

sure of every part, maketh increase of the body." In the face of this recognized mission of the *small* as well as the great, there, as it appears to us, is a growing tendency on the part of the larger denominations of Christendom to aim at absorbing or displacing the lesser ones.

In the Church's war-cry of old, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered," "little Benjamin" took his part. Ur of the Chaldees could be scarcely less known to history, and yet it gave the world the father of the faithful. Bethlehem, a small village of the smallest tribe, sends out the rod of God's strength to a helpless world, and becomes a fruitful house of bread to a spiritually famishing world. God employs the feeblest instruments to accomplish the most important ends. Somehow, we are disposed to read a lesson of direct encouragement on the one hand to the small, and a tacit rebuke on the other to the larger, who may be disposed to say "Stand by," in the apostolic announcement that God doth "choose the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."

It is scarcely necessary for me to remind you that to measure a Church or denomination by its size is not the correct mode of estimating its value and importance. On the morning of the Pentecost the Church was small enough, but it proved, with God's blessing mighty. It is not the size, but the vitality and energy of the seed that becomes the guarantee of a harvest. "Small as our instrumentalities in the service of Christ may be, they are not proportionately smaller than the axe by which the forest is reduced into a fruitful field." Let us but be "baptized for the dead," and we too may appropriate, even on this soil, the graceful acknowledgment of Phillips Brooks, "Any Church, whatever be its lineage in other lands, which comes and plants itself upon the New England soil, and tries to do there a part of the work of God and of Christ, must be under everlasting obligation to the Puritan Congregationalism which first claimed this land for Christ." You need not be reminded that this Puritan Congregationalism was a goodly bough, whose branches ran over the wall, some of them reaching to us as early

as 1761, if not earlier, and taking root where I speak, in Mangerville, in Horton, in Halifax, in Manchester and Chebogue. But I am reminded by Lord Russell that "they who on glorious ancestry enlarge, produce their debt instead of their discharge." This leads me to say, that I fear we have not given heed to what the Spirit still saith unto the Churches—"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Our rejoicing has been that our Church polity is at once flexible and simple, offering no obstacle to free action. We have been claiming to be in the secret of Divine principles that work on through vast periods. Have we assumed too much? Was it our special mission to maintain that the individual Churches had a right to govern themselves without external interference; that spirituality was a condition of Church membership; that Christ's people in each Church had a right to share in the administration of their own affairs, and that it was the duty of Church members mutually to receive and recognize one another in fellowship? I reply, it was our mission. We received a *witnessing* ministry. Have we made full proof of it? If so, may the crown still flourish on our head; but if to-day there remains nothing distinctive save the name, where, O where is the answer of a good conscience to Him who says—"I know thy works: thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead?"

We dare not compare ourselves with some that commend themselves, and yet I maintain that an intelligent perusal of the records of Methodism and Presbyterianism, our esteemed yokefellows in the common work, as furnished at their annual gatherings a few weeks ago, should produce in us great "searchings of heart." If they each report upwards of 1,500 ministerial charges, and between one and two hundred thousand communicants, why are we, comparatively, "like the heath in the desert, inhabiting the parched places?" "I speak as unto wise men; judge we what I say;" for of a truth a wise understanding of these signs is an essential factor in our progress.

(To be continued.)

You never get to the end of Christ's words. There is something in them always behind. They pass into proverbs; they pass into laws; they pass into doctrines; they pass into consolations; but they never pass away, and after all the use that is made of them they are still not exhausted.—Dean Stanley.