

you. To the right is one made by one maker ; to the left is one made by a different maker ; behind you is a third kind, and before you is a fourth ; and in the one district you will find five or six different kinds. Now, these machines are all doing fair work. It is true one may be better fitted for heavy grain, and another for light, and each has its own point of excellence ; but every farmer is succeeding in cutting his grain, and probably each farmer thinks his own the best. This, however, is to be remarked in general : the reapers are becoming more and more assimilated. The excellent points in each are, in principle, being introduced into all, and by and by the various reaping machines, though called by different names and ornamented in different ways, will be alike. So with the organizations for carrying on Christian work. They are year by year becoming liker each other. The good qualities of each are being adopted by the others, and by and by, it is to be hoped, there will be no essential difference between them. In the Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches, the people are taking a larger share in the government, and in Congregational Churches there is a desire for greater compactness. Whether a government by chosen representatives, as was suggested at the conference, will yet be adopted by all is a question which time alone will show.

The idea which the brother advanced, and which appeared to be approved of by a number, may be thus represented : Let the churches of the Western Association be taken as the illustration. They agree to have an elective representative assembly ; they elect it for a certain period, and they make it, for the time being, the final court of appeal. This, I think, is a fair representation of the idea that was mooted ; but, in the event of it being adopted by the churches referred to, they would cease to be Congregational, in the ordinary sense of the term. Whether they would cease to conserve the principle of government by the people, is another question.

Looking at Congregationalism in Canada, and comparing it with other denominations, it appears at once that democratic government is one of its characteristics. Each church manages its own affairs : the college board, the missionary board, and the other corporations are representative. All rule is directly, or almost directly, amenable to people in the churches. There is no individual or class ruling permanently by right of office.

Now, this does not infallibly secure wise government. The people may be un-Christlike. They may when deliberating be influenced by prejudice and party feeling. They often are ; for even Christians have not yet reached their own ideal, and even though they may be in the best spirit, it is possible for them, on account of their limitations, to err. But, on the other hand, are they not likely to be as even as any privileged class ? In my thinking, they are ; but whether they are or not, there is this to be said that, if they legislate unwisely, they themselves will suffer. And there is this further to be noted. The trend of the present age is to government by the people. The days of privileged classes, either in Church or State, appear to be passing. More and more the people are becoming the law-makers. The result, both in Church and State, will depend on the measure in which the people become subject to the Spirit of Christ. Let us hope that in the Church, at least, the Holy Spirit will prevail, and that the results will be glorious.

As to doctrine, there does not appear to be anything distinctive in Canadian Congregationalism unless it be in its inclusiveness. In its pulpits are ministers whose sympathies are Arminian ; there are others whose sympathies are Calvinistic ; you meet one brother, who is wistfully looking in the direction of the larger hope ; you meet another, who sees in the words of Christ and His apostles no wicket gate of hope for those who die impenitent. There is thus a reasonable liberty given to the ministers. So far as I have seen, there is certainly no tendency to foster vagaries, or wild speculation about everything theological. But let a man apply for admission into the Union, whose record shows that he is sound on the great essential verities of the Gospel, and nothing more in the line of doctrine will be required of him.

To some this may appear to be a disadvantage. They may think it better to make all sign an elaborate creed, as in the Presbyterian Church, and thus secure one stripe of theological doctrine. But, in the first place, does the signing of an elaborate creed secure agreement in doctrine ? It does in form, but not in reality. Look at the clergy of the Episcopal Church in England. They all, on entering the church, get tied to the creed but many of them do not remain tied. An old lady in Scotland said to me that the Established Church was