

The Canadian Independent

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TORONTO, JUNE 9, 1881.

NOTICE.

Mr Wm. Revell has kindly undertaken the business management of the INDEPENDENT. In the future, therefore, all remittances and letters about the subscription, or complaints, should be addressed to him, Box 2618, P. O. Toronto, and all articles for insertion, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

Mr A. Christie, 9 Wilton Avenue, will continue to attend to the business of the Congregational Publishing Company, including arrears for the INDEPENDENT and the Year Book.

We would call the attention of our readers to their labels. All whose subscriptions expired Jan., '81, or earlier, are now due another year. Will they please remit.

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be BRIEF, our space is limited, and we dislike to cut down.

THE MEETING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

The meeting of our brethren in the old land appears to have been pervaded by a spirit worthy of those whom we rejoice to call our fathers. Noble principles were enunciated, frank confessions made, earnest resolves also, and the putting into execution begun. Our Union will be meeting as these lines come into the hands of our readers. God grant that we may write our record in as noble a spirit as our friends in England have written theirs.

The election for chairman promised a storm, which happily subsided as the result became known. Mr. McFadyen, of Manchester, as our friends already know, having received a very large majority of votes. Speaking of the interchange of deputations between the Congregationalists of England and America, the Union Committee recorded their conviction that great "advantages would come to Congregationalism on both sides of the Atlantic if closer and more frequent intercourse could be established between the churches of the two countries." May we not hope, though "a little sister," to have a share in such advantages?

The year past has witnessed the removal of some notable worthies from the Congregational ranks to the church triumphant. Dr. John Waddington, the church historian; Wm. Cronfield, a merchant prince; Sir Charles Reed, who served his generation faithfully, and manifested the possibility of an active Christian politician; Edward Miall, too, a sketch of whose life, crowded out of two successive issues of the INDEPENDENT, appears this week: and we can only echo the prayer of our English brethren, "May the places of these and other good men, who, during the year, have been called to their reward, be in due time filled by men who will serve Christ in the Church and in the world with energy and faithfulness equal to theirs!"

The address of the present chairman, Dr. Allon was upon "Congregationalism," which he justly declares "has no mean record in religious annals." Drawing attention

to the fact that this is the jubilee year, and that the Union which was launched forth as an experiment, has proved its right to be by the fact that the fifty years of its existence have witnessed the doubling of Congregational strength. Dr. Allon says, "The fitting note of our jubilee celebration is the one hundred and third Psalm."

Of church organization the remark made, "they are more than churches, they are organisms which the life shapes for itself and through which it performs its functions—not identical with life, nor essential to it, but developed congruously with it, and presumably in the fittest way expressing it." Speaking of union Dr. Allon wisely says, "All association involves compromise, some exercise of individual liberty is surrendered for the sake of concerted action, but the surrender of church autonomy is impossible without the surrender of Congregationalism itself."

Complaint is made that the papers which represent the denomination are doomed to a painful and precarious struggle for existence, we hardly think, however, from their vigorous look that they are reduced to such a starvation allowance as has been measured out to the INDEPENDENT during our eighteen months occupancy of the editorial chair.

Speaking of the relation of Congregational churches to orthodoxy and free thought, Dr. Allon says, "No great heresy of the Church has been generated by us. Romanism boasts of no converts from us, Rationalism very few; evangelical Episcopalians have become converts to both, Unitarianism passes into the latter. Neither boasts of evangelical Congregational churches as a nursery or preserve. Our theology has been both reverent and free. If to accept the revelation of Christ as our final authority in all fundamental facts be bondage, in this bondage were our fathers held, and we are not ashamed of their bonds. Subject to this exclusive authority, we stand fast in the liberty where-with Christ makes us free." The closing lines of the address are worthy of prayerful study. "Our sole faith and hope in Congregationalism are in its religious life, in the spiritual relations to God upon which it insists, in the responsibility of the individual man which it recognizes, in the spiritual pieties and fine-toned purities which are its sanctions and its bonds, and in its broad conception of the religiousness of life, and of the consecration which it demands of us. It has no sanction, no calling, but the life that it can inspire. Failing the inspiration of a true life, it must signally perish; falling short in this inspiration, it must take with shame the lower place. Greatly realizing this, no weapon formed against it shall prosper. It is a church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

The curse of church debt lies upon our English brethren as on us; they confess to burdens upon church buildings to the amount of \$2,500,000, which means \$100,000 annually spent on interest. When did Christ commission His Church to enrich the money-lender? There is to be a jubilee effort to wipe out these debts. Can we antedate our jubilee thus?

The Church Aid and Home Missionary Society is working nobly, and an effort is to be made to raise the minimum salary of pastors to £150, or \$750. The receipts for the year were \$200,000. Many aided churches have become truly Independent, and acknowledge the true independency of gratitude by turning round and helping others, and a gratifying increase is noted throughout the whole body. The London Missionary Society, which is really the Foreign Missionary Society of English Congregationalism, reports an income during the past year of in round numbers \$500,000.

A perusal of the proceedings of the Union give confidence in the present and future of our brethren at home, and the fearlessness with which they expose their weak points is a sure indication of moral strength. May some of their spirit and prosperity be ours, and as we draw the lines closer with them, may we prove as worthy of their confidence and esteem as they assuredly are of ours. Our space forbids more.

EDWARD MIALL.

In the short notice we gave when the news of Mr. Miall's death reached this country, we promised a fuller sketch when the materials came to hand. The *Nonconformist*, of May 5th, supplies, as might have been expected, a very full biographical memoir of its founder, its first, and many years, editor. It is, of course, much too long for insertion here; we can only insert a few general facts, and the outline of his life.

Mr. Miall was born in Portsmouth, in 1809, and consequently was seventy-two years of age; and, his family removing to London, was educated at St. Saviours Grammar School, Southwark.

Having made up his mind to enter the ministry, he went to Wymondley College, Suffolk,—afterwards Coward College, and subsequently merged in New College, St. John's Wood. In 1831, at the early age of 22, he accepted an invitation to the Independent Church at Ware—a small sphere that facilitated his studious habits—and in the following year he married Louisa, daughter of Edward Holmes, Esq., of Clay-hill (treasurer, we believe, to the college he had lately left). Here, as subsequently elsewhere, Mr. Miall won the esteem and affection of his people by his devotion to his duties, his sound judgment, prudent bearing, and amiable qualities. After his three years' pastorate in this small town of Hertfordshire, Mr. Miall was called to a wider sphere of usefulness, having in 1834 accepted an invitation to the Independent Church assembling in Bond Street, Leicester. Relative to his settlement in Leicester—he was then 25 years of age—we may quote the following from an excellent biographical sketch, published as far back as 1852, in the *Monthly Christian Spectator*:—

In this town he soon formed a close friendship with the Rev. J. P. Mursell, the successor of Robert Hall. Mr. Mursell's vigorous character seems to have exerted a timely influence on the less practical intellect of his friend. Their intercourse turned much on the ecclesiastical and political topics of the day.

Both by Mr. Miall and Mr. Mursell, the State-Church question, in its relation to New Testament Christianity, the actualities of religion, the polity of nations, the nature of the human mind itself, was deeply pondered. The professional convictions thus enlarged and deepened by reading and thought, they expressed with an unprofessional emphasis.

The idea of starting a new paper to take up a more uncompromising attitude in ecclesiastical matters did not actually originate with Mr. Miall, though it at once enlisted his ardent sympathies and co-operation. The first requisite was to find a competent editor. An attempt to secure the services of a gentleman of the highest eminence and of tried experience as a public writer—failed. Mr. Miall and Mr. Mursell had gone to London for that purpose, and returned home disappointed.

As they returned, they were pacing together the railway platform at Rugby, waiting for the Leicester train. Suddenly, as the circumstance is told, Mr. Mursell said to his companion, "You must do it yourself." The answer of Mr. Miall, was that the idea was altogether new to him; and it was easy to conceive much of what would immediately come to the lips of a man committed to the Christian ministry, settled, to his mind, as the pastor of a church, and with a rising family to be considered.

Mr. Miall finally made up his mind to undertake the onerous duty, after taking counsel with reliable friends, among whom may be mentioned John Foster and John Childs, and the first number of the *Nonconformist* was launched on the 14th of April, 1841.

To his other labors the editor of the *Nonconformist* added those of preaching on Sundays. He was in great request as a supply in many of the pulpits of London, especially at the Gravel Pits, Hackney, where he took a monthly service. As his public labors increased, Mr. Miall found it necessary to discontinue for the most part his pulpit services.

One of the earliest practical results of the establishment of the *Nonconformist* was the foundation of "The British Anti-State Church Association," the name of which was changed in 1847 to that of "The Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control," or, as it is now popularly called, "The Liberation Society." Mr. Miall's chief aim was to produce in the minds of Nonconformists, in the first instance, a deep conviction of the evil nature, and the pernicious results of State interference with religion, and to urge the duty of strenuous and persistent aggressive efforts to strike at the root of the tree, instead of only seeking, and that but occasionally, to destroy its branches.

The first Anti-State-Church Conference was held on the 30th April, 1844, and two following days, and, considering the circumstances of the times, was extraordinarily successful. Nearly 800 delegates were appointed; there was unanimity, earnestness, and enthusiasm, and the intention of the Conference was realized in the launching of the new organization. While, however, there were present some of the ablest Nonconformists of the time, many others held aloof from the movement, and