

The Canadian Independent

Is published every Thursday, and will be sent Free to any part of Canada or the United States, or delivered Free in the City of Toronto, for One Dollar per Year.

Remittances to be addressed to THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT, Box 348, P.O. Toronto. All communications for the Editorial News of Churches and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 348, P.O. Toronto.

TORONTO, MAY 26, 1881.

NOTICE!

Mr. Wm. Revell has kindly undertaken the business management of the INDEPENDENT. In the future, therefore, all remittances and letters about the subscription, or complaints, should be addressed to him, Box 2618, P. O., Toronto, and all articles for insertion, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

Mr. A. Christie, 9 Wilton Avenue, will continue to attend to the business of the Congregational Publishing Company, including arrears for the INDEPENDENT and the Year Book.

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be brief, our space is limited, and we dislike to cut down.

RE SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The response to our appeal to unpaid subscribers, has not, we regret to say, been large; many, very many, are yet in arrears. Is this right?

THE COMING UNION MEETINGS.

We trust that all the brethren will make an effort to be in Toronto at the beginning of the Union Meetings, to remain until the end, and to make up their minds to attend to business while they are here. We by no means think that our ministers and delegates are worse than others, in fact we hear the same complaint from other bodies, that at the annual gatherings those who come together are inclined to look upon the occasion too much in the light of a holiday, that all they have to do is to enjoy themselves in seeing the sights, with an occasional drop in at some of the meetings, and have a general good time. We know that our Toronto friends, and the good brethren of old Zion, in whose building the meetings will be held, are making preparations for a large gathering from all quarters. The families connected with the various churches will gladly receive all who may come.

We think the occasion a special one. Subjects of great interest and of important bearing on the future of the denomination may arise for friendly conference; suggestions have been made on various points in the INDEPENDENT, which are worthy of discussion, and will not, we trust, be passed over in silence. We have a feeling that no union meeting that has been held for many years may be followed by such results as this coming one if the time is well and wisely used. May the brethren, ministerial and lay, all come up filled with the Holy Ghost and with wisdom.

HAVE WE A DENOMINATIONAL MISSION.

Or, having influenced other denominations with our peculiar views, are we to draw our mantle gracefully around our form and quietly yield up the ghost? The letters of "A Practical Man" have already elicited remarks on machinery, etc. We propose a few thoughts on the root question raised. Have we a policy distinct from others? We

shall make some statements of facts, and leave them for the most part to make their own suggestions, premising that the self-satisfaction some seem to gather from other denominations gradually coming round to our platform, does not justify us in prolonging a struggle for existence. If that is our only work let us disband, and carry our influence personally, as, alas, so many have, into those other denominations. Mere witness bearing gives no denominational permanence, and that we are a denomination (un-ectarian, we trust), is conceded continually by Union resolutions and by the logic of facts. (See, e.g., the resolution on page 92 of our last Year Book; also Constitution of the Union, Article IV., etc.)

Briefly then, and first, Congregationalism is the only denominational polity which freely and avowedly accords to a body of believers the full rights and privileges of a Church with bishops and deacons and sacraments, without any necessary aid from outward acts. Whilst for the freedom of fellowship and intercommunion it may and does invite the endorsement of other and sister churches, it gains therefrom no sacerdotal or ecclesiastical power, inasmuch as it forms from within, but is not formed from without, thus constraining the life within. Episcopacy, Presbytery, *jure divino* demand some form other than that of the simple Church authoritatively imposed, and therefore perpetual. We find in the local church all needful power, subordinate to the Great Head alone. We may organize even into synods, should circumstances demand, with, however, the undoubted right of dissolving the Synod the moment its work is done. The authority flows from the Church to any outward organization, should such be, never from that organization to the Church. No Synod can blot out a Church, nor diocesan bishop revoke a brother's ordination. This is a distinctive Congregational principle which none but Congregational churches hold. We are not arguing just now its correctness, we simply state a fact, and they who believe this to be a N. T. principle rightly belong to the Congregational order and to no other. Of course in this particular our Baptist friends are Congregational.

Secondly. The Congregational denomination, properly so-called, is the only one which owning an evangelical creed, makes its creed simply e angelical; which occupies in short, denominationally, the Evangelical Alliance platform. Other denominations are narrow as their creeds. We occupy an evangelical rather than a doctrinal platform. The Anglican Church may have Arminian clergy, the Presbyterian possess pastors virtually Unitarian, the Methodist those whose views are not to be distinguished from Calvinism, and among the membership of these Churches all shades of Christian belief prevails. All this, however, is at the price of denominational consistency. Congregationalism openly declares that its platform may contain all men who simply avow and manifest the great truths acknowledged on all hands as the essentials of evangelical Christianity. In this we occupy a distinctive denominational position, with its responsibilities and its privileges. An unwallled

extension, safe, if environed by Jehovah's wall of fire and overshadowed with His glory.

Following these we have a liberty others have not of shaping ourselves to meet the exigencies of the times. We are free to re-examine old foundations, which, in reality, gain in being thus freely examined. We are free to gather from all the benefits of experience and wisdom. We can use a liturgy without superstition; discard it without the violation of any principle. We can put on Goliath's armor if protection needs it; put it aside, as David did, should it prove cumbrous, and simply take the sword. We are Independent—not of each other or of God—but to do and dare for the Master and His truth; we are not free to allow our liberty to degenerate into license.

It seems, therefore, to us that we still have a denominational mission, only it will take men to fulfil it. More than once the question has been asked—"Are we the men for our stations?" Let the future work and spirit declare more loudly than words can utter, that we have not been found wanting.

SHORT PRAYERS.

We transfer from the *Religious Herald* of Hartford a few lines on the above subject, and would express our full concurrence in their spirit:—

The effort to get the greatest possible number of prayers and talks into a religious meeting within a given time, is a burlesque upon genuine devotion. The religious showman who boasts of such an achievement, ought to be employed in other feats of dexterity, and leave the worship of God for those who can engage in it without the spirit or the show of competitive zeal. That must have been a lively scene in which more than a hundred persons spoke in forty minutes, as approvingly reported by one of our religious papers! If it were possible to report what was said during those forty minutes by the hundred and odd speakers, we doubt if any devout, intelligent person would be either impressed or edified thereby. Is it not enough to wind bobbins and head pins by the count in minutes, and do other such like dexterous hand work? Must we also worship God—meditate, pray and think by a like count? If so, then by all means let each worshipper have his rosary in hand and watch the clock. But we believe there is a more excellent way, and they are wise who walk in it.

Long prayers are undoubtedly an evil; there has been a growing restlessness under them, and we are experiencing to-day the strong reaction against that practice. But has not that reaction itself produced an evil at the opposite extreme? Short, choppy, bald prayers, that are anything, apparently, but the utterance of a soul having communion with its Maker. Public prayer, whether in the pulpit or the prayer-meeting, we understand to be the utterances of one for many. The wants, the desires, the yearnings, the aspirations of the assembled brethren find one voice; this may be accomplished in two or three minutes, but we doubt it. We know what is urged, that one can take up one line of petition, a second another, and so on, but do they? Those who have attended meetings where the two or three minute prayers, with a dozen or twenty leading, is the rule, will know that there is a large amount of travelling over the same ground, the same ideas, the same class of petitions. We were struck with this when present at the Fulton-street noon-day prayer-meeting lately. We felt then that, we would rather have followed one orderly, comprehen-

sive, ten minute prayer, than five of the shorter ones. There may be occasions, as large gatherings of ministers and workers, where it is desirable to give many an audible part in the service; it then may be allowable, though we doubt its profit, but in the ordinary gatherings we claim that it is not well even to attempt the very brief, hurried apologies for prayer that we sometimes hear.

THE ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL UNION

Met on the evening of Monday, the 9th inst., and the next morning proceeded to ballot for a chairman. As some of our readers know, there has been this year, for the first time in the history of the Union, a most unhappy contest for the Chairmanship. Personalities and bitterness have entered into the struggle; names honored and dear to Congregationalists have been bespattered with mire; and, as we think, more damage has been done to the cause than would have been by the election of the most unsuitable Chairman. Dr. Joseph Parker was first in the field, and rallied round him a goodly number of excellent men, some of whom avowed that they could not endorse all that he had said and done, but that they thought the time had arrived when it was his right to receive this highest honor in the gift of the body. Others—and, as it proved, a large majority—thought otherwise; they declared that however able Dr. Parker might be, he was an erratic, unreliable man; that his history was full of blunders, that he had set himself in past years in direct opposition to the Union, and that his policy would have destroyed it; and those so thinking selected Mr. McFadyen as their candidate, and upon him the election fell by a majority of 297. It would be out of place for us to offer an opinion on the merits of the question, and we can only express great regret that it has arisen, and trust that now the election is over, the friends of Dr. Parker, and Dr. Parker himself, will accept the decision with a good grace, and that all will join heartily together, so that when the autumnal meetings come round, the churches and their pastors may be a unit in making this jubilee year of the Union a time of great advance and fresh aggressive work for the Master.

THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.

This long-expected work will be in the hands of most of our readers before they receive this. We have not had time to give it a calm, exhaustive examination, but hope to do so for an article next week. We may say, however, that our first judgment coincides with that of the great bulk of English critics, and is not favorable to the revision as a whole.

A SKETCH of the life of the late Edward Miall is in the printer's hands, but press of matter prevents its appearance this week.

WE thought that we should be able to recognize any name that had once appeared in the INDEPENDENT, but, Jupiter sometimes nods, and we were mistaken. The Rev. J. Grieve,