

count. The history of the many tribes of which our nation is composed, whether Teutonic, or Saxon, or Caledonian, or Latin, or Scandinavian, is totally distinct from that of any of the ten tribes of Israel, but *history in this case is quite set aside.*—The names of men, women, and places in our land are not Hebrew or Shemitic at all, but are traceable to another class of languages altogether; yet this, weighs nothing. The occupation of our island by certain tribes, whom we now call the aboriginal Caledonians or Britons, *long before the ten tribes were carried captive into Assyria,* and who therefore could not be Israelites, is passed by. The grand story of the Israelitish emigration from Assyria into Great Britain, whether by sea or land we are not told—a century or two before Caesar landed, *is got up for the occasion,* without history or tradition or local monuments to confirm it. There is no evidence in the Bible or in history or in tradition for any such Israelitish emigration."

What can we say to men who seriously—if indeed they speak seriously—thus comment on Deut. xxxiii. 17: "His, *z. e.* Joseph's, glory is like the firstling of a bullock. The ox being oftentimes applied to Israel, may fairly be said to emblemize the world-famed power of John Bull"! Indeed it is hard to conceive of a theory more thoroughly supported by conjecture coupled with forced renderings, and less supported by evidence, historical or traditional. The Book of the Generations—Gen. x.—following on Noah's prophecy, ix. 25-27, still stands the most trustworthy guide as to the dispersion of the human family, and in its light, history traces our pedigree to Japhet, Israel certainly comes from Shem. All modern discoveries confirm this, whether of comparative philology, or of monuments Assyrian or Egyptian. Such linguistic affinities as Dan Sobairse or Dan's resting place, we shall illustrate by a fact which comes from a near editor's sanctum: Our friend had written an article for a leading journal some time since on this very question, then being mooted. He tried his hand at inventing some further linguistic follies as a kind of set off to those found in the identifications. Among others he gave, without copyright, the following—"Saxon, pronounced *sason*, or Isaac's son, the I being dropped and an a elided." Judge of his dismay when in a pamphlet, which afterwards came to hand, he found that which he had given as an absurdity actually given as a philological discovery! Perhaps the following identity may prove in like manner efficacious: "It is well known that the Israelite eschewed pork, there are certain Aberdonians who are said to evince a like aversion, and still further to manifest that well-known Israelitish propensity for holding fast the bawbees." Q.E.D.

The theory itself is, as presented, scarcely worth refuting; in fact, is its own best refutation; only we must protest against making it any part of the gospel. Would the knowledge that we were, *e.g.*, the children of Ephraim, or Manasseh, make us more holy and charitable than the knowledge we may possess that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? Is it wise, in this age of scepticism, to read the Bible with, at best, fanciful interpreta-

tions, while the weightier matters of truth and honesty are so much neglected? Enough for us, we are God's true Israel if with faith we cleave to Him, and fill out appointed places where and as we are, for thereto are we called.

THE YEAR BOOKS

The *English Year Book* we have failed to receive, so that we are compelled to take a notice of it second hand from one of our contemporaries. Should we find, when it is before us, that there are any other matters worth noting, we will return to the subject.

From the *Congregational Year Book* we learn that the total number of churches, branch churches, and preaching stations of the Independent order in England and Wales is 4,188, and that the total number of pastors, lay pastors, and evangelists is 2,723. In England only, there are 500 ministers who are returned in the *Year Book* as resident without pastoral charge. But on this point the editor wisely adds a note of explanation and information, which may probably prevent a repetition of certain loose and hasty inferences which have sometimes been drawn from the bare fact. Of these 500 ministers, 220 are thus accounted for: 140 have retired from active work because of age; 26 are secretaries of societies; 14 are laid aside at least temporarily by serious illness; 2 are in business; 3 are engaged as editors, 20 as professors, and 15 as schoolmasters. Of the 258 remaining to be accounted for, the *Year Book* informs us that there are 105 whose ministry began at least thirty years ago; and who may be presumed, therefore, to have rendered a full share of ministerial service, and to have retired because of advanced age. Thus there are left at most 153 ministers who are without pastoral charges, but desirous of obtaining them. This is just about the number of vacant churches. There have been 153 ministerial removals during the year; 130 new settlements; 87 resignations; and 75 ordinations. In Congregational colleges and institutes, in England, Wales, and Scotland, there are 463 students. During the year, 18 ministers have left Congregationalism for other denominations (by the way, we only count 17 in the list given, but the editor gives 18 in his summary) and of these, seven have gone into the Established Church, four to the Presbyterians, and one each to the Unitarians, Swedenborgians, and Baptists. This loss has been exactly made good by the reception of 18 ministers from other denominations, of whom no less than 14 come from various branches of the Methodist body.

The *Irish Year Book* we are in receipt of through the courtesy of the Rev. Robt. Sewell, of Londonderry, the editor. The Churches of Ireland from a variety of causes, some of which can easily be conceived are very far from being the power in the County which they are in England and Wales, numerically they are weak, we find only thirty-one Churches and of these twelve are without pastors, more than one third of the whole. There were 107 preaching stations and 250 Sunday School teachers. At the last Union Meeting there were exactly the same number of ministers present as there are churches with pastors, whether they were all the same ministers does not appear, and thirty-seven laymen. We fear that one practice they have at their meetings would not meet the approval of some of our friends ultra independents if any member of the union ministerial, we suppose—is found to be wanting in orthodoxy, he is deprived of membership.

A perusal of the *Year Book*, with the papers read at the Union Meeting will convince any one that our brethren in

Ireland, carry on their work under great difficulties, we know that some of them there think that their difficulties might be lessened by their brethren across the channel, perhaps so, we cannot say, yet they also have their difficulties and struggles, and cannot do all that they would like to do for others. In Ireland the unsettled state of affairs, the chronic upheaval, the influence of the priesthood and the constant stream of emigration to this Continent makes the work of Protestant Churches, and of ours especially, difficult and disappointing. We can only trust that there may come a change, and that out of the present disorder and chaos, light, order and religious truth may arise, and that our churches may become centres of power for truth and God.

The *Victorian Year Book*, edited by the Rev. Richard Conmbee, Victoria, which it will be known is one of the separate provinces of Australia, as Ontario before Confederation, has a population of 888,500, or had in 1879 probably, according to its annual rate of increase, about 900,000 now, and 51 churches of our order*, about half of which are in the city of Melbourne or its suburbs, of these seven are vacant, six are supplied, and two are reported as "unoccupied." There are six Home Mission Districts, five of which are in charge of a stated Agent, and one "supplied." The list of ministers gives 31 in pastoral charge, and 14 without charge. The churches have an aggregate accommodation for 16,721 hearers, and \$660 is given as the number usually attending the principal Sunday service. The total number of Congregational ministers in all the Australian Colonies is 186. In Sunday School Victoria has 29 schools, 421 teachers, and 3,848 scholars, 164 of whom are church members. These items are sufficient to show that our brethren at the Antipodes are doing a good work, and although, as here, the denomination is relatively small, we know that it is exercising a powerful influence, politically and religiously. The *Year Book* contains a report of the Union meetings, including a *verbatim* report of the address of the Chairman, Rev. Thos. James, on "Materialistic Scepticism." It appears to have been a powerful paper, and we shall endeavor, if possible, to give a few extracts from it in some future number. The College Report is included, but it will scarcely be credited that the number of students is not given, nor can we find out from any other part of the book. There is a good deal of interesting information in the *Year Book*, but, with all respect to the editor, we like the full, complete, methodical arrangement of our own *Year Book* better.

MANITOBA MISSION.

The following sums received to date, and are hereby acknowledged with thanks of the Treasurer for subscriptions towards the above mission:

J. Porteous, Esq., Montreal	\$16 00
Calvary Church	7 40
Friend, per Rev. A. Duff	50
	\$23 90
WINNIPEG CHURCH BUILDING FUND.	
A. Savage, Esq., Montreal	\$5 00
H. Birks, " "	10 00
	\$15 00

The Committee has this year undertaken a greater responsibility in connection with the Manitoba Mission. More funds will be needful than are at present at their disposal. The treasurer will be glad to receive contributions from the churches and individuals to enable the committee to carry on the work efficiently in so large and promising a field.

Address, H. SANDERS,
Treasurer,
120 St. James St.
Montreal.
Feb. 16, 1881.

Correspondence.

To CORRESPONDENTS. We cannot ensure the insertion of a matter in the week's issue reaching us later than the Monday preceding. The Editor is not responsible for the opinions of correspondents.

ARE WE A ROPE OF SAND?
To the Editor of the Canadian Independent.

DEAR SIR, Will you allow another word as to our independency. I find a great many persons comfort themselves in being connected with a great denomination, especially those attached to national churches, and what is commonly called connexional denominations, or societies. All sorts of speculations are indulged in as to why the Congregationalists do not multiply faster in Canada. It is, they say, due to our being "A rope of sand," or to an "exaggerated independency," &c. &c. As to the first, let me say, I have never felt myself any part of the "rope of sand," although I have never been anything but an Independent. When I first left college I did not go to the Congregational Union for a few years, and since I joined the Union I voluntarily resigned my connection with it, when I thought the interests of truth and righteousness could be best served by my doing so. For a few years I did not feel like a *bit of sand*, out of the Union, any more than in it. I have always felt myself and my church to be a distinct link in a golden chain, united on one side to Jesus, and on the other to the great body of believer who love and serve Him. I have never been out of fellowship with believers. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, a goodly company of whom I have always found, and with whom I have always taken sweet counsel, and in nearly forty years since I began to know Christ and preach Him, have had no rupture with any of them. I have never compromised my principles, nor felt that by them I was severed from the body of Christ, or the Mighty Head. The fellowship of Christians should be the unity of the spirit, the bond of affection, which should be above and before all union of mere name, form, or connexional organization. A Church united to Christ cannot be a "rope of sand," or part of such a rope. One common spirit binds all who love Him to one another with a stronger tie than that of any merely human organization. The "rope of sand" figure should never trouble a Church united to the Head, though they may differ on non-essentials from others, that does not break the unity of the Spirit. Nothing can sever a church from the body of true believers that does not separate them from Christ.

As to "exaggerated independency," we have had very little of this in Canada. A few cases of unwise settlement of ministers have of late occurred; these mistakes might have been prevented had the churches counselled with others. Such cases have been exceptional in the history of Congregationalism in Canada. Had we time we could name a number of unwise settlements in connexional bodies, where the people had very little or nothing to say of the matter. We certainly cannot admit that an "exaggerated independency" has made us few in Canada. What has then? Allow me to say, many things have combined to do it. We have not been largely helped by emigration. Our polity has not been "most in accord with the spirit of the people." Canada is composed of a people for the most part who have not very strong desire to depart from their ancestral religion. It involves less trouble to let religious matters be managed by ecclesiastics; self-government in religion is what very few care for in Canada, although some in all the churches are awakening up to it. Then, our excessive liberality, and the strong desire on the part of many of our ministers to bring our churches into conformity with other religious bodies, have made our *distinctive principles* of no account. If we have nothing distinctive,