

## Editorial Articles.

### COLLEGES LARGE AND SMALL.



NOTHING has more distinguished Congregationalism than the ever continued desire and effort to provide collegiate training for young men. The school, and closely following it, the college, has ever been established wherever the church itself took root.

The Congregational colleges in England have been numerous; but mostly small. Now an effort, which is somewhat wide-spread, is made to amalgamate some of these colleges; and of very late years something of this has been done. Then for the results. There are fewer students, and smaller subscriptions than before; though it was hoped both these would show an increase. There was also more village and hamlet work; more evangelistic work in general, under the small-college system, than under the larger.

These are serious results. Now what are the advantages claimed for the large college? (1) More *esprit de corps* among the students, which is supposed to be a good thing; (2) more and better professors, resulting from the larger funds to obtain them; a larger field for their professional zeal; (3) a combination of means and funds; (4) more prospect of perpetuity of corporate existence, from large endowments and more wide-spread interest; (5) a better educated ministry.

But the results have shown in England no such gathering-in of students, or of subscriptions and endowments; and not in every case even an enlargement of the professorial staff. The *esprit de corps* remains, and the claim for better educated ministry remains; but the advocates of smaller and more numerous colleges put little value on the first, and dispute the second.

The question of residence or non-residence also comes into the argument. The comparison arises of a small college with residence together as a family, and the large college and non-residence; for that is the way the question practically divides itself. The advantages of the family-system—

where the number is (as is generally the case), small enough to have all the intimate acting and reacting influences of the family—must be very great. The young men will go out, with most of the intellectual, and many of the moral features of the professor they have studied under in the class, and ate with at the table, and walked with on the campus. In the other case, where it is only hearing lectures and attending examinations, no such results will follow. The young men will take on the habits and imbibe the opinions of those among whom they move outside their classes. And as for the *esprit de corps*, there is no reason why all that is good in it should not exist in a company of eight or ten, as with fifty or a hundred. And some of the best men we ever met, held that the most valuable "*esprit*" was that held in common between an evangelizing student and the souls he had won to Christ, and between a pastor and a flock he is helping on their way to heaven.

Every college should be a centre of gospel effort in its own neighborhood. This the small college always is. The training in preaching, and hand-in-hand work among the pews—and among the homes of the people—are what "make" the good minister. No amount of apologetics and hermeneutics, of homiletics and eschatology, will ever make up for these. All well to do these, but not to leave the other undone. Even if the influences of the large college were as favorable as the other, it only occupies one centre, where the other occupies three or four.

And every such college is a centre of denominational effort. If we possess a good thing, we want to spread it. The Roman church works thus, to spread what *they* hold. Says a contemporary: "Roman Catholics seem to go upon the plan of having as many colleges for students as they can support, for every college is an influence for Romanism in the neighborhood where it stands." And so it ought to be among us. We ought to have colleges in Winnipeg, London, Toronto, Kingston, and Montreal—five college centres instead of one, from whence could radiate influence and labor; where our young men could be trained further in the work many of them are already engaged in; and where village-work, not necessarily impinging on proper hours of study, and daily and hourly contact with the pastor-professor who