

met with such a statement in any history, though it is perhaps correct. The nearest to it I have come across is that the Baptists increased largely under his influence (*Schaff's Encyclopedia*). He is generally called a Puritan and an Independent. Where is he described as a Baptist Independent?

E. B.

## Our Contributors.

### THE CHURCH-MEETING.

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The Church Meeting, What is it designed to be? and what has it become? What important purposes in our Church life, fellowship, government, and work, is it intended to subserve, and to what extent have these ends been accomplished, or in what respects has there been failure? The modern Church-meeting, how will it compare with the primitive, the scriptural, the ideal Church-meeting? Brethren, we may be mistaken, but we have a profound conviction that we in this Dominion are exceedingly recreant to our principles in the matter of our Church-meetings. Believing as we certainly do, in the fellowship of the saints, have not our Church-meetings, in large measure, ceased to afford opportunity for the cultivation of that fellowship? Believing in the right of the local Church to self-government, and that to it the Master has committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power of binding and loosing on earth, which He will ratify in heaven, does not the meagre attendance at our Church-meetings, as compared with the number who come to the Lord's Table, prove that we have basely surrendered our God-given right of spiritual rule, and handed it over to the minority, whom conscience and a sense of duty bring to the Church-meetings? Let any one possessing the true Christian instinct, but unconnected with any denomination, visit an average Congregational Church-meeting, and would he carry away with him, as the result of its varied exercises, as vivid an impression of Christian fellowship, as he would from a Methodist Class-meeting, or Love-feast? or as strong a conviction of order, rule, and strength, as he would obtain from a visit to a well-conducted meeting of a Presby-

tery? And yet, we believe, the Class-meeting and the Love-feast, and the Presbyterian meeting, are but human expedients, while the Church-meeting is the scriptural and natural embodiment of the Divine life and of Christ's people, the meeting to which the Saviour had special reference when he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in their midst." And the rights and liberties of which even St. Paul would not dare to subvert, but would rather uphold and direct, witness for example, his instructions to the Church of Corinth, in regard to a matter of discipline, when he said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Is not the anomaly we behold to-day a most singular one? People who are not Congregationalists, and who would not take upon themselves our name, contending successfully for the rights of the laity against pure ecclesiastical control, and Congregationalists practically surrendering rights already in their possession! Methodists asking for the right of calling their own pastors, and granted it with certain restrictions; Presbyterians, demanding the right of the membership to settle certain matters of internal administration—and given it in regard to some particulars; and Congregationalists, through indolence and indifference, bartering away their time-honored and inherited privileges! It is just possible that our verdict may be too severe. It may be found in the course of the discussion, which we hope will follow the reading of this paper, that there are yet churches not a few amongst us, that possess the model, the ideal, the scriptural Church-meeting. If so, we shall be glad to hear from their pastors and delegates, and take a leaf from their books.

Still, as the result of a somewhat extended experience and observation, we are fully convinced that the *average Church-meeting* of the churches of our Dominion is by no means what it ought to be, and what it might be made. That allowing for the necessary absence of the sick, the very aged and non-resident members, there are many members of the Church, and some of those best quali-