

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JUNE 12th, 1879.

ASSERTING OUR PRINCIPLES.

THE English Congregational Union is preparing to celebrate its jubilee next year, that organization having been established in the year 1831. Among other excellent and noteworthy things it proposes to do in connection with that event, it is providing for the delivery and publication of twelve lectures, by as many of its ablest men, on topics, chiefly historical, relating to the origin of Congregationalism in England; its development and growth during the Commonwealth, the Restoration, and the Georgian period; its influence upon the great evangelical movement of the last century, and kindred subjects. They also propose to issue a series of tracts on the distinctive principles of the denomination, not with any design of exciting controversy, or as a menace to other religious bodies, but to educate our own people, as well as the public generally, as to the views we hold.

This is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, although the difficulty is felt there, as it is here, of getting people to read them. Still, as a denomination, we have made too little use of the press, and said too little about ourselves in the pulpit. The reasons for this are various. In most of our congregations there are persons who have been brought up in other church connections, whom we are anxious to retain among us, and are perhaps afraid of offending by the advocacy of our distinctive views. Or, our ministers themselves are less impressed than they should be with the value of our principles, and their importance in the development of Christian and church life. Or, while admitting them to be of very great importance, they think they see them so generally accepted by other denominations around them, that they regard it as less necessary than formerly for them to set them forth. It is not long since one of our leading ministers in this country—not, we are happy to say, one of our Canadian-trained men—told us Congregationalists had no longer any *raison d'être* in this country. They had in England, he thought, but none whatever here!

Now, if that be the fact, it is desirable that we know it, and look it in the face. If we have no reason for maintaining separate denominational existence, and can serve the cause of God just as well in the ranks of our Presbyterian, Methodist, or Episcopal brethren, separation from them is schism, and schism is sin! "To what purpose is this waste?"—this waste of energy, and thought, and money, that, on the hypothesis named, could be expended to so much better purpose within other denominational lines? The man

who holds such a view is bound to answer that question.

We maintain, however, that there are good reasons for the course we are pursuing, and that although several of the other denominations are much more populous and influential in this country than ourselves, there is not one of them that can say, "We have no need of thee." We are endeavouring to emphasize certain great principles—our existence is itself an assertion of certain great principles—which all the churches of Christ are the better for being thus reminded of; and much as we cherish the hope of a more manifested unity among all Christian people, we think the time has not yet come, at least, when loyalty to truth and duty will permit us to relinquish our work. Whether it will ever come is a question the future alone will enable us to answer.

THE American Education Society gives \$75 to each of the young men on its list for the past year. For the two previous years it gave them respectively \$65 and \$50. Would we had some such Society to relieve our overpressed College!

It is said that Professor Bain wishes to retire from his chair in Aberdeen University, but gives it out that he will not retire just yet, but wait to see if a successor to his own mind can be secured by a change of government. Meanwhile, the learned professor is publishing a life of his late friend John Stuart Mill.

THE "Catholic Review" has waxed very hot, if not eloquent. It says the horrid tragedy of Pocasset "may be truthfully called the sublimation of Protestantism." How handy and easy for those who do not live in glass houses to throw stones. Everyone knows that whatever can be charged to Roman Catholicism it has never driven people mad, or supplied prisons with inmates and gallows with subjects!!!

A MINISTRY which fails to waken in men an interest in works of benevolence may well be set down as a failure. An exchange tells of an elder who was recently looking for a pastor, and while making special inquiries about a certain candidate, he discovered that the church over which this person had been settled, had contributed nothing to missions. He inquired no further, but simply remarked: "That man won't do."

THE Pope is about to issue a kind of official gazette of the Holy See in seven languages. It may be wondered that the venture was not tried earlier. Considering the "Catholic" character aimed at by the Roman faith, it is surprising that the impulse which such a paper can hardly fail to impart to ultramontane action all over the world was not perceived. It is said that there are already 52,000 subscribers. The editor is to be one of the newly-created cardinals, M. Alimonda, whilst the printing will be done by the deaf and dumb boys of Father Ludovico da Catoria.

THE Catholic hierarchy and newspapers of Ireland maintain a profound silence respecting the Bill for the establishment of the University of St. Patrick at Dublin, introduced by O'Conner Don in the Commons, in the absence of a knowledge whether it would be the end or beginning of difficulty. The Protestants of Ireland look unfavorably on the measure. They say they must be certain of its acceptance by Rome before it could do any good. Protestant Dissenters and the Church Liberation Society of England bitterly opposes the measure, and are organizing public agitation against it. Independent Liberal and Radical members of Parliament will endeavour to talk out the Bill. The attitude of the Marquis of Hartington and Gladstone is not known.

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neck to the yoke of Christ. To his brethren in the ministry he would say, know what you are preaching about. Nothing is worse than to indulge in flings at science and scientific men. Leave Darwin and Huxley and Spencer alone. It is our wisdom to preach the positive truths of God. The pulpit is not the place for scientific controversy. Leave it to the platform or magazine. We have a simple clear message of the grace of God in Christ to men to deliver. Let us see to it that we preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God in such a way that men will say here is something that the scientific class-room does not give me. It is something that my soul wants and what science will never tear away. There is a Catholic faith which we are to keep whole and entire. There are great facts concerning God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, man's sin and God's cure for sin, truths which in all ages of the Church have won men from sin to holiness. Believe these, preach these, live these, and Congregationalism will be adequate to all the free thought of this age.

Rev. Joseph Griffith, of Hamilton, next spoke on "Congregationalism as a Spiritual force." He asked, "Has Congregationalism ever been defined?" Presbyterians sometimes found difficulty in defining the tenets of their belief. Episcopalians are similarly situated; and it is natural that there should be a little divergence of opinion as to the meaning of Congregationalism. There was the formal Congregationalism and the essential Congregationalism. There was the former without the latter, and *vice versa*. Congregationalism, by emphasising the sole authority of the Word of God, brought man face to face with his Maker, and makes him realise his direct responsibility to God. Some men put the Westminster Faith between them and God, some election, some atonement, some ritual. He could readily subscribe to much of the Westminster Confession. He had a Confession of his own, but he never thought of putting it between himself and his God. It was said these little disagreements were the sources of weakness, but he thought differently. He thought liberty of speech was a source of power. Congregationalism had a peculiar spiritual force from the fact of its Catholicity. Standing where he did he did not regard himself as shut out by any denominational fence at all. The Presbyterian was a Christian plus something. The Baptist was a Christian plus something. The Episcopalian was a Christian plus something. He wished to make no invidious comparison, but he added that the Congregationalist was a Christian plus—nothing. A Congregational Church is simply a body of believers in Christ, with a fellowship for all who love and obey him. Let us be true to this; let us live in constant contact with the Word of God and the cross of Christ. Let us lay emphasis on the central truths of Christianity, and live in fellowship with all who love and obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. R. W. Wallace, M.A., B.D., made the closing speech. He remarked that his mind was filled with deep emotions. He hated these 'good byes,' but he liked the greetings. They no sooner came to say 'How d'ye do?' than they had to take their departure. He based his remarks upon a sentence in a speech made in England by Rev. Mr. Dale, that 'he stood in the midst of great memories and in the midst of hopes.' These words prompted lengthy and, at the same time, tender references to ministers of the Union who had been removed by death, and in setting out he spoke in an especially kind manner of Rev. Messrs. Denny, Durant and Wheeler, all old and worn men. He alluded to a picture he had examined the day previous of

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and the number of missing faces was astonishing. He asked himself the question, and he asked it then,—Are we worthy descendants of the men who toiled and wrought for the spiritual improvement of this country? He read the names of many standard-bearers who had fallen by the way, and in the heat of the fight, but the old flag of freedom had never lacked an ensign yet, and never shall. Having quoted Whittier's poem of tribute to the dead, he said he hoped all would return home to do more earnest work. This was no time for differences of opinion. The enemy was before, and it should be met unitedly, and as a means of sinking disagreements he suggested a grand and general revival during the ensuing year.

The Rev. J. G. Sanderson moved a vote of thanks to the pastor and congregation of the Church, and to the members of other Churches, who generously entertained them during the meeting of the Union. In this resolution an acknowledgment was made of the appreciation of the service of song furnished by the efficient choir of the Church.

Rev. W. H. Allworth seconded this in his usual happy style, and the motion passed amid loud applause. After singing and the benediction the Union dispersed to meet in Emmanuel Church, Montreal, in June, 1880.

A "METROPOLITAN INDEPENDENT CHURCH" is announced in Boston. Rev. H. A. Shorey, of Pilgrim Congregational Church, Dorchester, heads the movement. Mr. Shorey was at one time with W. H. H. Murray on the "Golden Rule" and in his New England Church.

REV. TITUS COAN has been missionary pastor at Hilo, Sandwich Islands, forty-five years. He has received to church membership more than 12,000 persons. The contributions of his congregation for Home and Foreign Missions now amount to \$4,000 annually. Though seventy-eight years of age, Mr. Coan is still in active service.