

P R E F A C E .

In consenting to edit the eighth volume of the YEAR BOOK, the former editions of which have been so successfully brought out by my predecessors the Revs. F. H. Marling and John Wood, I well knew the responsibility of the undertaking and had not the work been congenial to my taste I should have shrunk from an attempt to fill the vacancy. This YEAR BOOK is now one of our Institutions, and forms one of seven like publications, representing Congregationalism in as many countries. To increase its interest and usefulness, and keep it abreast of its older, wealthier and more pretentious contemporaries is no small task, which requires boldness even to attempt.

It has been a leading aim in this edition, to present a general view of the standing and work of our denomination throughout the two continents, in so far as reliable facts could be gathered; for as Christ said His kingdom was not of this world, no more should any part of our spiritual work as a denomination be isolated or confined within the compass of any one country.

In the facts and figures given, it cannot, of course, be claimed that there is absolute correctness, for in a very few cases approximate numbers had to be taken in the lack of definite knowledge, however, great care has been used to make them reliable.

Although the resolution to bring out this edition at the earliest possible date after the annual meetings has been adhered to, it will be found that in nearly all the information concerning our denomination at large the facts are brought down to the recent May Meetings both in England and the United States, thus putting our churches at once in possession of the latest information. In this I am greatly indebted to the kindly and prompt assistance rendered by the representatives of Congregational Societies both in Great Britain and the United States. Although I have by no means reached my ideal as to what the YEAR BOOK should be, still it must with its perceptible imperfections be given to the Churches such as it is.

SAMUEL N. JACKSON.

KINGSTON, August 1st, 1880.