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OUR "MUCH LAUDED INDEPENDENCE."

Independency sorely puzzles many of our friends of other denominations, and very various, and often very opposite, are the opinions they form regarding it. Like the constitution of England, where, in its modern type, it originated, it is "*unwritten*." It has never yet been embodied in an authoritative form of words. It has no "Creed," no "Book of Discipline," no "Ecclesiastical Courts," by whose decisions and deliverances it may be weighed and measured. Its sole appeal is to the authority of Holy Scripture in all matters of faith and practice. And hence, many of our friends aforesaid, accustomed to the intervention of Conference, or Synod, or Diocesan, upon almost all occasions, as well as to appeals on every doctrinal and ecclesiastical question to their human "*standards*," can hardly conceive of denominational existence without them. After all that has been written about it, Independency is a *terra incognita* to them, and Independents, a kind of religious nondescripts, with some very fine-spun theories of church administration, much more curious than useful or practicable.

It is pleasant, however, to know that what they have learned about us is, in general, greatly in our favour. Our good brother of the *Evangelical Witness* (New Connexion Methodist), writes of us :—

"We confess to a liking for some things in Congregationalism, and we have ever found their ministry friendly, and willing to fraternize with us on all suitable occasions; ready, in fact, to lend us a helping hand in any good work that was to be done. We further acknowledge that evangelical Christianity owes this denomination much for the literature it has furnished in exposition and defence of the truth as it is in Jesus, and, as we see things, the denomination has always been on the right side in any struggle there has been for liberty of conscience and for general freedom all over the world." He is disposed to doubt, however, whether "this much-lauded 'independence' secures to its advocates the personal and individual freedom which is claimed for it. We confess," he says, "to preference for a freedom both as to doctrinal opinion, church order and individual action which is 'nominated in the bond.' We are in favor of a constitution and form of doctrine which is written down, and to the terms of which a man can appeal when suspected or accused. Otherwise we perceive that there are occasions when we should be very much at the mercy of an influential man, or a clique, who could trample us in the dust."