

Yet it is not to be inferred, that all other branches of the church are now abreast of us in this matter of freedom. Indeed, it is not long since an ecclesiastical dignitary warned his people against Congregationalism as a thing inimical to the people's interests. And the large following in these communions where the people have least of self-government, shows the disparity which still exists, makes the work of Congregationalism in the interests of the fullest liberty needful, and opens up a large field whence may be obtained our most promising recruits.

As another favoring factor, mention must be made of the weakening of the denominational spirit. Attachment was formerly strong, to the denomination of which people were united; either by their being born into it, or by their having joined it of their free will. Once in it, they were disposed to remain all their days. In this condition of things, a denomination could make little progress outside its own adherents. And this strong denominational sentiment made our progress especially slow in this country. First because of our numerical weakness to begin with, and second, because it closed the doors to mission work among the denominationalists around us. But throughout Canada to-day, not even excepting Catholic Quebec, there is a loosening of the ties which hitherto bound the people to particular sects. Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans, are less tenacious of their hold upon the forms of worship, and politics represented by these names, and are more willing to pass over into new relations. In not a few of our churches are to be found members representing several sections of the church. In a church of which your chairman was pastor, in a total membership of 113, were only four persons of Congregational antecedents. And in my present charge, out of 140 on the membership roll, are not more than 25 who can properly be called children of the denomination. And these cases could doubtless be duplicated in a large proportion of our Canadian churches.

I shall now mention conditions, whose fulfilment is necessary to the advancement I have outlined. And first, among these necessary conditions, I would place a passion for humanity. In the absence of this, little has been done for the welfare of men. All who have labored earnestly and successfully for human weal, have possessed this passion. Paul had it. So strong was it that he could have wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake. By this he was held cheerfully to his work of evangelization, even when he knew it would be better to depart and be with Christ in glory. All the apostles who came

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