

Editorial.

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CONGREGATIONALISM.

It sometimes happens that Congregationalists in comparing the growth, size, wealth and influence of the denomination in one of the Provinces with that of some of the larger ecclesiastical organizations become discouraged, and possibly are tempted to make the weak weaker and the strong stronger, by a change of church relationship. Now there are several facts that should not be forgotten by such.

1. If we believe that our principles are scriptural we have no moral right to desert *principle* in order to be numbered either with the multitude, the wealthy, or the powerful. Principle, especially if enjoined by the teachings of God's word, is greater than all these and cannot be deserted without injury to the individual.

2. The separate Independent churches, whether few or many in a district or Province, form a part of a great whole which is by no means insignificant in numbers, wealth or influence. There is, so to speak, the empire of Congregationalism embracing all quarters of the globe. In Great Britain and America alone we have statistics of about *seven thousand* churches, and *six thousand* ministers, with an aggregate membership which

may safely be put at about *seven hundred thousand*.

3. For Christian culture, activity and usefulness, these churches will compare very favourably with any other Protestant organization. It is well known that two of the largest and most successful missionary societies, the London Missionary Society and the American Board are Congregational.

4. The record of Congregationalism forms a striking part in the history of the two continents. Not only have we this from the authority of leading statesmen and historians who were not of us, but also in the heritage of civil and religious liberty which has been secured. At a great price was this purchased for us by our ancestors in the faith, and their faith in those principles though while they "wrought righteousness," "obtained promises," "out of weakness were made strong," "waxed valiant in fight" should not easily be renounced especially if those principles are, as we maintain, those of God's truth.

5. The divine origin of these principles, we think, is shown both by the teachings of the scriptures and their perpetuity in the churches. To an unbiassed student of the Acts of the Apostles, the first, it would seem, must be clear; and the growth, activity and christian manhood developed in the churches, without such human inventions as are found in hierarchial pretensions or power