

THE
Canadian Independent.

VOL. XXI.

TORONTO, MARCH, 1875.

No. 9.

CHURCH EXTENSION AND SELF-SUPPORT.

BY A DISTRICT MISSIONARY SECRETARY.

By Church Extension we refer to new enterprises in the rapidly rising towns and villages of the Dominion. By Self-Support we mean the freedom of our Congregational Missionary Society from all dependence for support upon the Colonial Missionary Society, and also the attainment of self-sustentation by our local Missionary churches.

To the first two we are already committed, by taking up new fields in some of the towns of Western Ontario, and by the gradual reduction and speedy termination of the Colonial Committee's grant. The last is the goal to which we must press forward, if the new enterprises are to be pressed on successfully, and the gradual withdrawal of English help is not to damage us.

It cannot be denied that one cause of the weakness of Congregationalism in comparison with some other denominations in the Dominion is this, that so large a proportion of our churches are, and have been for many years, dependent upon missionary aid for the support of ordinances. Doubtless, in most cases, this is inevitable, and by none has it been more felt and deplored than by the devoted and laborious pastors of these missionary churches. In not a few instances, indeed, a pastor has quietly but sorrowfully left his field, seeing no prospect of self-support being attained within any definite period, and feeling reluctant that the church should apply year after year for the same old missionary grant, possibly for an increased sum. At the same time he feels a great delicacy in urging his people to seek less help from the Society, for this is simply to ask that they do more for his own support. May not the following supposed case be regarded as typical of the method in most of our churches applying for missionary aid: A meeting of the church is called to consider the matter. The annual subscription for the pastor's support having been previously made, it is found that there is no increase on the past year's subscription, and it is agreed to ask for the same missionary grant as formerly; or it is found that through the decease or removal of some prominent member or members of the church and congregation, less has been promised towards pastoral support, and unless the already indifferently paid minister be content to do his work on a smaller salary, more has to be sought from the Missionary Society.

Meantime, the pastor comes to the Union Meeting, with a burden on his mind which no one ought to have to bear upon that joyous occasion, because uncertain as to whether the application of the church will meet with a favourable response from the Missionary Committee, and yet feeling that on this depends his remaining in his present field, or his removal from it.

Brethren, is there not altogether a fault among us in this particular? Ought there not to be some systematic effort made to develop *self-help* in our missionary churches, without compelling the minister to be their sole educator in the