impression on the public mind that they have maturely "investigated," when they have not. The document is not a Result. It is an indictment. And the charges it contains, as a whole, in written form, met the eye of the Pastor for the first time when the so-called RESULT appeared in the columns of a commercial journal.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### VERACITY.

In speaking of the principles that ought to regulate Councils, one of the most important was omitted. It is time to supply the omission. The principle is that the decision of Councils ought always to be based on the truth. By "the truth," is meant not what is often called "the truth," i. e., some human creed, but the plain, homely, yet divine virtue of veracity.

Isaac Taylor well remarks that it has often happened that fanatical ecclesiastical partisans in defence of certain abstract doctrines which they are pleased to call the truth of God, have without any moral sensibility violated the most simple and fundamental every-day virtue of speaking the truth.

This is the severest test to which this Result can be subjected. For as will be hereafter shown, if their allegations be true their advice is wicked, and if their allegations be not true, their advice is still more wicked. Let it then be noticed that the Result does not pretend to state the alleged opinions of the Pastor in his own language, or to sustain a single charge by quotations from him. This is unfair on the face of it. In this particular even the Roman Catholic Church in all ages, has been fairer in dealing with alleged heretics or errorists. She is wont to have their works carefully examined

and full and thorough extracts made on all points of alleged error. The same course is pursued in the Presbyterian Churches and other Ecclesiastical bodies. But here with copious documents urged on their acceptance, the Council avoid the use of the exact words of him they would condemn as carefully as if they were poison. Why is this?

Are they afraid of the influence of a fair statement of his opinions as he sets them forth? As Rome clothes heretics for an auto da fé in robes painted all over with fiends and flames, must they also dress up in fitting attire the opinions they would "consign to all fires of detraction can kindle?"

Let it also be noticed that the Result makes sweeping and indefinite charges. So sound and orthodox were the extracts read from his sermons that nothing more was to be said. To break their force Dr. Braman asserted without proof that Mr. Beecher was wont at other times to preach differently. "His trumpet had an uncertain sound." The writer rebuked him for this as a gross violation of Christian principle and honor, and demanded proof or retraction. Neither was offered. The Result repeats the offensive charge. "Much of Mr. Beecher's preaching has been in accordance with the Scriptures and standard New England divines, yet this is so interwoven with preaching of an opposite and erroneous character, as dangerously if not fatally to neutralize the good effects of his teachings."

Thus the Council make a deliberate assault on the whole scope of the Pastor's preaching, smiting it with leprosy through and through, and aiming a death blow at his ministerial and religious character and standing.

To show, however, their utter looseness of thought, in the next sentence they change the proportions of error and truth in his teaching. In the sentence just quoted, *much* of his preaching is said to accord with the Scriptures and standard New England divines. But they forthwith proceed to say, "With *some* things on these doctrines that we think truthful, he has indulged in *much* which we consider wholly irreconcilable with the articles of faith of this church, which he himself has adopted as a member, and of the Orthodox churches generally in New England." Here the "much" which first stood on the side of his true preaching, is transferred to the side of his errors, and "some" takes its place. Which of these views do the Council really hold? Or have they no fixed ideas on the subject?

And is this the way in which a Congregational Council ought to deal with the reputation and standing of a brother in the ministry? Specifications were demanded. It was denounced as unjust, cruel, dishonorable, a stab in the dark at reputation. All in vain. The majority marched in solid phalanx to their



predestined Result, treating all remonstrances with anger, or ridicule, or defiance. The only thought that seemed to occur to one of the majority was that the writer ought not to have been on the Council, since he took up too much of their time. Such heartless cruelty he fervently hopes never to meet again.

And what bearing has conduct like this on the question of veracity? Is it not an untruthful act, to make charges that are not and cannot be proved, and to persist in them against explicit denial, and the offer of rebutting testimony? Is it not as really inconsistent with a due regard for veracity, as the positive utterance of falsehood? If it is, then is the Result already invalidated, before we come to the direct examination of the charges.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DIVINE SORROW.

As the petitioners regard this as a great error, and Dr. Braman exerted all his rhetoric to have it condemned—it is well to ask what it is.

By Divine Sorrow is meant that God is really grieved and pained at heart when his children do wrong; and feels a real joy and pleasure, when they are good. And that between this grief, and this joy, there is a real contrast—as there is in our minds when perfectly sanctified, in view of the bad or good conduct of those dear to us.

This, we understand the Council to regard as a fatal error. If so, they ought explicitly to say so. No matter if Dr. Fiske, the Moderator of the adjourned session, thinks it a less ecstatic feeling in God to abhor Satan than to be well pleased with Christ; no matter if Dr. Pond, of Bangor, ventures to imagine that to love holiness is with God a pleasanter exercise than to hate sin; no matter if Prof. Haven, of Chicago, thinks that the holiness of a Universe is more conducive to divine beatitude than the Apostacy of that Universe. No matter if even the Princeton Quarterly so far forget itself as to declare it “in the highest degree illogical and inconsistent to attribute one class of emotions to God and not the other;”—if the doctrine be fundamental error, the Council will not confer with flesh and blood but condemn it unflinchingly.

Yet they do not. For some reason or other they only censure Mr. Beecher's manner. “By HIS MANNER OF TEACHING that God suffers and sorrows over the sins of our race, he presents to us a God deficient in his nature, and imperfect and finite in his blessedness; a doctrine having painful variation from our common faith.”

Whether it is that Mr. Beecher's manner is too frank, too earnest, indicating that “this notion is held by him as an eternal truth,” and not kept sufficiently “in abeyance” we are not informed.

We are perplexed to conceive what “manner of teaching” fundamental error, the Council would recommend. Or is it that they do not really consider it a fundamental error? Must it not be that their common-sense revolted against pronouncing it a heresy to think that the occurrence of rebellion is more painful to the King Eternal, than the continuance of loyalty would have been? Could men in their right minds really consider that a damnable heresy? Obviously not. They would be fit candidates for Bedlam if they did.

But alas, why then were they willing to be supposed by the public to have condemned it? Did they not know what construction people would put on their statement that the “objections of the petitioners are *well sustained*?”

Did they not know what the petitioners would understand by that? Did they not know what use they would make of it? Did they not deliberately intend it should operate to the virtual deposition of Mr. Beecher? Is it quite honest, thus by “a smooth ambiguity” to seem to condemn in a plain country minister, what they do not and dare not really condemn in Theological Professors and D. D.s?

## CHAPTER X.

### PRE-EXISTENCE.

As this is called in the reply to protests “the leading view which brought Mr. Beecher to trial and condemnation,” it is to be presumed that that “condemnation” is unequivocally expressed. And what then is this “leading view?”

Simply this, that the material system is neither cause nor occasion of sin, but auxiliary to cure. Sin originates in the spiritual world, from spiritual causes. Souls are sinful before they enter this material world. The soul is of Celestial origin. This is pre-existence. Does the Council then, really think that it is a fundamental error to deny that the material system is a divinely instituted contrivance for the production of sin? If that is a fatal error, since it is Mr. Beecher's “leading view,” it is to be hoped they will say so plainly.

The posture of affairs was this. The churches of the entire denomination, by their continued fellowship of Dr. E. Beecher, and by witnessing without protest, his employment as lecturer in Chicago Theological Seminary, had practically decided pre-existence not fundamental error. The Council at Mr. Beecher's



settlement had decided the same. Mr. Beecher openly avowed his belief of the doctrine. His installation was opposed in private session by McCollum of Bradford, on that ground. In concluding to proceed, the Council decided, and that deliberately, that pre-existence was not fundamental error.

"The Council thought," says Pike of Rowley, who gave the right hand of fellowship, "that as it was not deemed a proper ground of suspending Dr. Edward Beecher from his ministry, so it was not for denying his brother installation. \* \* \* Idle as the idea of a pre-existent fall is, we confess that with its associated view of deep and entire depravity, we were less disposed publicly to object against it, from the fact that we have so often to meet with a fall of man which is no fall, a sinful nature which is not sinful, an original sin which is no sin, a tendency to all that is sinful in the present and destructive in the future, and yet a tendency that has no character whatever in the sight of God."

In these words, Mr. Pike evidently gives the preference to pre-existence over the new school view of Original Sin as taught at Andover and New Haven. He declares that "the scriptural doctrine of the fall in Adam," as held by new school churches, (and all New England churches nearly are such,) is "no fall." He declares that Mr. Beecher's denial of the fall in Adam by pre-existence, is a great deal better, than their assertion of it by a theory that practically nullifies a fall altogether. On this view the Council acted. On this view he gave the right hand of fellowship.

Add to this, that the Essex North Association after protracted deliberation, with the Pastor's published sermon on the subject before them, emphatically refused to condemn it as fundamental error, and thus re-endorsed the decision of the Installing Council and of the churches. Moreover, the churches which sent delegates to this Council, knowing that Dr. Beecher was invited to a seat, and the Council itself, which allowed him that seat without remark, sanctioned the principle that pre-existence is not fundamental error.

For this Council to condemn it then, openly and explicitly as such, would be to place itself in open opposition to the Essex North Association, to the Installing Council, to the Chicago Theological Seminary, to the churches of the denomination, to itself, and finally, to common sense. To condemn pre-existence unequivocally as fundamental error, was to commit suicide. Hence they say:

The Christian spirit of Mr. Beecher, shown in this case, and his rare ability to present what he believes, would have led the Council to very different results if we could be persuaded that he simply holds certain notions about pre-existence as academic theses, scholastic questions, or philosophical speculations, which

he could and would conscientiously keep in abeyance while he preaches Christ and him crucified.

What do the Council mean by "keeping in abeyance?" and by "academic theses," and "scholastic questions" and other long words? They mean in plain English, the Pastor may believe pre-existence if he will keep it secret. He may cherish it as a private opinion, a speculative belief in his own mind, provided he will not preach it, but carefully conceal it.

Now suppose it is a fundamental error, what does this amount to? Is not one fundamental error as good or as bad as another? If a minister may conceal one fundamental error, while preaching Christ, may he not another? May he not cherish any number of fundamental errors, yea, deny the whole gospel system—be an atheist—if he will conceal the fact while preaching the creed according to contract?

A Congregational minister is a man to whom the church lets out the job of creed-preaching by contract. So much creed—so much money. The business of the minister is to *prove to people that what they already believe, so far as dried in the creed, is right, to the dot of an i, the cross of a t. Not—to teach. Not to bring out of his treasure things new and old.* He is "under contract by his settlement to preach the creed," but he may believe fundamental error on every point, "as academic theses." He may laugh in his sleeve at those stupid gulls, who imagine he is under contract to *think*.

The Council has no objection to heresy, however damnable, provided it is "brought in privately." Pre-existence is fundamental error—vital error—a damnable heresy, yet if Mr. B. will only keep it "in abeyance," and preach the creed by contract, the Council is satisfied. The public is to understand, henceforth, on what tenure ministers hold their office. The people are to ponder in their minds what fundamental errors may not the ministers on this Council be themselves "conscientiously keeping in abeyance," while carefully preaching by contract to the dot of an i.

The world would like to know about this. They will naturally wish to know, whether the churches really do expect their ministers to believe the solemn doctrines they are "under contract to preach;" on preaching which their salaries, if not their souls, depend.

The people will ask, did the church in Medford mean by her representatives, to sanction the doctrine that Mr. Marvin may "hold as a philosophical speculation" that slander is a fruit of the spirit, while *preaching* the command "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor?"

The people of Marblehead will undoubtedly be interested to learn from the church in that place, whether they sent representatives to this Council to vote, indirectly, that Mr. Allen may



hold "certain notions about Mormonism," provided he will "conscientiously keep them in abeyance," while he upholds the creed by *contract*.

Citizens of Bradford will probably like to be informed whether the church there has any idea of repudiating the votes of her representatives in Council, virtually authorizing their pastor secretly to embrace the "scholastic question" that "it is right to lie for the glory of God," while unctuously proclaiming (by *contract*) that "all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

The honest yeomanry in old Rowley will be anxious to ascertain whether the Reverend John Pike's church meant by the votes of her representatives to authorize him, merely by way of "academic thesis," to deny the validity of the seventh Commandment, while preaching chastity according to *contract*.

There will unquestionably be many simple minded persons in Boston who would like clearly to understand whether Park St. church sanctions the vote of its lay delegate, by which Dr. Stone would be practically authorized to hold Pantheism as an academic thesis, while preaching Christ crucified by *contract*; or whether the Church as well as the Pastor, protests against Mr. Farnsworth's vote.

The congregation of Mt. Vernon church, too, will probably wish to know to a certainty, whether that church sanctions Dea. Palmer's vote, by which, consistently carried out, Dr. Kirk would be justified in believing Parkerism, and preaching the cross, strictly according to *contract*.

Undoubtedly the religious world in Newburyport, would be obliged to the North Church, for explicit information, whether that church sent Dr. Hooker to Georgetown to say, by fair implication, that no matter what Mr. E. C. Hooker really believes or disbelieves as "academic theses" so long as he keeps his own counsel and grinds out a creed grist according to *contract*.

The Fourth Church likewise, would confer a favor on the community by informing them whether they accept their Pastor's vote repudiating the principle of believing one thing and preaching another, or that of their lay delegate, by which Bro. Campbell might, if he chose, deny the Trinity as a scholastic question, if he would keep it to himself and do his creed stent, to the last jot or tittle.

There may be, too, even in Reading, a number of inquiring minds, who will indulge in an unsanctified curiosity as to whether the Old South really sent precious Mr. Barrows and Mr. Wakefield to Georgetown to elaborate more clearly than ever before the genuine principles of Congregational Church polity in reference to the clergy—to say, "a Congregational Pastor is a man hired by *contract* to

preach a certain creed, and keep any 'academic theses' he may happen to have diametrically opposed to said creed, 'in abeyance.'"

Do the said unsanctified persons ask, "what might be, for instance, Mr. Barrows' favorite 'academic thesis,' his pet 'scholastic question,' his cherished 'philosophical speculation?' Pantheism? Parkerism? or the mystery of the Thugs?"

"What business is that of yours?" they reply. "O, ye over curious inquirers, is he not honorably performing *his contract*? Is he not preaching the creed to the very letter? What is it to you what he thinks? What concern is it of yours what 'academic theses' may be lurking 'in abeyance?' Mind your business; let him mind his. His business is to preach you so much creed; your business, to pay him so much money—a bargain is a bargain—a *contract* is a *contract*. This is Congregationalism. This is Protestantism. This is Christianity."

The world will probably be glad to know from all the churches whose representatives voted for this report, *whether this is what they really mean*. Whether they have concluded at last to take off the mask and avow themselves infidels and hypocrites as the world has so long charged. Whether, now, they mean to come out in their true colors, and write on their own forehead, so that all may read, "MOTHER OF HARLOTS."

Will it be said that the Council did *not* mean to pronounce pre-existence *fundamental* error? Then why allow the world to think so? Why call it "the leading view that brought Mr. Beecher to *trial* and *condemnation*?" Why say, "by the doctrine of the apostacy of the race in a pre-existent state he denies the Scriptural doctrine of the fall in Adam, a doctrine which however interpreted by the different schools of New England theology, is nevertheless held by them all in common."

What is this but an attempt to crush pre-existence by a coalition of hostile schools, as in the days of Pascal, the Dominicans and the Jesuits conspired to crush the Jansenists by the celebrated doctrine of "next power," a phrase to which the parties attached precisely opposite significations?

Another Pascal might find scope for his inimitable irony in exposing this hyper Jesuitical stratagem!

"The scriptural doctrine of the fall in Adam!" What is it? Is it the doctrine of Dr. Hodge? or of Dr. Baird? or of Dr. Emmons? or of Dr. Taylor, which according to Pike, of Rowley, is "no fall" at all?

The Council combines half a dozen schools mutually abominating each other's theory as "no fall"—and precipitates them in an avalanche upon pre-existence, and will they now turn round and say it is not a fundamen-



tal error? The "leading view that brought Mr. Beecher to condemnation" not really fundamental error?

True, it is difficult to see how Pike of Rowley could condemn it as such, after what he has said about it; it is difficult to imagine how any of the members of Council could possibly deem it a damnable heresy to think that mankind are actual sinners before conception. But one thing is certain, they meant to be *understood* to condemn it as fundamental error. They knew it would be so interpreted, that it would operate to the virtual deposition of the Pastor, and they manifestly intended it should.

If, now, pre-existence be not in their view really fundamental error, how can they explain this conduct? If it be, how can they explain the permission to "keep it in abeyance?"

The Council is inextricably fixed between the horns of a dilemma, on one or the other of which it is gored. If pre-existence be fundamental error, it is hypocrisy to allow Mr. Beecher to "keep it in abeyance"—if it be not fundamental error, it is hypocrisy to pretend to condemn it, when they do not.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ATONEMENT.

It is manifest that if the Pastor's deposition was to be effected, it must be on other grounds than those of Divine Sorrow and Pre-existence. No Council would dare to proceed on those grounds alone. Not even an *ex parte* Council could have been culled from the theological dregs of all New England, infatuated enough for such an act of self-stultification. If this end was to be carried, charges of other errors must be accumulated, to serve in connection with these, as a plausible basis of virtual deposition.

Accordingly an individual devoted himself to taking notes of the Pastor's sermons, for the avowed purpose of "exposing" him. Another individual attended the Tuesday evening lecture, as it appears, for a similar purpose. The result of such listening, the Council was pleased to entertain as evidence. If the Council has been led into a fatal dilemma, it is because they choose to place implicit confidence in men whom 248 of their neighbors declared over their own signatures to be "unscrupulous."<sup>1</sup> Had they been more cautious, had they fairly "*investigated*" for themselves, as the Church asked them to do, their position would be less deplorable.

To illustrate exactly what that position is, the following dialogue has been prepared,

between the Result of Council, and Mr. Beecher's written defence.

THE COUNCIL.—He defines "the God man as having an angelic nature, being own and younger brother of Lucifer—"

THE PASTOR.—"The Son of Man AS MAN came from Heaven."<sup>1</sup>

THE COUNCIL.—He defines "the God man as having an angelic nature, being own and younger brother of Lucifer—"

THE PASTOR.—"Angels were called to act as ministering spirits in the creation of a new world, and a race but little below them, ONE OF WHOM in alliance with the divine nature, was destined to sit upon the throne." (This was read before the Council.)

THE COUNCIL.—He defines "the God man as having an angelic nature, being own and younger brother of Lucifer—"

THE PASTOR.—"This creature, assumed into personal union with the second person of the Trinity, was not an angel, for 'he took not on him the nature of angels.'"<sup>2</sup> Heb. ii. 16.

The adoption of the charge that "Christ was own and younger brother of Lucifer," is the most astonishing feature of this truly astonishing Result. The Council were not aware that they were taking up a *slang* expression of an objector, designed to bring the Pastor's doctrine into contempt, and putting it in the Pastor's own mouth, as his own statement of his belief. Such however is the actual fact. The Pastor taught carefully that Christ's human soul was *not* angelic—quoting Heb. ii. 16, but of a *younger* race, the race of MAN. An objector said with a sneer, "So our Lord is younger brother to the Devil." The Pastor took occasion to administer a severe rebuke from the pulpit to this profane sneer. Now, however, that sneer is adopted by the Council, in a grave paper, as if it were sanctioned by the Pastor himself.

But to continue—

THE COUNCIL.—"And by making his sufferings suatory and argumentative, *rather than* vicarious, he fundamentally deranges the commonly received doctrine of atonement."

THE PASTOR.—"It is not then that I make the atonement less than the older divines, but more. Not that I deny expiatory agonies properly infinite, but that I affirm them and deny whatever is contradictory to them."

THE COUNCIL.—"Making his sufferings suatory and argumentative rather than vicarious—"

THE PASTOR.—The sufferings of Christ involved "such a sight and sense of the vileness of his church, and her exposure to infinite wrath, as affected him as painfully as if it had

<sup>1</sup> In one of the printed sermons laid in by the petitioners.

<sup>2</sup> In a sermon not read, but offered in manuscript to the Council.



been his own, he being *identified* through sympathy with her."

THE COUNCIL.—"Making his sufferings suasive and argumentative rather than vicarious—"

THE PASTOR.—"Thus he bore her sins, and knew the terrors of the Lord, and so great was this that he was amazed, his soul was sorrowful unto death, and the blood fell in drops to the ground."

THE COUNCIL.—"Making his sufferings suasive and argumentative rather than vicarious—"

THE PASTOR.—"Christ so identified himself with that soul whose name was graven on his heart, as to obtain a most vivid sense of those terrors to which it was exposed; and so as to bear those terrors in himself, so far as was possible for an innocent and holy soul to bear them."

THE COUNCIL.—"We are clear that the objections of the petitioners are well sustained by Mr. Beecher's concessions in his defence."

MR. BEECHER.—"The appearance of peculiarity in my views is chiefly due to an attempt at comprehensiveness, by the historic method. The things that I affirm, I affirm with the ancient church for a thousand years, or with one or the other branch of the modern church; the things that I deny, I deny in common with this church and the churches of New England."

\* \* \* "The sacrificial language of the Bible is to me no foreign idiom; it is my vernacular;—my sermons, poor though they be, are sprinkled with blood. I have scarce said anything since I came here, but 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"

THE COUNCIL.—"We are clear that the objections of the petitioners are well sustained by Mr. Beecher's *concessions* in his defence."

## CHAPTER XII.

### FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

It is to be premised that the Result strings together a number of charges under this general subject, as if all were fundamental errors. Now it may be an error to say that the lost are not absolutely devoid of something they will consider enjoyment, but Augustine distinctly taught it. Did Augustine teach *fundamental* error? Milton implies it in the plainest manner. Did the Council design to anathematize Paradise Lost for describing the *amusements* of the fallen angels in hell, as,—

"On some hill remote they sing  
With notes angelical, to many a harp,  
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall  
By doom of battle."

As to the idea that the sensibilities of the lost are blunted, so as to diminish suffering,—

did the Council mean to sanction the course of the petitioners in condemning it as fundamental, knowing at the same time that they had tolerated a belief in the ANNIHILATION of the lost, in their former pastor?

The Council was advised of the fact that this error was not considered fundamental in Mr. Prince, by the petitioners, nor urged against him at his dismissal here, or his re-settlement at Bridgewater. In accepting his resignation, his friends knowing perfectly well his sentiments, did not allude to them, but made mention of "his earnest labors in behalf of Christ's cause in this place, his devoted piety, and his fidelity as a pastor." Yet the merest approximation to the idea of annihilation, the mere "weakening and blunting of faculties and sensibilities" in the lost, they condemn in Mr. Beecher, (though he never held it) as fundamental error! And the Council knowing the facts, sustain them, and mention this among other points as if it were fundamental!

In respect to three of the alleged errors under this general head, viz.: "that God to affect men overstates the reality of future punishment, as the cannonier elevates his piece above the mark; that the lost do find some pleasure in their degradation and sorrow even as wicked men here; and that all God's visitations on them are for their good," we observe they are so stated as inevitably to convey a false impression of the Pastor's real sentiments.

All the expressions to which these passages point, occurred in one sermon. The object of that sermon was to correct certain erroneous views of future punishment, and open the way to the main argument in the sermon following.

Properly considered, in their connections and bearings, there is nothing in that sermon contrary to the orthodox belief. At any rate, so the author claimed. He ought to have had the full benefit of a statement by the Council, that such was his understanding of the matter. The Result ought in common fairness to have stated that Mr. Beecher did not put these statements forward as opposed to orthodoxy, but as a part of orthodoxy. They ought not to have suppressed wholly a statement of the DESIGN of the series of discourses, in one of which this mistake, (if mistake it be) as to the nature of the orthodox doctrine occurred; viz.—the refutation of Universalism, and the establishment of the orthodox belief on an impregnable basis.

A *suppressio veri*, so important could not but have all the influence of a direct assertion of falsehood. By such suppression, by taking isolated fragments, out of connection, never quoted in the author's own language, and by putting them in juxtaposition, with some statements (as we shall presently show) totally



false, a sinister cast is given to the Pastor's whole theology on this doctrine,—a coloring deceptive and mendacious beyond description.

We come then to charges positively untrue. To make the case plain, it is to be stated that in July 24, 1858, Mr. Hassall of Haverhill, published a communication in a New York Unitarian paper, in which after mentioning some things he had heard Mr. Beecher say in a sermon, it was added that if he had been rightly informed Mr. Beecher had "at other times" expressed a doubt whether Christ "might not redeem all men in the next world if not in this." He did not say he had heard Mr. Beecher express the doubt, but had been so "informed."

In the Recorder, August 19, 1858, appeared an article written by the Scribe of this Council, in which he makes Mr. Hassall say he heard Mr. Beecher "inform his congregation, . . . that Christ may redeem all men in the next world if not in this," thus stripping off the doubt, and changing it from mere hearsay to direct and positive ear-witness.

Mr. Beecher called on the Scribe, denied the truth of the statement, and demanded retraction. The Scribe refused, and in open Council had the face to say that in the interview referred to Mr. Beecher would not deny the charge!

Thus much premised, the following dialogue, between the Result, drawn up by the Scribe, and the Pastor's written Defence becomes intelligible.

THE RESULT.—"He undermines the doctrine of future punishment, by teaching that the offers of salvation are made to men after death."

THE DEFENCE.—"Our Saviour drew the pictures of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, and Dives in torment. The chasm was fixed. The idea of reformation under such circumstances is impossible."

THE RESULT.—"Offers of salvation after death."

THE DEFENCE.—"What becomes of the idea then that the wicked man at death, suddenly finds a school of reform? It is absurd."

THE RESULT.—"Offers of salvation after death!!"

THE DEFENCE.—"All souls that ever are to be redeemed, are to be redeemed in this world."

THE RESULT.—"Offers of salvation after death!!!"

THE DEFENCE.—"I am fully persuaded by the Word of God that your eternal destiny is to be decided by the answer you give to this question during life!"

THE COUNCIL.—"We are clear that the objections of the petitioners are well *sustained* by Mr. Beecher's *admissions* and *concessions* in his defence."

THE DEFENCE.—"I observe, Moderator,

that the correspondent was wholly misinformed I never expressed such a doubt. I never had such a doubt. I never in my life doubted for a moment that all liars will have their part in the lake of fire. \* \* That statement was wholly groundless; it was destitute of the slightest foundation."

THE RESULT.—"We are clear that the objections of the petitioners are well *sustained* by Mr. Beecher's *admissions* and *concessions* in his defence."

THE DEFENCE.—"Can you, Sir, can these brethren believe it possible I could be in constant use of warnings so solemn,<sup>1</sup> and yet not believe them? What right has any one to do this? Are reputations to be sacrificed in this way without remorse? Are men to be slain, assassinated, murdered, without inquisition for blood?"

How admirably Mr. Beecher's *ADMISSIONS* and *CONCESSIONS* in his written defence, sustain the objections of the petitioners on this point! Why did not the Result quote some of these concessions and admissions, to which it appeals with such refreshing coolness?

But we pass to another point.

THE COUNCIL.—"He weakens and undermines the doctrine of future punishment, by teaching that the faculties and sensibilities of the lost are so weakened and blunted, as to diminish their sufferings."

THE PASTOR.—"Lost men will realize that they might be enjoying the favor of God, but have lost it forever."

THE COUNCIL.—"He weakens and undermines the doctrine of future punishment, by teaching that the faculties and sensibilities of the lost are so weakened and blunted, as to diminish their sufferings."

THE PASTOR.—"Yet though excluded from Heaven forever, they will be capable of realizing what it is, and what it might be, and that they have lost it."

THE COUNCIL.—"Sensibilities blunted so as to diminish suffering!"

THE PASTOR.—"At the same time the soul will know what knowledge is. It will realize what its career might have been. It will see what the redeemed are doing. From its own self-imposed darkness, it will look out upon a universe growing and developing in knowledge forever, and will see that it might have kept pace with the foremost, but all that is lost!"

THE COUNCIL.—"Faculties weakened and sensibilities blunted so as to diminish suffering."

THE PASTOR.—"The accomplished reality of the exalted glory of the faithful will nevermore be hid from them. The consummate reality of their own dishonor and extreme degradation, will forever realize itself to their

<sup>1</sup> Referring to extracts from sermons which he had just read before Council.



minds. It will no longer be possible to deny it, or misunderstand it, or forget it."

THE COUNCIL.—"He teaches that the faculties and sensibilities of the lost are so *weakened* and *blunted*, as to much diminish their sufferings."

MR. BEECHER.—"Omnipresence is a boundless deep of consuming intensity, to goodness innocuous, in which the remorse and hatred of their defeated villany will kindle and burn with sulphurous flames forever."

THE COUNCIL.—"We are clear that the objections of the petitioners are well sustained, by Mr. Beecher's CONCESSIONS in his defence!"

We may well ask, if this is *sustaining* the objections of the petitioners, what would *refuting* them be? If this is an "admission," a "concession" of their charges, what would a contradiction be?

The public will judge of the reliability of this Result, adopted under the whip and spur of parliamentary tactics, against the most solemn warnings of its utter falsehood. Honest men everywhere, who love truth, will draw their own conclusions. They will perhaps think this church has dealt as mildly with the Council as possible, in saying—

*Resolved*, That in respect to the atonement and eternal punishment, the sentiments condemned by the Council are not the sentiments of our Pastor, as evinced by extracts from numerous discourses, exhibited to the Council.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE COUNCIL'S THEORY OF CREEDS.

One half the Result, nearly, is occupied with the doctrine of creeds, and the implication of the Pastor's moral character as a perjured covenant-breaker. Let us inquire what is the theory of the Council as to the relation of a minister to the creed of the church, and the charges brought against the Pastor on that theory.

The theory of the Council is that every pastor covenants with the church, not to preach doctrines essentially variant from the creed of the church; that by virtue of his office, he promises to adopt, preach and defend the creed of the church. It is a matter of right with the church, say they, it should be a matter of honor with the pastor, that he preach the faith (the creed) which by his settlement he has contracted with them to preach, and is most solemnly obligated to the great head of the church to preach."

On this theory they assert that a necessity was imposed by Mr. Beecher's conscience, of

violating his covenant with the church, by preaching doctrines that in several particulars are essentially variant from the creed of the church. That such an example as his course has offered, tends to engender in the entire church and the community, an utter indifference, not to say contempt, towards creeds and covenants. That he has thrown into the shade, and trampled under foot the creed of the church that in virtue of his office he promised to adopt, preach and defend. That the case has been aggravated, by the fact that he has become a member of the church to which he ministers, and that their creed has thus become his own, and that there he has neglected, shunned and denied parts of it. That if such an example be copied by the laity, they do not see how a church can have or maintain a creed, or have any door of admission or excommunication, in matters of faith. That the pastor has in private judgment and right disregarded the creed of the church, and if others may do so, then the pulpit is left open to any faith, and any ministerial fellowship, however erroneous and repulsive, and the church have no redress. They imply that the Pastor has violated right with the church, and honor with himself, in not preaching the faith which by his settlement he has contracted with them to preach, and is most solemnly obligated to the great head of the church to preach. And they advise a dismissal in this case, partly to relieve Mr. Beecher from the necessity of violating a contract which his conscience will not allow him to keep.

There is at last one subject on which the Result employs neither "smooth ambiguity" nor "diplomatic platitude." It charges on the Pastor a long course of covenant breaking, in its nature most dishonorable, and in its influence most pestilential. It lays upon him the guilt of perjury in matters involving the highest interests of the church of God and of human society—perjury for which he would have deserved long since, to have been struck dead by an avenging God, for if what they allege is true, he has in the most eminent degree lied to the Holy Ghost, by whom he was made an overseer to feed the church of God.

Remember, too, by whom these statements are made—men acting in the name of Christ, as pastors and delegates of churches. Remember to whom these statements are made, to all the churches of our land and to all the world.

In view of such statements the inquiry naturally arises, what did they know of the creed<sup>1</sup> of this church? Was it read in the Council after the Result was reported, in order that the Pastor's teachings might be carefully compared with it, and the precise number and degree of his divergencies accurately ascertained? No.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix, L.



Not one sentence of it was read during the entire adjourned session while the Result was under consideration. Is there any reason to believe that the majority had ever attentively examined it? There is not. At the utmost they had heard it once publicly read. How then could they know that the Pastor had preached doctrines essentially variant from it, that he has thrown it into the shade, and trampled it under foot? How could they know that he had violated right and honor and perjured himself by not preaching the creed he contracted to preach, assuming for the time that there was such a contract. Obviously they could not know. And that they did not know is obvious from one simple fact, to wit, that he has not in fact departed from or contravened the creed in but one single point, but holds it to the letter, and in that one point he never promised to preach according to it, but distinctly stated before his installation that he did not hold it—but instead of it held another view—better adapted to confirm and strengthen all the rest of the creed—as a house is not weakened but strengthened when an insufficient and rotten foundation is removed, and a strong granite foundation is put in its place. And with this full understanding of his views on the part of both Church and Council, he was installed, free from all pledge or covenant to suppress that point.

As a matter of fact, therefore, all the statements of the Council in relation to his covenant breaking, and perjury, and dishonorable conduct, and evil example, in reference to the creed of the church, are utterly and absolutely false. There is not even the smallest particle of truth in them. They are in all particulars, diametrically opposed to the truth.

And what a spectacle is this, before the God of truth, before all pure and holy minds, before humanity at large? Pastors of churches and delegates, professing to act in the name of Christ, and with the influence and authority derived from that fact, sending forth such slanders against a devoted minister of Christ, in the midst of a revival, and that without the slightest evidence to sustain them, and in direct war with all the facts of the case!

Let them look to it lest God turn the charge of covenant-breaking and of perjury upon their own heads. Have they not sworn before God and man, as members of the church, and as ministers of the gospel, to defend the truth, and to denounce the wrath of God on all liars? And yet when warned of the falsehood of statements affecting all that a Christian brother holds dear, when implored not to plunge rashly into such statements, when warned that they were a direct violation of the law of God, they rushed on and committed themselves to assertions than which none can be more grossly false and more utterly slanderous.

And are these the men to set forth the evil influence of the Pastor's example? Alas for them. Long, long will it be ere they can stand before God or man in this respect, as pure and innocent as he. Let them first purge themselves from the charge of unprovoked, and baseless slander, before they attempt again to censure and rectify the morals of others.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE TRUE DOCTRINE.

So far we have spoken on the assumption that there was such a covenant with respect to the creed of the church, as is alleged. But this, like other statements of the Council, is a mere fiction. No such covenant was entered into by Mr. Beecher, and it is at war with the first principles of Congregational system that it should be done, nor is there any evidence that it ever was done in any Congregational church in New England or anywhere else, in a single case, nay, the violent presumption is that it never was done.

The foundation principle of Congregationalism, is to interpose no standard between the church and the Bible. Creeds are used simply as declarations of faith, and are always open to a trial by the Bible.

The Congregational system admits of no standard but the Bible. The fathers of our churches, bound themselves by covenant to walk in the ways of the Lord, not only as now understood by them in his word, but as they should be in future revealed to them from that word. It was in their view, the evil of other ecclesiastical bodies, that they would not do this, but fettered the churches by human standards. Against this, John Robinson, as the Mayflower was about to sail, and plant Congregational churches here, uttered his solemn protest. The reason of this protest was that he did not believe that the doctrines even of the great Reformers were yet thoroughly purged from the adulterous virus of the great apostacy, and that the true marriage supper of the Lamb could not be consummated until such a thorough purgation had taken place, and that to bind the church to human standards, containing such errors not yet purged out, would stand directly in the way of God, and oppose his purpose finally to purify her fully, and openly and joyfully to espouse her to himself, to the salvation of a world long darkened, debased, and groaning by reason of the corruptions of the nominal church, and her exclusion from full, glorious, and triumphant communion with God.

Listen to the parting words of that man of God to the founders of the Congregational system, as an element of future divine power upon



this great continent. He closed his discourse, we are told, with appropriate and judicious counsels to the following effect:—

"He charged us before God and his blessed angels, to follow him no further than he had followed Christ; and if God should reveal any thing to us by any other instrument of his to be as ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word. He took occasion also miserably to bewail the state and condition of the reformed churches who were come to a period in religion and would go no further than the instruments of their reformation.

"As for example the Lutherans, they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw, for whatever part of God's will he had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And so also saith he, you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them; a misery much to be lamented, for though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them; and *were they now living*, said he, *they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light, as that they had received.*

"Here, also, he puts us in mind of our Church Covenant, or at least that part of it WHEREBY WE PROMISE AND COVENANT WITH GOD AND WITH ONE ANOTHER TO RECEIVE WHATSOEVER LIGHT AND TRUTH SHALL BE MADE KNOWN TO US FROM HIS WRITTEN WORD;—but withal exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine and compare it, and weigh it with other Scriptures of truth before we received it. For saith he, it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-christian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."

## CHAPTER XV.

### OTHER TESTIMONY.

This full belief "that it is not possible that the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-christian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once," and this "strong confidence that the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word," are the original, eminent, and vital characteristics of Congregationalism, as developed by the Spirit of God. They are its glory and its power. Through them it was fitted to lead the Church to ultimate and perfect purity, and to final and full communion with God. Hence in all its earlier churches, a sensitive jealousy where any attempt was made to put human articles of faith as a standard, where only the word of God should be. Some of them for such reasons had no confession of faith, and only covenanted to walk together according to the word of God, as it had been revealed to them, or as it should hereafter be revealed, in full conformity with the earnest counsels and entreaties of John Robinson, already set forth.

Thus Thomas Goodwin, in his letters to John Goodwin, says:—

"The Church Covenant, is no more with us than this,—an agreement and resolution, professed with promise to walk in all those ways pertaining to this fellowship so far as they shall be revealed unto them in the gospel. Thus briefly, and indefinitely and implicitly and in such like words and no other, do we apply ourselves to men's consciences, not obtruding upon them the mention of any one particular before, or in admission \* \* \* leaving their spirits free to the entertainment of the light that shines, or shall shine on them and us out of the word."—*Letters to John Goodwin*, p. 44.

Prince quotes from Gov. Bradford this statement of the Congregational principles and practice, "upon which these people shake off their anti-christian bondage, and, as the Lord's free people, join themselves by covenant in a church state, to walk in all his ways, made known or *to be made known to them* according to their best endeavors, whatever it cost them."—p. 25.

Daniel Buck, a member of a primitive Congregational Church in London, in 1592, thus describes his admission, when arraigned for his faith and practice before three magistrates, when he joined the church, "he made this protestation that he would walk with the rest of the congregation so long as they would walk in the way of the Lord, and as far as might be warranted by the word of God."—*Punchard's History*, 277, 278.

Plymouth Church, as appears from their original covenant in 1602, covenanted, "to walk in a church state, in all God's ways, made known or *to be made known to them*. They reserved an entire, perpetual liberty of searching the inspired records, and forming both their principles and their practices from those discoveries they should make therein, without imposing them on others."—*Prince's Chronology*, 4.

The original covenant of the First Church in Boston, after the preamble, is simply this: "We do solemnly and deliberately, as in Christ's holy presence, bind ourselves to walk, in all our ways, according to the rule of the Gospel, in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect to each other so far as God shall give us grace."—*New Englander*, Aug. 1850, p. 412.

"In this Church every member wrote his own confession, in his own way, and to the satisfaction of those who received him into their fellowship. At first the churches of New England were usually constituted with no other form than a covenant."—*Congregational Dictionary*, p. 135.

In cases where a confession of faith was used, great pains were taken to show that they regarded it as a mere declaration of faith and not an authoritative standard. Thus Morton says of the Church in Salem, for which Higginson prepared a confession of faith: "Hig-



ginson's Confession of Faith and Covenant was acknowledged *only* as a direction pointing to that faith and covenant contained in the Holy Scriptures; and therefore *no man was confined to that form of words*, but only to the substance and scope of the matter contained therein. And for the circumstantial manner of joining the church, it was ordered according to the wisdom and faithfulness of the Elders together with the liberty and ability of any person. Hence it was that *some* were admitted by expressing their consent to that written confession of faith and covenant; *others* did answer questions about the principles of religion that were publicly propounded to them; *some* did present their confession in writing which was read for them; and *some* that were able and willing did make their own confession in their own words and way."—*New England Memorial*, p. 46.

Richard Mather says of the Congregational churches: "They *may have* a platform by way of profession of their faith, but not a binding rule of faith and practice . . . if so, they ensnare men, attending more to the form of doctrine delivered from the authority of the church, . . . than to the examining thereof according to the Scriptures."—*Church Gov't*, 64.

John Cotton, author of the work entitled "The Keys of the Kingdom of God," which converted the great Owen to Congregationalism, says, in his answer to Ball: "When a church is suspected and slandered with corrupt and unsound doctrine, they have a call from God to set forth a public profession of their faith; but to *prescribe* the same as the confession of faith of that church, to their posterity, . . . Sad experience hath showed what a snare it hath been unto both."—p. 44, 45.

The Church in Georgetown was founded on a Covenant without articles, and so existed for more than a century. That Covenant says:

"WE TAKE THE WORD OF GOD FOR OUR RULE."

And that sublime declaration stood for over a century. If for a time this Church has swerved from its antique simplicity, it has returned to it again by the following resolution:—

*Resolved*, That in impeaching the Pastor's honor, in the matter of creeds, and virtually charging him with perjury, the Council announce principles subversive of Congregationalism. Our Pastor accepts the creed of his Church "for substance of doctrine." No Congregational minister can lawfully do more. He is under the most solemn engagements to the Great Head of the Church to preach the Word of God, and try all human creeds thereby. We are constrained to regard the action of Council as an open apostacy from the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, as enunciated by the Westminster Assembly in these words:—

"The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures."—*Chap. 1, § 10*.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CRIMINALITY OF RESULT.

We have remarked (p. 38) that if the allegations of the Result are true, its advice is wicked, and if they are false, it is much more wicked. Let us look at their advice on either alternative, and first we will suppose their charges true. Mr. Beecher is not only vitally and fundamentally heretical from A to Z in theology, but guilty of preaching sound doctrine part of the time and heresy the rest; guilty of violating his covenant, breaking his contract, and committing perjury in its highest, most blasphemous form.

If this is true, they ought to advise deposition and excommunication, in express terms. There was nothing else left for them to do. But no—"Whether his doctrinal unfitness for the Church in Georgetown is an unfitness for all Orthodox churches, the Council have not said, and were not called to say." And *why* were they *not* called to say? Was it not "a trial?" Were they not "clear that the objections of the petitioners were well taken?" Did they not "condemn him as unfit for this Church?" Why were they not "called" to advise deposition in express terms? Did they not advise what they meant should amount to deposition? "The Council could not see their way clear to dismiss a man for unsoundness in the faith, and then recommend him as a faithful minister of the Gospel in good and regular standing." They were "called," it seems, to set him adrift, without papers, but not expressly to depose him. They "are at a loss to see how any one could consistently and conscientiously condemn him as unfit for one Church, and then, by a smooth ambiguity or diplomatic platitude in papers given him, leave him to repeat his unsatisfactory ministerial labors in some second Georgetown." They can depose "by a smooth ambiguity or diplomatic platitude," but to depose in express terms, they "*are not called*." Will not every candid mind sustain us in saying, that if their charges are true, they *were called* to do precisely this, and nothing less? If it was "a trial," if Mr. Beecher was "condemned as unfit for one church," if he was proved a heretic, "by his own admissions and concessions," if he was forsworn, dishonored, perjured, they were called by every principle of Congregationalism, and of loyalty to God, to advise in the



most direct and express terms, DEPOSITION and EXCOMMUNICATION.

Not to do so, and yet in an indirect and "diplomatic" way to attempt to compass the same end, without assuming the responsibility of it, is an act the wickedness of which we will not attempt to estimate.

But what if the charges are not true? What if the Result cannot speak truth? What if its very touch is an embellishment? (*nihil quod tetigit non ORNAVIT.*) What if Mr. Beecher's teachings are caricatured, perverted, directly falsified? What if to brand him with perjury Congregationalism entire is wrecked and trod under foot, and to blacken and blast him contracts and covenants are invented that never existed,—all usage and all law turned bottom-side up, in order to glut the deadly vengeance of years in an act of cowardly ecclesiastical assassination,—then, who can calculate the enormity of the guilt of such a crime?

The utterance of falsehood, varies in criminality according to circumstances. If a private individual, carelessly utters any thing to the disadvantage of his neighbor, of the truth of which he has no evidence, and can have none, he sins against God and man. If he does the same in an official station, where his very business is to investigate the truth, and where the presumption is that he must know what he says, so that his words must have great weight, his guilt is much increased. If to such a declaration of falsehood is added the authority of professed piety, and the influence of associated churches and their officers, professing to act in the name of Christ, and as his representatives, the guilt is immeasurably enhanced. If this is done against a distinct warning of the falsehood of the statements made, and with a persistent refusal of adequate opportunities for correction, then the summit of criminality is reached.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A CONSPIRACY.

Under all the circumstances, we are compelled to regard this Council as the result of a conspiracy, in which the leading spirits of the majority were implicated.

A conspiracy is "a combination of men for an evil purpose. In law an agreement between two or more persons falsely and maliciously to indict or procure to be indicted an innocent person of felony."<sup>1</sup> In ecclesiastical law, for felony read heresy.

Of the existence of such a combination there is strong circumstantial evidence. The whole

region has been pervaded for years by the slanderous accusations of individuals in this place, both oral and printed. They have waged systematic war upon the pastor. They energized to have him virtually tried by Association, in defiance of the constitution of that body, the rules of this church and the principles of Congregationalism. The fact is notorious. The failure of Association to do what was expected of them led to the revival of the plan of a Council, which had been started before, but laid aside. The evidence of a local conspiracy against the pastor's reputation and against the prosperity of the Society under his auspices, is abundant. There is not probably an individual in Georgetown that doubts it.

There is strong circumstantial evidence that this conspiracy had ramified itself beyond the bounds of this place and implicated the leading spirits of the majority. Those who know the history of the church in Reading, and of an ecclesiastical Council there some years back, in which Dr. Edward Beecher bore a prominent part, and who couple therewith the facts mentioned of the pastor of that church pp. 18 and 24—and the prominence assigned to him in preparing the Result, will not doubt the existence of a contrived plot, between the conspirators here and parties elsewhere.

Those who know the ecclesiastical history of New England for the last half century, and of that theological faction which has been incessantly whetting the scalping knife, and sounding the war whoop against Andover and Professor Park; those who know that it is substantially the same party that made covert war on Dr. Lyman Beecher all through his Boston ministry, and pursued him with relentless animosity to the West, and which persecutes the children hated for the father's sake as for their own; those who know any thing of the antecedents of that faction, and of the master spirits of this Council, will find it impossible to doubt their complicity before the fact, in the conspiracy against the ecclesiastical life of Mr. Beecher. There was a league between the rebellion in Georgetown, and the ecclesiastical copperheadism of New England.

The Council was packed. One case is certainly known where the pastor of an invited church arranged in concert with conspirators here, the nomination of a lay delegate. Members of the majority, are known to have predicted the result beforehand as certain. The whole behavior of the leading spirits of the Council confirmed the idea. Their impatience. Their haste. Their rushing the result through the last day, cutting off debate, choking down discussion, and adjourning in such disorder as *not to approve the minutes of the entire session.*

And what was the object of this conspiracy? It was to entrap the pastor into a council under the pretence of a fraternal healing inves-

<sup>1</sup> Webster.



tigation, and then turn it into "a trial." It was to ensnare him into a deadly ambush, and strike him down by false witness. It was to indict him falsely and maliciously for heresy and publish that indictment as a "conviction" after trial. It was to effect his virtual deposition, without assuming the responsibility of advising deposition in express terms. It was to beguile him into a pledge<sup>1</sup> of resignation and then brand him a perjured heretic, so that resignation should be equivalent to deposition. No pledge under such circumstances is binding. The attempt to enforce it is infamous. Even if the Council had complied with the condition of the pledge, it would be wholly null and void. How much more when they have not! When they have not really condemned Divine Sorrow, but "his manner of teaching" it; have not condemned pre-existence, but his honest avowal of it; have not condemned "*his teachings*" on Atonement and future punishment, but teachings as opposite to his as darkness to light.

Let ecclesiastical Shylock insist upon his bond, our only answer is:

"Take thou thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh,  
But, in the cutting of it, if thou dost shed one drop  
of Christian blood,  
Thy lands and goods are by the laws of Venice  
confiscate  
Unto the State of Venice."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### INFERENCES.

1. If this is Congregationalism, then a man may hold every fundamental doctrine and yet be cast out as a heretic by a Council on mere unproved assertions or on mere questions of human philosophy, or sect, or party.

In fact, Mr. Beecher holds in the deepest and most orthodox sense, the doctrine of the native and entire depravity of the human race. As growing out of this he holds that all men are in a state of condemnation, and need pardon and justification through the free grace of God in order to be saved. In order to meet this necessity, he holds to the incarnation of the Son of God, and the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in one person, according to the most orthodox view, and that by this one person an atonement, an expiatory offering was made, by his death on the cross, for the sins of the world. He believes in the great doctrine of justification by faith in this atoning sacrifice, as the

<sup>1</sup> On the part of the church no pledge was given either by the pastor, or by any other person at any time. The pledge of the petitioners really amounted to nothing more than this, that if the Council sustained them they would remain, but if it censured them and advised repentance they would withdraw.

only way of salvation, offered to fallen men. He holds to the doctrine of regeneration, by the Holy Spirit, through the truth, in its most orthodox sense. He holds to the doctrine of eternal decrees and of election, even as they were held by Paul. He holds to the doctrine of the trinity in its fullest sense, as the manifestation of a God one in essence and yet existing in three divine persons, as the basis of the great work of redemption. He holds to the rewards of eternal life in heaven, and to the eternal punishment of the wicked, according to the doctrine of our Lord and his Apostles.

And yet he may be cast out as a heretic on mere assertions unproved, improbable, utterly false, or on mere questions of human philosophy, or of sect, or of party, exalted to the place of vital and fundamental doctrines. What is called "the Scriptural doctrine of the fall in Adam," though there is no agreement as to what it is; a certain philosophy falsely so called as to the impassibility of God; certain human speculations as to what future eternal punishment is; a certain scholastic theory of literal legal satisfaction in the atonement; all these are exalted without authority to the rank of fundamentals, and made the ground of excluding a man as orthodox in every respect as any member of the Council.

2. If this is Congregationalism, then it regards such mere speculations of men as of more weight than the divine work of God, in regeneration and personal holiness. That such a work has taken place in Mr. Beecher, the Council do not deny. They imply that it has. They speak of "the Christian spirit shown by him in this case." Now this experimental work, the Bible exhibits as the greatest and most glorious of the works of God. But if the action of this Council is true, and truly represents Congregationalism, that system regards such a work as of less weight than the mere speculations of men. How low, loose and inconsistent the views of the Council are on the whole subject of experimental religion, may be inferred from the fact that they concede the Christian character of the man they are in the act of condemning as a perjured heretic. A concession that might be of some value, if they did not elsewhere show that they would be better satisfied with him, if he would only "conscientiously" conceal his damnable heresy, while preaching Christ crucified.

3. If this is Congregationalism, then men have a right, on the ground of mere human speculations, or uninspired theories, to tear asunder a divine union created by God himself.

It is the doctrine of the Bible that all truly regenerated persons are a part of God himself, "partakers of the divine nature," "members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." It used to be the glory of Congregationalism to recognize this, and to make the conditions of



earthly fellowship, and divine unity in God coincide. But if the action of this Council is valid, such is Congregationalism no longer, and mere uninspired human speculations are the highest bond of union, overruling and tearing asunder the real and divine unity created by God himself.

4. If this is Congregationalism, then a man may be in effect deposed and cast out of the churches, without any equitable trial, without any previous notice of charges, and of witnesses, without any adequate specifications, without any opportunity of defence against the final form of indictment; nay, meeting the indictment in the Result, for the first time. He may be ejected by a mock trial, and a RESULT containing fresh charges of error, not advanced before, against which, being proposed in private session, he cannot defend himself, and against which no one else is allowed time to defend him.

If any one would be convinced how thoroughly inequitable this is, let him compare with it the caution, deliberation, and equitable safeguards, ordained and observed in the Presbyterian church, whenever the deposition of a minister is aimed at. Let him read the Book of Discipline, chapter v., and let him be ashamed if he is a Congregationalist, of the system under which he lives, a system, if this Result be a fair specimen, totally devoid of all the safeguards of equity, and open to the tyranny of a prejudiced majority, under the influence of local and partisan impulses of the worst kind.

5. If this is Congregationalism, then a person may first circulate slanders, and fill the community with them, then sit as a judge on them, then act in committee to embody them in a Result, and finally vote them to be true, and yet incur no censure. Such a slander was issued against Mr. Beecher in the Boston Recorder of August 19, 1858, by the Scribe of this Council, and although Mr. Beecher expostulated with him, personally assuring him of the falsehood of the statement, and demanding its public correction, it was refused. And now that very slander is embodied in the Result by the Scribe, as chairman of the committee, and is voted to be true by him. This slander, too, has operated for years, to fill the air with the same rumors that are now acting so malignantly on an innocent man.

6. If this is Congregationalism, then Councils are under no law of any kind, but the law of impulse and of passion. When it was stated in Council that they were under the law of the Bible, demanding present holiness and spirituality, a sense of the presence of God, and the judging of all opinions in view of their relations to the life of God in the soul, the majority of the Council met the statement with no favorable response, two of them sneered at the demand as involving a claim of

peculiar spirituality in the one who made it, and one repudiated it as radical and revolutionary. Certainly they acted as if they did not regard the law of the Bible in all its spirituality as binding on Councils. But if Councils are not under the law of the Bible in all its fulness under what law are they? They have not like Presbytery a written code. They are not under the code of secular law. Hence they are lawless, and their action cannot be calculated on any fixed principles of right or equity. They are, as is said in the Recorder, the tools of men who form plots, or the slaves of preconceived and predestined ends and results.

7. If this is Congregationalism, then the highest ends to be gained by the system are not truth and equity, but to accommodate any business man, who happens to feel that he must get through with the gravest questions in theology, and the most weighty interests of the churches in time for the cars. It may be said, as it is said virtually, in the reply to the protests, that if the Council had taken ever so much time, they should have come to the same result. This may be true, but if so, it can be on but one ground, and that is that the result was cut and dried before they came, and they were pledged to it, irrespective of truth or equity. This supposition best solves their acts, but it reflects no higher honor on Congregationalism.

8. If this is Congregationalism, it is of more importance to carry an end within a given time and whilst you can, than to understand what you are doing so as to avoid gross contradictions, or falsehood, or ridiculous absurdities. The great end is to carry your point whilst you can, just as in a political election, where lies are freely used. No matter if the lies are exposed, after the election is gained. They have done their work. In the present case, besides the falsehoods and slanders already exposed, the Council by their haste have plunged themselves into a most ridiculous position for so grave a body. The petitioners allege against their Pastor, as summing up all their views, that they are pained to believe, that his teachings on the four points specified are, either, 1. "Not according to sound doctrine," or 2. "Very obscure and confused, and we have failed to comprehend their meaning." Certainly these two alternatives mean very different and opposite things. Concerning this statement the grave Council say, that they have fully sustained their charges. Which charges? Do they mean that they have fully sustained both sides of the alternative? If not, why not take some notice of it, and say which side is sustained? Any preceding allegations of the petitioners, though positive in form, must be understood under the modifications of this last statement. This ridiculous position of the



Council is the inevitable result of the heedless haste with which the majority precipitated themselves to the railroad cars, as if to be in season for them were the great ruling principle of the occasion.

To this same indecent and disgraceful haste it is owing that they neglected to read, correct and approve the minutes of the last day's proceedings, so that there neither is nor can be an authentic record of them. Were they ashamed and afraid to have a correct and authentic record of that day's work in existence?

9. If this is Congregationalism, then it is not the duty of a council to act in any community as a healing power, or to be in sympathy with any revival in progress in it.<sup>1</sup> It is not necessary to investigate the nature and power of the truths proclaimed to young converts, and by which they are influenced. It is not necessary to regard their feelings and wishes concerning him who has been instrumental in leading them to God. On the other hand it is right to yield to and be led by a most malignant moral influence, and appeals to the most ungodly passions. Those who remember the passionate and insulting retorts of the advocate of the petitioners to all who disapproved his proceedings, the moderator not excepted; those who recollect his appeals to the pride and prejudice and passion of his hearers on doctrinal points; those who heard the strong expressions of moral indignation against his course and spirit, made by Dr. Dwight at the opening of the private session; those who know any thing of the almost universal abhorrence excited towards that advocate in this outraged and indignant community, will understand what is meant when we speak of a malignant moral influence, and ungodly passions. And yet the advocate is a faithful representative of the controlling spirit of the petitioners. *They* were not shocked. *They* were not disgusted. To *them* he appeared an angel of light. *They* were delighted with his whole behavior. He was altogether such an one as themselves.

And yet in the action of the Council there is no rebuke for advocate or client, but rather a yielding to their influence and a following in their train. The majority of the Council manifested no sympathy with the revival, no regard to the wishes of the young converts, but were obviously in full sympathy with the petitioners and with their advocate.

10. If this is Congregationalism, then disaf-

<sup>1</sup> The Recorder of August 28, 1863, says on this point: "Dr. Beecher pressed the taking of a kind of spiritual and mystic evidence for his brother's soundness, by going out into the community and seeing what the Spirit of God was doing with persons said to be inquirers. He thought a high state of holiness and communion with God would enable the Council to see much evidence in that direction. But they did not see their way clear to prove the pastor's soundness by such a process."

If this had been said by an Infidel paper, it would have been justly regarded as a sneer at the work of the Holy Spirit in Revivals.

fected members and factious minorities of churches may violate Covenant and Rules, forsake communion and worship, or attend service avowedly to "expose" the pastor, lay waste the church, tear out its vitals, fill the community for years with incessant charges against the pastor, openly warn the young against him, obtain a council professedly to "investigate our affairs," and heal difficulties, convert it into a trial, without vote of church or preliminary steps of discipline, be witnesses in their own cause, pour out before the council the same slanders they have poured out for years upon the community, and instead of being advised to repent, be complimented for their "Christian forbearance," and rewarded by the virtual deposition of their victim.

Factional minorities have only to adopt this happy method, and find a council like this to back them, and no pastor on earth will long be able to stand against a Congregationalism so mighty and so pure.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### CONCLUSION.

We regard this whole movement as an attempt to punish free thought and appeals to scripture.

The charges against Mr. Beecher on Atonement and Future Punishment being fictitious, invented for effect, and Divine Sorrow being the general belief, Pre-existence alone remains. Here the issue is real. This the Council pronounce "the leading view that brought him to trial and condemnation."

It is, then, an attempt to punish the discussion of pre-existence by the Bible. It is an attempt to carry out in practice the statement of Dr. Woods, that the doctrine of Original Sin "cannot be brought to the bar of Reason \* \* the attempt is sacrilege;" of Dr. Hodge that it is not a doctrine of common-sense, but must be received in "BLIND FAITH."

Because a man dares to bring such a *favorite* doctrine to the bar of the Holy Spirit and of Reason, he is brought "to trial and condemnation." He goes to the Bible, and elaborates an argument to his own mind conclusive. He can detect no fallacy. He lays that argument before his Association, and asks to have the mistake pointed out. His request is denied. Discussion is waived, investigation declined, exegesis ignored. From the time of his settlement, he is gazetted in a religious journal as believing in Indico-Persian Mythology, and made at home the object of unlimited abuse by factious tongues.

After five years' endurance, he publishes two sermons consisting wholly of Bible argu-



ment. He proves, as he conceives, that Redemption in Scripture implies a RETURN to Heaven; that a celestial origin was the faith of the Abrahamic and Apostolic Church, first condemned by the Man of Sin in the opening of the Sixth Century. That the Holy Spirit does not exhibit Adam as first SPIRITUAL, and then by a fall NATURAL or CARNAL, but NATURAL from the outset, the representative of a fallen race, blind and naked, but not ashamed.

He asserts that the common doctrine is not a favorite with its own defenders, that they kick and cuff while they defend it, declaring it not common sense, not rational, and to be believed only on pain of eternal damnation. He declares that it dishonors God, undermines Christianity, does no good, and in its influence, is evil and evil only continually.

He is answered by an attempt to throw him out of the Association. Failing in that, he is met by an attempt at virtual deposition, by false witness, without trial, at the sacrifice of every principle of Congregational order.

Both movements, that before Association, and that before Council, were manifestly retributive in spirit. There was in them an eye of scorn, a brow of wrath, and a hand of iron.

Are these things according to the Genius of Congregationalism; of Protestantism; of Christianity? Mr. Beecher has been severely censured for intimating in a published sermon, that the churches were drinking of Rome's cup. But of what cup are churches drinking that can sustain such a Result of Council?

Is it not Rome who waives argument, denies private judgment, forbids appeal to scripture, and resorts to deception and persecution? Just so far as the Result is impregnated with deception, and a persecuting spirit, is it not Romish, and will not churches sustaining it show themselves to be drinking of Rome's cup?

All we ask is discussion. We demand that the whole subject of the Fall be investigated afresh from the bottom.

Souls must have some origin. What proof is there that they are *created* at birth? None. It is neither self-evident nor revealed, and the whole Augustinian school, represented by Prof. Shedd and Dr. Baird, attack it with all their might.

What proof is there that they are *propagated* by natural law? None. It is neither self-evident nor revealed. And the whole Princeton school, and the whole New England school, assail it with all their might.

How inconsistent then, to stand on an unproved hypothesis, and clamor against pre-existence as unproved! How absurd, while in the act of building on a pure assumption, to clamor against pre-existence because not demonstrated to a mathematical certainty.

Above all, how unfair to refuse even to look at the subject. To assume infallibility and affect the judge. Nay, to bring every attempt at discussion "to trial and condemnation!"

What if pre-existence is despised, hated, reproached, scorned, villified, insulted. Is it the less likely on that account to be true? Has the offence of the cross ceased? What if this movement should succeed, and Mr. Beecher become an outcast, suffer the loss of all things, and be regarded the scum and offscouring of all things! Is pre-existence less probably an eternal truth? Is it a sign that a doctrine is not dear to God that it has no organ, no influence, no control, that all churches, societies, colleges, seminaries, papers, and quarterlies are shut against it, and the man and the book defending it ciphers?

Is the world so changed, is society so sanctified, are the churches so spiritual, that God no longer chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not to bring to naught the things that are?

To us it seems that the treatment pre-existence is receiving, is very much the treatment it ought to receive if it and the New Testament are true. And if destined to excision, we are anxious that it should be entirely on this account, and that no false charges be mixed up to give color to the "condemnation." If it is the Lord's will that we suffer the loss of all things for the sake of the Gospel, as viewed in the light of pre-existence, we shall "rejoice and be exceeding glad." Matt. v. 11, 12.

We are confident, however, that sooner or later the subject must come up, and be thoroughly investigated. It never has been fairly investigated. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the mind of the Church was too debased by asceticism to be able to investigate any subject properly, least of all this. The doctrine of pre-existence involves among others, the question whether the body and the whole material system is directly or indirectly defiling to the spirit.

We say it is not, but that sin is of spiritual origin, in a spiritual sphere. We assert that the material system, as a whole, is auxiliary to cure, and its influence salutary so far as it extends.

Under this aspect pre-existence has never been discussed. It has been supposed we teach that men are the fallen angels; we do not; that birth is penal, and life retributive; we do not. We hold that the soul is of celestial origin; that sin is of spiritual, not material derivation, and that the material system is a divine contrivance not for the production but for the removal of sin.

In this aspect, we repeat, pre-existence has never been fairly investigated. And until it



has been investigated in this aspect, it has not been investigated at all. The discussion includes many other aspects. None of them have ever been thoroughly considered.

The Conflict of Ages has not been answered. No attempt has been made to answer it, such as Edwards, or Hopkins, or any of the divines of a former age would have made. The same is true of the Concord of Ages.

This we think wrong, and ask a change. We ask the churches to meet us fairly. We claim that they are bound to do so. We say they are now especially summoned in the providence of God to the work.

All admit the need of a higher standard of piety, a purer experimental religion, a closer communion with God. All admit that the Church has a great purification to undergo, before sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. We claim that the common theory of the Fall stands directly in the way of that result; that it is a bar to holiness; and that the theory we defend is direct and powerful in its tendencies to produce holiness. Is not this an argument? It is an argument more deeply founded than any other. It assumes a true correlation between the real character of God and the thoroughly purified soul of man, and it affirms that what is called the Fall in Adam, in any of its forms that denies pre-existence, violates that correlation. If this can be made out, is it not an argument? Can any thing stand before it? Are there no materials for such an argument? Has not the soul of man a true nature, a real constitution? Cannot the influence on this of any doctrine as to God and his acts be known *a priori*? Cannot the influence of such views be traced in fact, in the development of ages? Can it not be shown that what has been deduced as true *a priori*, is confirmed as true by the record of all the centuries since Christ? If it were possible to analyze the human digestive system, and the relation to it of a professed article of food, and to show *a priori* that it would act as a poison, and if then a detail of facts for centuries proved that it always had acted as a poison, would there be in this no proof of its

real character? But as to the mind of man this has been done. Its nature and constitution have been developed. It has been shown that the common doctrine of the Fall in Adam, in any form, wars on the life and health of the soul. It has been shown that the experience of all centuries confirms this.

It has been shown that division, paralysis, moral disease, a low state of holiness, and very imperfect communion with God result from it, and that from pre-existence they do not logically result. That it, in connection with right views of the suffering of God, would lead to the highest development of holiness, and to the most intimate communion with God.

This is not merely asserted. It is proved. And if it is so, then is there no argument in all this? Whether the proof is real and valid is no doubt a proper subject of inquiry. We ask no man to take it for granted. But we do insist that it is a question, if any can be found, worthy of the most earnest and profound examination. The range of the inquiry is wide. It will tax all the mental powers. But it will not tax them in vain. The results will be sure and glorious.

Who does not know that the great difficulty of the age is to produce deep conviction of sin? Who does not know that through pantheistic speculations, and naturalism, conviction of sin is virtually annihilated? Who does not know that Julius Müller, the greatest and most orthodox divine of Germany, could not meet these tendencies and found a deep doctrine of sin except through pre-existence? In special reference to his great work on this theme, Hagenbach says, "the regeneration of the Church and of theology, are chiefly to be expected from a right doctrine concerning sin." We do not ask any man to believe that pre-existence can meet the wants of the age, without proof. But we do ask that the blind fear and prejudice which has so long prevented a knowledge of the existence of any argument, may at length cease. That it may be conceded that there is an argument, and that if it cannot be answered, it ought to cut its way.



## APPENDIX.

## A.

*Extract from Remonstrance before the Council at Mr. BRAMAN's Ordination, June 7, 1797.*

\*\*\* And inasmuch as Mr. Braman has informed us that he has studiously avoided all pointed and controversial preaching, they beg leave to observe that they think in the general he has, but they presume it is to the neglect of some necessary truths, viz.:

1. The Doctrine of the Trinity.
2. He has not clearly demonstrated the doctrine of the fall of man by the sin of our first covenant Head, with all its dreadful consequences and effects.
3. He has failed in opening the nature of the Divine Law, and in showing the propensity there is in man to hope for, and expect life, by the deeds thereof, not considering the opposition of the human heart to its holy precepts and the necessity of man's giving up all hopes of life by the deeds thereof, and thereby take occasion to point sinners unto Christ as the end of the Law for righteousness to all that believe.
4. He has failed in demonstrating the nature of Christ's divinity and humanity, and in showing wherein Christ was qualified to make satisfaction to Law and Justice for the sins of guilty man.
5. He has not properly demonstrated the condescending love of Christ in submitting to the Sovereign Will of the Father, in the iniquities of his people being laid on him, and in his bearing their sins in his own body on the tree, as the law-condemned sinner's substitute, and thereby opening a glorious door of hope to perishing sinners of the human race; a doctrine as your remonstrants think, wonderfully calculated to silence every murmuring thought against God's sovereignty in imputing the guilt of the first Adam's sin to his natural seed.
6. He fails in the demonstration of experimental truth, in showing the method of the Divine Spirit's influence in bringing sinners home to Christ, and how the Spirit operates in awakening, convicting, illuminating and comforting, and what are the views and exercises of the mind in their several stages, and their temptations from their own hearts' lusts, from the wiles of Satan, and the world, to stop short of a saving union unto Christ by resting in their own righteousness, or in their supposed good resolutions; or any thing short of a cordial submission to God's sovereignty in that glorious method of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ received by faith.

A full demonstration of the above, as your remonstrants conceive, is comprehended in preaching the truth as it is in Jesus.

JEREMIAH SEARL.	PAUL STICKNEY.
WILLIAM SEARL.	PHINEAS DODGE.
JONATHAN CHAPLIN.	AMOS PILLSBURY.
AMOS NELSON.	BENJAMIN ADAMS.
ENOCH HERRIMAN.	JOB BROCKLEBANK.
JOHN BROCKLEBANK.	NATH'L NELSON.
ASA NELSON.	PHINEAS DODGE, Jun.
SOLOMAN NELSON.	SOLOMON NELSON, Jun.
DANIEL THURSTON.	MOSES NELSON.

## B.

GEORGETOWN, Jan'y 27th, 1847.

*To the Council for the Ordination of JOHN M. PRINCE, as Pastor over the Congregational Society in Georgetown.*

The undersigned members of said Society, believing that a good degree of unanimity is very essential in the settlement of a Pastor over us, and aware that a large number of the Society are strongly opposed to the settlement of Mr. Prince, would respectfully state that under existing circumstances we deem it unadvisable to proceed to his ordination.

Signed by SAMUEL LITTLE, and 47 others.

## C.

GEORGETOWN, April, 1848.

*To the Rev. JOHN M. PRINCE,*

REV. SIR,—The undersigned members of the Society of which you are the Pastor, think it proper to address you on the subject of your longer continuing in that capacity. Those of us who were opposed to your settlement here have always thought it most unfortunate; and others are now of the same opinion.

Before this, candidates for settlement had with little or no opposition been invited to the pastoral office here; and it has seemed to us that when your immediate predecessor was no more, one might have been found to fill his place of greater ability than you possess to interest, unite and influence the people.

But for this no opportunity was given, as no candidate for settlement was heard. Directly after his death while you still occupied the pulpit, a movement was made that resulted in your becoming the Pastor, though the opposition was such that the embarrassed Council would not proceed to ordination till you had been asked whether it was still your wish that they should do it. The minority must yield to numbers, but are not obliged to silence their honest conviction, and the dissatisfaction since your ordination has been increasing. We think it is not now certain that you have the majority on the question of your dismissal. And as you were not ignorant when ordained that very many were not satisfied, it is neither unjust to you nor unreasonable to ask you peaceably to retire from the pulpit. We believe that one might be found to fill it not less acceptable to your personal friends, and much more so to ourselves. And our wish is for the restoration of confidence, harmony, and good-will in the Society, which we are satisfied it is in vain to look for so long as you are the Pastor.

Hoping that you will take this matter into serious consideration, and be guided to a wise decision,

We rest, your humble parishioners,  
(Signed.) SAMUEL LITTLE, and fifty-seven others.

GEORGETOWN, May, 16, 1847.

DEAR SIR,—Your note and the accompanying paper signed by Samuel Little and others, has been



received and prayerfully and I trust candidly considered.

In reply, I have only to say that the indications of Providence are not in my judgment of such a nature as to justify me in forsaking the post which I have been called to occupy.

This reply you will please communicate to the signers of the above mentioned paper.

With many prayers for their spiritual welfare,  
I remain, yours, &c.,

J. M. PRINCE.

JEREMIAH RUSSELL, Esq., and others, Com.

May 22, 1848.

REVD. SIR, — In your note of the 16th instant, in answer to our communication of last month, expressing the wish that you retire from the pulpit, for reasons it sets forth, you thus write :

"In reply, I have only to say, that the indications of Providence are not in my judgment of such a nature as to justify me in forsaking the post which I have been called to occupy."

Different people sometimes view the indications of Providence differently, and your remark about "forsaking the post you have been called to occupy," brings directly up the question of the *manner* in which you were "called to that post" — some of the circumstances of it were alluded to in our former communication, and many we think would interpret them as "indications of Providence" that it was *not* the "post" for you. It is known to you that you did not come among us as a candidate for settlement, that after the death of Mr. Pond, the Parish Assessors engaged you to preach four Sabbaths; and that on the very first of them a church meeting was notified for one day that week, to see if it would call you to be the Pastor. But you may *not* know that the senior Pastor, who had a few years before entered into an engagement not to interfere in the affairs of the parish, notified the meeting, stating its object *without consulting the Parish Assessors or any committee of the church* beforehand on the subject. To us this looks like *stepping before* "Providence" rather than following his "indications" in the matter.

You know that at the Parish meeting to act on the subject, there was a minority of 26, to 48, against giving you a call; and that before your answer had been communicated, a paper signed by 48, expressing their unwillingness to have you for a Pastor was placed in your hands. To us these do not seem "indications of Providence" that you should come to the post you "occupy."

You know something of the circumstances attending your ordination; and the influences employed to determine the Council in the way they finally did. However it may be with you, to us these appear more like indications of Providence *against* your settlement, than Providence pointing to it as to what should be.

Since that time the dissatisfaction has been increasing. This seems to us an "indication" that we were not mistaken in opinion, which in your judgment the indications of Providence are not of such a nature as to justify you in leaving.

We have no wish to throw any responsibility upon you which you ought not to bear, and so as we view these things differently from yourself, and as all are liable to be mistaken, we now propose that an Ecclesiastical Council be called, before which the condition of the Parish shall be laid, and their opinion given on the question, whether its well-being does not require your dismissal.

The differences in the Parish, consequent on your sustaining the pastoral relation is so grave an affair

as to justify, we think, such a proceeding. Hoping you will take the same view of that with ourselves,

We remain very respectfully,

Yours, &c.,

SAMUEL LITTLE, and others.

GEORGETOWN, May, 25th 1848.

GENTLEMEN, — Your note of the 22d instant is before me. In relation to the request therein contained I would remark that my *ecclesiastical connection* is with the *church only*. When they shall wish that connection dissolved, I shall be ready to unite with them in calling a Council to carry their wishes into effect. Under such circumstances you will perceive the propriety of directing your future communications (if such you wish to make) to the church.

Earnestly desiring your spiritual prosperity,

I remain, yours, &c.,

J. M. PRINCE.

JEREMIAH RUSSELL, Esq., and others, Com.

GEORGETOWN, June 13, 1848.

REVEREND SIR, — When we addressed you last March on the subject of our increasing dissatisfaction with you as our minister, it was in the belief that we were doing a very proper thing, in the very best manner. We thought you ought to be distinctly told that one-half of the Society over which you had been placed a pastor were desirous that you should resign the office, and that if you viewed the matter with an eye single to the good of this people, you could not long hesitate about what should be done. Your reply was, "The indications of Providence are not in my judgment of such a nature as to justify me in forsaking the post I have been called to occupy." This brought up the question, about which we differ with you entirely, of what the indications of Providence before, and since your settlement had been. We mentioned, in part, the way in which it was brought about. But not wishing to throw on you any responsibility which you were unwilling or ought not to bear, we proposed the ordinary course, sanctioned by long usage in our denomination, of having an Ecclesiastical Council called, before which the condition of the Parish should be laid, and their judgment given on the question, whether its well-being did not require your dismissal. To this, in your note of May 25th, you reply, "*My ecclesiastical connection is with the church only.*" And farther, "under such circumstances you will perceive the propriety of directing your future communications (if such you wish to make) to the church."

We will not question that this was done in the simplicity of your heart; nor that you really think you sustain no relation to the Parish, under which questions might be raised by it, or individuals of it, for an Ecclesiastical Council to consider. We are willing that you should have the full benefit of such ignorance, though it is amazing. But you cannot *help* knowing that the legal claim you have for your stipulated salary is on the Parish; and, that without the concurrence of a majority of its members with the church in calling you to be the Pastor, no council could have settled you over it, and given you that claim, which now we believe a majority would choose to have dissolved. Now, if the act of a majority of the Parish was necessary to enable the council to that very important business, does it seem to you, on reflection, a reasonable thing to answer half the Parish, asking you to have a council to consider our condition and advise what should be done, as you do? Is it your purpose then, however many members of the Parish may be dissatisfied with your ministrations, from their feebleness, to hold it responsible for your salary, receive your bread at its hands, and deprive it of such ministrations as it may desire,



until the body of the church shall call for your resignation?

If you had been at all familiar with the doings of councils, and the decisions of the courts which have respect to Parishes in this Commonwealth, you would know not only that you were entirely mistaken, but that just such an excuse as you give for not acting in this case, was long ago given by others, and decided by both to be utterly untenable. At this stage of the business, there might be no impropriety in addressing the church, as you more than intimate we should, instead of you. And if you had acceded to our proposal, it would have been addressed before this time. But then, if that would now be "propriety," as it is you with whom we are directly concerned, and whom we wish to influence, the propriety of making our communications on this subject which is entirely within your power, to you, cannot be called in question.

And now will you please inform us, if it is your determination to listen to no proposal for a council to take into consideration the condition of this Parish, and give their judgment upon it, that does not come from the church? We wait your reply.

Very respectfully,

SAMUEL LITTLE, and others.  
By the Committee.

GEORGETOWN, June 19th, 1848.

GENTLEMEN,—Your note of the 14th instant has been received. In it you state your belief that a majority of the Parish desire a dissolution of my connection with them.

I have already expressed my readiness to dissolve my connection with the church whenever they shall request it. I will now say that if at a regularly called Parish meeting it shall appear that a majority of the tax-paying members of the Parish desire to be released from their contract and my connection with the Parish dissolved, their wishes shall be complied with immediately.

Praying still for your spiritual well-being,  
I remain, yours, &c.

J. M. PRINCE.

JEREMIAH RUSSELL, Esq., and others, Com.

GEORGETOWN, July 4th, 1848.

REVEREND SIR,—We are glad to perceive from your note of June 19th, that you are now sensible of sustaining a relation to the Parish over which you have been placed a Pastor, imposing some obligations to regard its wishes, though sorry to find you still entertaining some notions that are not, as it seems to us, either reasonable or just.

You now say that, in a certain contingency, you will be ready to have your contract with the Parish dissolved,—though not that even then you will resign your pastoral charge; or submit the question of its expediency to a council.

You say, "if at a regularly called Parish meeting it shall appear that a majority of the tax-paying members desire to be released from their contract, and my connection with the Parish dissolved—their wishes shall be complied with immediately." This implies a determination not otherwise to do it; though the objection to you from the first has been, that you had not the ability needed for the station; nor such as the Parish might command in some other man. We think that a right-minded minister, mainly anxious for the good of his Parish, would be slow to act on the principle that only a majority of votes should move him to regard their wishes in such a case as this.

Nor is that all—you make it a farther condition to taking any step of the kind, that "a majority of the tax-paying members of the Parish" be found against you. This seems rather ungracious, since all would be compelled to pay, in case of a suit at law to recover arrearages in your salary; and since besides, some among the largest tax-payers have declined paying since your settlement, only because of their dissatisfaction with you from the first.

Do you happen to know that the year previous, those who were opposed to your settlement paid *more than their assessments*: while those who were active in procuring it paid *forty dollars less*? If the first had always been delinquents, you might very properly regard that fact when considering what you ought to do; but to taunt them with a delinquency resulting from a failure to prefer yourself, and punish them for their lack of ability to do it, seems not much like a good minister, disposed to be entirely just to all his charge.

We wish you to review this matter and see if a better course than that you now propose cannot be taken. For we desire no compulsion nor conflict; but such a course of procedure as shall save as much as possible the feelings of all concerned, and promote the well-being of this Parish.

Yours, &c.,

SAMUEL LITTLE, and others.  
By their Committee,

## D.

*Preamble and Resolutions of the South Congregational Church, Georgetown, Mass., Adopted Dec. 23, 1860.*

*Whereas*, the recent message of the President of the United States recognizing the existence of open rebellion at the South, advises to amend the Constitution so that the rebels may submit; and

*Whereas*, having laid the blame of this rebellion upon the "violent agitation of the slavery question at the North," the President now proclaims a National Fast, that we may confess our faults to God, and "implore Him to remove from our hearts that false pride of opinion which would impel us to persevere in wrong for the sake of consistency," thus virtually summoning the people to repentance for the issues of the late Presidential canvass; therefore

*Resolved*, That the President of the United States is in treasonous conspiracy with rebels to overthrow the government.

*Resolved*, That an amendment of the Constitution for the avowed purpose of propitiating armed rebellion is a thing unheard of in the annals of time, absurd and impossible.

*Resolved*, That the only amendment which the age demands is an express repudiation of the slave construction of the rendition and representation clauses of the Constitution.

*Resolved*, That the present distress is a judgment of God, not only upon our other sins, but also and especially upon the sin of slavery; and that this people should immediately break off their sins by repentance, and daily seek forgiveness for the same.

*Resolved*, That viewed in connection with the charges and implications contained in his late message, the President's proclamation of a Fast, although verbally pious, is an act of hypocrisy and spiritual usurpation in the highest degree insulting and detestable, being nothing short of a virtual bull of excommunication against political adversaries; and that, under the circumstances, we must wholly decline to comply with the President's request.



## E.

## PROTEST.

GEORGETOWN, Dec. 28, 1860.

Whereas, The Congregational Church, the 22d of December, passed resolutions condemning the President's Message to Congress, and using that as a reason why we should not keep the Fast proclaimed by him "at the request of pious and patriotic citizens and associations,"

We, the undersigned members of said Church, without in any way endorsing the sentiments of the message, desire to enter our protest against them for these reasons:—

1st. They breathe not the spirit of Him who has commanded us to pray for our enemies, to pray for all men, to pray always, and that "without wrath."

2d. We believe that Christ did not, by his example or otherwise, teach the impropriety of public fasting in times of great national distress or public calamity.

3d. We believe them to be insidious, wrong in spirit, evil in tendency, and pernicious in their results.

A true copy, attest,

H. PERLEY,

Clerk of the Church.

It is a little curious that the signers of this lucid document, actually as it reads, protest against the sentiments of the President's Message. Thus construed, the protest would do them honor. It is due to truth however, to say that they meant to protest against the Resolutions of the Church, and not against the message of a traitorous executive. Thus considered, the document is less creditable.

## F.

GEORGETOWN, July 6, 1863.

We, the undersigned, members of the First Congregational Society in this place, of which the Rev. Charles Beecher is the Pastor and Teacher, with others who have attended upon his ministry, knowing that strenuous and unscrupulous efforts have been and are now being made by a few disaffected persons to remove him from his labors here; and believing that his labors here, under God, have been and are now being blessed to us as a people and as individuals,—we do, therefore, earnestly desire that he may continue with us in his present relations.

Signed, J. P. Coker, J. A. Lovering, Sam'l Little, D. E. Moulton, and 70 other males, and 174 females.

## G.

We are members of Mr. Beecher's congregation, and of late have been very much interested in religion.

We have listened to his sermons and attended his prayer-meetings, and have not been able to resist the earnest pleadings of our beloved Pastor to come to Jesus. We have conversed with him personally, and have been instructed, guided, and strengthened in undertaking a religious life by his sympathy and councils.

We have been greatly tried and tempted by what we regard the injury shown him by his opposers, in the unchristian and abusive spirit of their advocate.

But we have seen him patient and forbearing, loving those who have injured him, and praying for their good, and with such an example before us, we have been confirmed in our belief of the reality of religion, and determined to follow him in the love and service of Christ.

We see no reason why he should not remain here, to guide others who confide in him, to their Saviour. We earnestly desire it. And if all who love the Saviour will unite with our Pastor in prayer and a holy life, we see nothing to prevent an extensive revival of religion, of which we stand so much in need. We think that the removal of him and a triumph given to such a spirit as has been seen in the representative of his opposers, would dishonor the Saviour, and injure this cause unspeakably in this place.

Signed by twenty-five names.

## H.

Below is given the amount of capital belonging to Mr. Beecher's *Friends* and *Opposers*. This has been truthfully gathered by the selectmen of the Town, from the Town Records and is simply intended to show the relative strength of the two parties, financially considered.

Mr. Beecher's Friends,	\$157,000 00
" " Opposers,	86,000 00

O. B. TENNEY,

Chairman of Assessors of Georgetown.

The debt accumulated since Mr. Beecher has preached in the Congregational church in Georgetown is less than six hundred dollars—or about one hundred dollars a year.

This debt would not have been made if his opposers had paid their proportion of the expenses of the Society.

Now, We, the undersigned, pledge ourselves that no more debts shall be allowed to accumulate, so long as he may remain with us.

JOHN BAGLEY.	A. B. NOYES.
SAMUEL PLUMBR.	CHARLES BOYNTON.
ROBERT BOYES.	D. P. HOLMES.
JOHN P. COKER.	SAMUEL LITTLE.
HENRY P. CHAPLIN.	JOHN A. LOVERING.
DANIEL E. MOULTON.	

## I.

We the undersigned, members of the First Congregational Church in Georgetown and lovers of orthodoxy, plead with the members of this Council, standing as witnesses for *Jesus and his Gospel*, not to admit Dr. Braman by their right hand of fellowship to stand before this community as the representative of the faith we love, while they withhold it from our Pastor, as unsound in the deep doctrines of Grace.

We entreat you in behalf of the *imperilled immortal souls* of our Husbands, our Children, our Parents, Brothers, Sisters and Friends, among whom, many have been led by the earnest zeal of our Pastor, and his sincere love for the Truth, to think seriously upon the subject of Religion.

Some of these we have heard say that if Dr. Braman and those with whom he is in spirit identified, are the true exponents of orthodoxy, then there is nothing in Religion.

LYDIA A. BAGLEY,	RUTH P. NELSON,
SUSAN A. HOYT,	LIZZIE H. NELSON,
MAGGIE A. MERRILL,	ELIZA J. LOVERING.
SARAH M. MERRILL,	ELIZA M. LOVERING,
SILENA BRADSTREET,	SARAH M. LOVERING,
ELMIRA P. EDMONDS,	C. N. S. HORNER,
	And many others.



## K.

## RESULT, PROTESTS AND REPLY.

## RESULT.

This Council is called by the church in Georgetown "in deference to the wishes" of certain petitioners in it, "to consider the matters contained in their petition and give advice thereon." The petitioners say: "It seems to be that several doctrines preached by our pastor are not in accordance with the faith once delivered to the saints, and held generally by the churches of New England. The points on which we have special difficulty are, the doctrines of the Pre-existence of the human soul, of the Atonement, of the state of souls after death, and Divine Sorrow." They also represent that there is a division in the church, a want of interest in the preaching, increasing dissatisfaction, and a decline in the welfare of the church.

After a long and patient hearing of two days for and against the objections of the petitioners, we feel constrained to say that they have fully sustained their charges as to the teachings of their pastor on the four doctrines specified. The lengthy and carefully written argument of defence given in by the pastor satisfies us that he does not preach the faith of this church and of the churches of our order in New England, but doctrines instead that are vitally and fundamentally erroneous.

By the doctrine of the apostasy of the race in a pre-existent state he denies the Scriptural doctrine of the Fall in Adam, a doctrine which, however interpreted by the different schools of New England theology, is nevertheless held by them all in common. He weakens and undermines the doctrine of future punishment by teaching that the offers of salvation are made to men after death; that God, to affect men, overstates the reality of future punishment in his threatenings of it, as the cannoneer elevates his piece above the mark in order to reach it; that the faculties and sensibilities of the lost are so weakened and blunted by their circumstances as to much diminish their sufferings; that they do find some pleasure in their degradation and sorrow even as wicked men here; and that all God's visitations on them are for their good.

By defining the God-man as having an angelic nature, being own and younger brother of Lucifer, with the divinity of the second person in the Trinity added, and only a human body given in the incarnation; and by making his sufferings suasive and argumentative rather than vicarious, he has so distorted the nature, person and work of Christ as to fundamentally derange the commonly received doctrine of the Atonement. By his manner of teaching that God suffers and sorrows over the sins of our race, he presents to us a God deficient in his nature and imperfect and finite in his blessedness; a doctrine having painful variations from our common faith.

It is in evidence that much of Mr. Beecher's preaching has been in accordance with the Scriptures and with standard New England divines. Yet this is so interwoven with preaching of an opposite and erroneous character as dangerously, if not fatally, to neutralize the good effects of his teachings. With some things on these doctrines that we think truthful, he has indulged in much that we consider wholly irreconcilable with the articles of faith of this church, which he himself has adopted, as a member, and of the Orthodox churches generally in New England.

Therefore we are clear and decided that the objections of the petitioners are well taken and well sustained, not only by their own witnesses, but by Mr. Beecher's declarations and concessions in his defence; and that the petitioners ought, on the principles of

honor and of right, to be relieved; and as a most painful duty that we owe to Christ and his church, we do hereby advise the termination, without delay, of the pastoral relation between this church and the Rev. Charles Beecher.

Nor do we thus recommend merely that we may relieve the petitioners. We would also relieve Mr. Beecher who is a member of this church, from the necessity imposed by his conscience of violating his covenant with the church by preaching doctrines that in several particulars are essentially variant from the creed of the church. We would also save the entire church, and the community, from the utter indifference, not to say contempt, that must be engendered toward creeds and covenants, by such an example as his course has offered.

In our view, it is a most serious evil, and one having a wide sweep of lamentable consequences, for a pastor thus to throw into the shade and trample under foot the creed of the church, that by virtue of his office, he promises to adopt, preach, and defend. And the case is aggravated when the pastor himself becomes a member of the church to which he ministers, and then neglects, denies, or slurs any part of its creed, and which, by his entering the church, becomes at the same time his own. If such an example be copied by the laity, we do not see how a church can have and maintain a creed, or have any door of admission or excommunication in matters of faith. If the ministry may so in private judgment and right disregard the creeds of their churches, the pulpit is left open to any faith and any ministerial fellowship, however erroneous and repulsive, and the church have no redress.

As it is a matter of right with them it should be a matter of honor with the pastor, that he preach the faith which, by his settlement, he has contracted with them to preach, and is most solemnly obligated to the Great Head of the Church to preach. And we advise a dismission in his case, partly to relieve Mr. Beecher from the necessity of violating a contract which his conscience will not allow him to keep.

The Christian spirit of Mr. Beecher, shown in this case, and his rare ability to present what he believes, would have led the Council to very different results if we could be persuaded that he simply holds certain notions about pre-existence as academic theses, scholastic questions, or philosophical speculations, which he could and would conscientiously keep in abeyance while he preaches Christ and him crucified. But these notions are held by him as eternal truths vitally related to his entire theological system, so far as we have examined it.

This system he believes is destined to supplant the common theology of our church, and is essential to conviction of sin, and the highest type of Christian character. Therefore he feels solemnly obligated to unfold and propagate it. So we find that his peculiar views permeate, and from his estimate of their importance must of necessity permeate his public teachings, so far as the witnesses on both sides, his own lengthy and able defence, and his written and printed sermons have exposed those teachings to us.

While, therefore, he affirms that he has not given his peculiar notions a prominence in his public ministrations, we are able to see that in some way such views have come before the minds of his people, disturbing the religious feeling of some and unsettling the religious faith of others.

This Council, therefore, cannot in any way or degree commit themselves as apologists for Mr. Beecher's peculiar views on the subjects mentioned by the petitioners, nor as countenancing his publication of them in the pulpit or through the press. We feel constrained to make this our public and solemn protest against them.



In these troubles, running through five years and more, the parties have all had a great trial of their Christian forbearance; and, if we may judge from the excellent spirit generally shown during the hearing of the case, they have endured well. We do fervently commend them all to God and to the word of His grace, praying that He will give them the guidance they need, and work in them that which is well pleasing in His sight.

#### PROTESTS.

I protest against the "Result" in the late trial of the Rev. Charles Beecher, because the vote was passed upon its adoption before the *requisite time* had been taken, and the *means then and there* afforded, had been duly improved; to gain unwavering assurance as to the entire truthfulness of all its charges.

The Result was drafted by a committee, of which, with much hesitancy, I became a member. Certain views and expressions in that Result are to be ascribed to me as their source. Nor have I seen any reason, as yet, to doubt their perfect fairness. But there were certain sentiments therein ascribed to Mr. Beecher, in reference to which I had my doubts whether the investigation would really warrant them. Even though it had been proved that the obnoxious terms and phrases had been used in some certain instances by the accused, the question still remained, whether they had been construed with due respect to their original connections, or whether they might be viewed in the light of unguarded utterances, to which in the necessary rapidity oftentimes of pulpit composition, the best of men are liable. Still, as other members of the Committee were fully confident that what had thus been put into the Result, had been amply justified by the testimony, I judged it proper to unite with the Committee and present the whole to the Council as our harmonious report. This I did under the expectation that the entire document would be subjected to the most *exact and searching scrutiny*. With any other expectation, it never could have received my concurrence. And this examination I desired, *not less* in regard to any thing said therein, that might be due to me, than what might be more immediately ascribed to others. It was perfectly clear that if the instrument should sustain the ordeal supposed, without very material modifications, its legitimate effect would be, not only the termination of Mr. Beecher's present pastoral relations, but his virtual deposition from the orthodox ministry. Surely, in these circumstances, every member of the Council was morally bound to give the document in question the most deliberate, careful, prayerful consideration, before it should go out of their hands to the parties immediately concerned, and to the wide world. Indeed, every member had the *moral* right to claim the privilege of such a consideration with all the advantage of faithful discussion, before the vote upon the adoption should be taken. But the adequate opportunity was not given, nor any justifiable excuse before God, for withholding it.

Even during the time that was afforded, *less than two hours*, we heard from different members of the Council, that certain doctrinal errors by the Result imputed to Mr. Beecher, were not, in their view, proved by the testimony. With sufficient time allowed them, they might have possibly made this appear to the satisfaction of the Council. Indeed, one member most solemnly affirmed, over and over again, that certain allegations were utterly false; that the accused to his certain knowledge, neither held in his heart the particular forms of error in question, nor publicly preached them; and he implored the Council to give him the opportunity to bring forth the proof. Nevertheless, it was not given. The vote

upon the Result was called for, and mine was given in the *negative*. With my views as to the *strict interpretation of Church creeds*, I do not suppose, by the most extended examination, I should have seen reason to advise Mr. Beecher's continuance in his present relation. But it might have shown possibly a degree of divergency from the old fashioned standard orthodoxy of New England not so wide of the mark as we had imagined, and hardly less serious, than that applicable to various types, of New England orthodoxy now current among us *without reproach*.

I submit, with the light I had gained, and in view of the determination of the Council to refuse the time, that to me seemed necessary, for due deliberation and the introduction of any countervailing testimony that might there be offered as to the full validity of every allegation, that I could not have affirmed the Result considered as a whole, and as our absolute finality, without standing accused before my own conscience of inflicting upon the defendant a *grievous wrong*, and doing dishonor to the King of Zion.

RANDOLPH CAMPBELL.

NEWBURYPORT, July 24, 1863.

I feel constrained to protest against the "Result" of the recent Council at Georgetown, for the following reasons:

1. Because sufficient time was not allowed for a thorough consideration of it. A document of such grave import, affecting seriously so many vital interests, and impairing the ministerial and ecclesiastical standing of a Christian brother, should have been carefully examined paragraph by paragraph. Several members of the Council wished to do this, but did not have the opportunity. The entire morning session, and the first hour of the afternoon session, were consumed in considering other questions, and the discussion of the form of "Result" presented by the Committee did not commence until three minutes past three o'clock, P. M., and the vote upon its adoption was taken at quarter past five, so that less than an hour and three-quarters (including several interruptions and side issues) was devoted to the examination of it. I could not myself, neither was I able to see how my brethren could give an intelligent vote in favor of a "Result" involving so many points, without a more protracted and minute consideration of it, and a careful comparison of its statements and allegations, with the evidence before us.

2. Because, while disclaiming the remotest sympathy with Mr. Beecher in his views of "pre-existence," and other doctrines involved in that, I do conscientiously believe that the "Result" ascribes to him views on some points (e. g. the offer of salvation to men after death; and the pre-existent nature of Christ) which we had no proof that he held, and which he and his friends emphatically denied that he does hold.

3. Because I conscientiously believe that the "Result" does not fairly state the real difference between Mr. Beecher's views and those commonly held by the churches of New England, on some other points, e. g. the Atonement and "Divine Sorrow."

4. Because the "Result" contains no such expression of Christian sympathy and fraternal interest toward Mr. Beecher, as is always due to an erring brother who is deemed worthy of ecclesiastical censure.

5. Because I believe that if due time had been taken for deliberation, a "Result" might have been reached by a unanimous vote, (or unanimous with a single exception,) which would have relieved the petitioners, and been better adapted to harmonize the discordant



elements in the Church at Georgetown, and to promote the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.

D. T. FISKE.

NEWBURYPORT, July 23, 1863.

The undersigned, a member of an Ecclesiastical Council, convened at Georgetown July 15, 1863, desires respectfully to protest against the Result of the majority of said Council.

I. Because I find nothing in Mr. Beecher's teachings which can be pronounced fundamentally erroneous.

1. In respect to future punishment, I do not understand Mr. Beecher as holding to the possibility of pardon after death, in any sense not warranted by the Westminster Confession, Ch. X. Sect. III.: "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh *when and where and how* he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word."

I find that in reference to future endless punishment, his views are in accordance with those of Augustin, Calvin, and the Reformers generally, and I protest against his being made a Universalist against his will.

2. In respect to the divine sorrow and the atonement, I am able to discover nothing in his views and teachings contrary to orthodoxy, in its essential elements.

3. Whether pre-existence be true or false, I regard it as a mode of explaining the facts held in common of the fallen condition and entire depravity of the human race, and not as a denial of them, or of any orthodox doctrine based on, or growing out of, these great facts; a mode of explanation that may be adopted without prejudice to orthodoxy, as much as either the Augustinian, Princetonian, or New England modes.

To pronounce pre-existence a fundamental error is to censure the Council that installed Mr. Beecher, together with this Church, and the Essex North Association, which have fellowshiped him for six years. It is to censure the Chicago Theological Seminary, in which Dr. E. Beecher is a lecturer, and all Councils, of which he has been a member, this not excepted. In short, it is to place this Council in an attitude with regard to the denomination, utterly absurd and indefensible.

II. I farther protest against the Result, because though invited to investigate the affairs of this Church, as well at the teachings of the Pastor, this Council has failed to make such investigation thoroughly, and to acquaint itself with the real state of facts, and of public opinion in this place.

In particular, 1, The Council has taken no proper notice of the charge made by the Pastor, and not denied by the disaffected, of irregular conduct, in neglecting to labor with him privately, in withdrawing from meetings, withholding payments, circulating charges against him, and virtually bringing him to trial before the Association, over the head of his Church, and a second time for the same offense, before this Council, in violation of the plainest principles of ecclesiastical discipline, and to the subversion of all the safeguards of ministerial character.

2. Moreover the Council have taken no proper notice of a petition signed by males and females of the congregation, representing 111 families, and many of them members of the Church, characterizing the action of the disaffected as "*unscrupulous*," and declaring Mr. Beecher's labors to be a blessing to them as a people, and praying that existing relations be not disturbed.

3. Also a pledge by responsible individuals to incur no more debt, as a society, while Mr. Beecher continues his present relations.

4. Also a petition from many inquirers and young converts, praying that he may not be violently torn from them and from this community, in the midst of a revival promising fair for general extension.

5. All these the Council has not properly regarded or even received, nor the fact, established beyond denial, that three signatures to the petition for a Council were obtained by representations that the Council was designed to heal divisions, and not with any wish or expectation that Mr. Beecher would leave.

Moreover, the Council has failed to take suitable notice of the unchristian spirit in which the prosecution was conducted, contrary to the moral sense of this community, and to the dishonor of Congregationalism, and the cause of Christ, unless suitably reprov'd and disclaimed.

And further, the Council has neglected to regard evidence which exists in abundance, to show that this result will not harmonize this community, but the reverse.

I believe it to be in the power of this Council to harmonize this people, and unite them in their present Pastor. I believe that they cannot be harmonized in any other way.

I therefore protest against a Result which, instead of vindicating the innocent, condemns him, and instead of healing and harmonizing this Church and community, tends to involve them in deeper and more irremediable discord, and all this to the great dishonor and injury of our great Redeemer's cause, and to the grief of the Holy Spirit of God, by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.

EDWARD BEECHER.

I respectfully and solemnly protest against this Result because, in the opinion of the large body of Mr. Beecher's friends in his Church and parish, the Council have declined to hear his case with sufficient fullness to put within their reach the materials of a fair and complete judgment of the case; because—while I accept and defend none of Mr. Beecher's peculiar views—the Result seems to me injuriously to pervert and overstate what has been in evidence in regard to Mr. Beecher's theological belief on the points objected to; and because I do not believe it to be either pleasing to Christ, or judicious or honorable to his Church, thus summarily to attempt to cast out of the ministry one whose eminently Christian spirit his enemies concede, and whose labors have often and unmistakably received the endorsement of the Divine blessing.

HENRY M. DEXTER.

(Subsequently signed by) A. L. STONE.  
GEORGETOWN, July 22, 1863.

GEORGETOWN, July 22, 1863.

I protest against the action of the Council now in session in this place in the case of Rev. Charles Beecher, for the following reasons:

1st. I do not believe all the allegations are founded in fact.

2d. I believe there is abundant evidence to show that Rev. Charles Beecher preached Christ and him crucified—that his ministrations have been blessed to the conversion of many souls, and that a delightful revival is now in progress in this place as the result, under God, of his labors. I cannot, therefore, notwithstanding my disbelief in his peculiar doctrines, and my firm belief in the great doctrines as commonly understood in the Orthodox Congregational denomination, assent to a paper so denunciatory in its language, and so sweeping in its assertions, with scarcely a qualifying word, and without any recognition of



the good Mr. Beecher has accomplished during his settlement as pastor.

B. W. WILLIAMS.

#### REPLY TO THE PROTESTS.

When this Council, by a vote of sixteen to five, had adopted its Result, and were about to dissolve, the minority proposed to offer Protests against the Result. The committee who drafted it were therefore appointed a committee to prepare a Reply to these Protests. (They were published in the *Congregationalist* last week.)

To what is material in them we now make the following summary and briefly reply.

[Dr. E. Beecher proposed a protest, but as the committee have received none from him they have none to publish or reply to. Committee.]

1. It is objected that the case was foreclosed against the admission of testimony by the defence.

The Council gave two days to the taking of testimony on both sides. The larger part of this time was used by the defence. The written argument of Mr. Beecher, aside from his witnesses, was four and a half hours long. The Council continued to receive testimony as long as any was offered, and only closed its public sessions for it, when, on the call of the Moderator, Dr. Beecher said that they were through, and no one could be found or promised in the church, society, or mixed congregation, who had any thing more to offer in the case. When adjourning from the 16th to the 22d of July, it gave the committee on Result discretionary power to confer with the parties, and collect any new facts in the interim. The Committee consumed most of the next day in Georgetown in this work, and also received many persons, letters and remonstrances at their homes on the following week. Yet they reported to the Council, at its next session, that they gained nothing new to affect or qualify their Result. So, after a long debate on a motion by Dr. Edward Beecher to reopen the case by the taking of farther and outside testimony, the motion was lost, only one voting in favor of it. These facts, we submit, do not warrant any one in saying that the case was foreclosed against testimony. Moreover, to have received new and outside testimony for the defence, at this stage, would have resolved the Council into a most partial and *ex parte* body, since the petitioners had put in their case and retired. But more than all, there was nothing to satisfy the Council that any new and important testimony for the defence could be found.

2. It is objected that sufficient time was not given for the consideration of the Result before its adoption.

The Council was two days in taking evidence, and a week in thinking of its bearing on the parties. At the end of the second day, and in full view of every essential fact, the informal vote stood twenty-two to three for Mr. Beecher's dismission. The Result was but an expanded declaration of that majority vote. The only change of views during the week's adjournment was a deepened persuasion that his theology was not according to New England orthodoxy. The reflection of these days made discussion needless. The testimony was the argument, and without rehearsal, gained the vote of twenty-two out of twenty-five for dismission in a Council of which Mr. Beecher nominated one half. Still a day was left for discussion of the Result, if the minority wished. This, except two hours, they consumed mostly in side issues and trifles, and of these two hours left, the Council gave one, by unanimous vote, to the brother of the pastor, and the author of the book that lay at the bottom of the troubles. A discussion by the Council of the peculiar views of Mr. Beecher would

have proved a conflict of days, if not of ages, and without any change of opinion or vote.

Talking may have been a personal gratification, to one or two, but we claim that in the circumstances, and at the end of the eighth day, it could not have been for the edification of any hearer. And so we think the idea of one of the protestants a delusion that discussion and delay would have made the Result unanimous, with one exception.

3. It is objected that the Result perverts Mr. Beecher's peculiar views, that some of its allegations cannot be sustained by the evidence, and that it is denunciatory and sweeping.

These are mere matters of opinion expressed by two individuals. An unambiguous and emphatic condemnation of fundamental errors will effect men of different minds and habits differently.

4. It is objected that Mr. Beecher may have been ungarded and unfortunate in some of his earnest pulpit passages, and that these should have the qualifying advantage of a wide context.

This objection cannot lie against the printed sermons of Mr. Beecher, that were in evidence, nor against his carefully drawn written defence of hours, which so generally and so thoroughly carried the conviction of the Council that he is not an orthodox man according to the creed of his own church, and of the New England churches of our order. But aside from this, his rare gift in the use of the English language will not allow us to reproach him with obscurity or ambiguity in his teachings.

5. It is objected that the result does not sufficiently recognize Mr. Beecher's soundness in some things, and at times.

The letter missive confined the doctrinal investigations of the Council to four points. On these they found him at radical variance from our standards. If at times he preached some truths on these points, this only enhanced the difficulty with the Council, since by so doing he added inconsistency or contradiction, and a dangerous covering to dangerous teachings. No doubt Mr. Beecher holds and teaches some evangelical truth, and the practical question before the Council was, whether he does not neutralize and overshadow that truth, and mislead his hearers by his errors. The Council strongly affirmed that he does. His witnesses, and his able written defence only went to show that he preached some truth, (a fact that we all admit) but did not at all disprove the abundant evidence of his teaching fundamental errors. A show of comfortable symptoms cannot set aside the painful testimony of a sepulchral cough, night sweats, and hemorrhage from the lungs. A ship may have some good timbers, and yet one be quite unwilling to embark his family in her, and an adroit display of those timbers will not satisfy underwriters. So the written defence of Mr. Beecher, four and a half hours long, furnishes two columns of matter more or less comfortable for him, in the *Boston Traveller* of July 31st. In what sense it can be announced, as it is, as a "defence in full," we cannot conceive. The insertions, as well as vast omissions, make it useless for purposes of evidence. We cannot find the argument of July 16th in the *Traveller* of July 31st. It has only adroit selections, with additions. It is a careful showing of a few bricks from a house in Georgetown that the Council examined, and by a vote of twenty-two to three pronounced unsafe, and then recommended to be vacated and taken down "without delay."

6. It is objected that spiritual fruit has followed Mr. Beecher's labors, and that this fact should have qualified or reversed the judgment of the Result.

We believe that other hands have sown much divine seed in that vineyard in past days, which God will not suffer to be lost; and we now believe that he has many faithful laborers there. So we are not



able to trace the fruit, be it little or much, to one man. Least of all can we trace it to his peculiar views.

7. It is objected that the views charged on Mr. Beecher concerning the pre-existent nature of Christ, and a second probation were not proved by the testimony.

This objection surprises us. Christ's full brotherhood with Lucifer in his angelic nature, and the offer and acceptance by many of salvation after death, were points clearly and repeatedly set forth by the evidence and written defence.

8. It is objected that the Result does not fairly state the difference between Mr. Beecher's views on the atonement and divine sorrow, and those commonly held.

We understand our New England theology to teach that the atonement of Christ was vicarious. Mr. Beecher teaches that it was suasive and argumentative. This we esteem a radical divergence. How far he may carry it we cannot say; but how far it has been carried, by others who left us where he has left us, we know. Mr. Beecher's distance from the common view of the atonement is evident from his remark, in substance, on the sufferings of Christ, that in the redemptive struggle Satan, who was guilty, and deserved it, and not Christ, who was not guilty, and did not deserve it, bore the punishment of our sins. That God has an emotional nature our church holds, but not with Mr. Beecher, that God under the exercise of it experiences unhappiness and painful deficiencies in his blessedness.

9. It is objected that one member of the Council (Dr. E. Beecher) affirmed again and again that some of the charges in the Result were false, and that his brother neither held those views in his heart nor put them into his sermons.

We pardon much of earnest, and exaggerated, and reiterated statement in one who sustains a paternal relation to the doctrines condemned, and a fraternal relation to him in whom we condemn them. But we advance the idea that the sermons, the arguments, and the heart of Mr. Charles Beecher were as open on the trial to the inspection of the most of the Council who endorsed the Result as to the one who voted against it. It is doubtful whether a near relationship to the peculiar views and to him holding them would aid one in judging to a clearer perception or to a more unbiassed judgment. We think the twenty-two out of twenty-five who were at first for dismission, and the sixteen out of twenty-one who voted for the Result were as likely to be unprejudiced and clear in their perceptions of the evidence, and in their final judgments on it as the member of Council so peculiarly related to the whole affair. We are willing to give all proper weight to the affirmations, denials and reasoning of Dr. Edward Beecher in this case. But we must remember that he is the brother of the accused, and the eminent step-father, since the days of Plato and Origen, of the leading view that brought his brother to trial and condemnation. If the anomaly happen in court that a chief partner gets on the bench in his own case, or a brother of the accused gets into the jury-box, we must allow such weight to their perceptions, logic, and decision as human nature is entitled to in such tempting circumstances.

10. A tenor of dissatisfaction runs through some of the Protests, that the Result practically will work against Mr. Beecher's re-settlement over an orthodox church.

If it seemed otherwise to any individuals, the Council could not see their way clear to dismiss a man for unsoundness in the faith, and then recommend him as a faithful minister of the gospel, in good and regular standing. Whether his doctrinal unfit-

ness for the church in Georgetown is an unfitness for all orthodox churches, the Council have not said, and were not called to say. But we are at a loss to see how any one could consistently and conscientiously condemn him as unfit for one church, and then by a smooth ambiguity or diplomatic platitude in papers given him, leave him to repeat his unsatisfactory ministerial labors in some second Georgetown.

As to the Protest presented by one of our committee, who himself aided in making up and fully endorsed the Result, we prefer to leave it without any farther or more specific reference, than to say that its author has an official right, very seldom embraced, to reply to his own Protest, as he also had a right to present this Protest against a Result of his own making up and endorsing.

With this brief Reply to the Protests given in—a work we think that we hardly needed to do—we close our present labor, and leave the case where it belongs, with the parties, the Christian community, and God, who is Judge of all.

## L.

### ARTICLES OF FAITH,

#### OF THE CHURCH IN GEORGETOWN.

1. We believe in one God, of infinite perfection, the Creator of all things, and existing in three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

2. We believe Jesus Christ to be both God and man, two distinct natures in one person.

3. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God to men, necessary to be received and obeyed by them.

4. We believe that God made man upright and happy.

5. We believe that our first parents by transgression fell from the innocent and happy state in which they were created, and that in the consequences of their apostasy all their posterity were involved.

6. We believe the depravity of man, as he is by nature, to be universal and entire.

7. We believe that Jesus Christ, by his obedience unto death, made atonement for sin, and opened a way, in which pardon and salvation may be consistently offered to our guilty race, and that they are freely offered to all who will repent of their sins and believe in Him.

8. We believe that all who become the obedient children of God are born again by the agency of the Holy Spirit, ordinarily in connection with the use of means.

9. We believe that the children of God are justified freely by grace through faith in Christ.

10. We believe that all who really come to Christ will be received and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

11. We believe that all who come were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

12. We believe that Baptism with water and the Lord's Supper, are ordinances instituted by Christ to be faithfully observed in his Church.

13. We believe that all men are under obligations to keep the commandments of God, so far as his commands are known to them, and that professing Christians especially are bound to adorn their profession, and commend religion by a holy life and conversation.

14. We believe that at the end of the world there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just



and of the unjust; that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that the righteous will be approved and the wicked condemned; the former will be admitted to a state of everlasting happiness and glory, the latter consigned to a state of misery without end.

## M.

### ANALYSIS OF FINAL VOTE.

#### AFFIRMATIVE.

*Bradford*—  
Rev. J. T. McCollom, Dr. Coggswell.  
*Rowley*—  
Rev. John Pike, Mr. John Cressey.  
*Marblehead*—  
Rev. B. R. Allen, Mr. N. P. Sanborn.  
*Malden*—  
Rev. E. C. Reed.  
*Medford*—  
Rev. E. P. Marvin, Mr. G. S. Wheelwright.  
*Mt. Vernon Church, Boston*—  
Dea. Julius A. Palmer.  
*North Church, Newburyport*—  
Rev. E. W. HOOKER, D. D.  
*Belleville Church, Newburyport*—  
Dea. J. P. PEARSON.  
*Fourth Church, Newburyport*—  
Dea. Daniel Adams.  
*Park Street Church, Boston*—  
Dea. EZRA FARNSWORTH.  
*Reading*—  
Rev. W. Barrows, Dea. Caleb Wakefield.

#### NEGATIVE.

*Belleville Church, Newburyport*—  
D. T. FISKE, D. D.  
*Fourth Church, Newburyport*—  
Rev. R. CAMPBELL.  
*Berkley Street, Boston*—  
Rev. H. M. DEXTER, Mr. B. W. WILLIAMS.  
*Galesburg, Illinois*—  
EDWARD BEECHER, D. D.

Names printed in Capitals, invited by the pastor, eight. Names in Roman letters, invited by petitioners, twelve. Number of those selected by Pastor, voting in affirmative, three. Number selected by petitioners, voting in negative, none. Whole number originally invited by Letter Missive, thirty-two. Number finally voting in the affirmative, sixteen.

## N.

### THE LETTER MISSIVE.

"The Congregational church in Georgetown sends to the Congregational church in — Greeting, Dear Brethren, Whereas certain members of this church have presented to their pastor the following petition:

(Here followed the petition already given, page 8.)

And whereas the pastor has laid the request before the church, expressing his willingness to comply with the same: Therefore in deference to the wishes of the petitioners, we do hereby solicit your attendance at the Congregational church in Georgetown, on the 15th day of July, 1863, at 10 o'clock A. M., to consider the matters contained in said petition and give advice thereon."