

To the Editor of the Canadian Independent:

MY DEAR SIR,—I have just received this week's INDEPENDENT, and hasten to say that, as a born Scotch Independent; as the son of a Scotch Independent minister—and they are considered thoroughly orthodox on the question of Independence—I am quite in accord with your views on that subject, as published in the INDEPENDENT; and so far as I know, they are the views held by our body, both in England and Scotland.

I am quite as strong a Congregationalist as those who have written the letters in question; have no leanings whatever to Presbyterianism, as a church system; and I fail to see the slightest bias in that direction in any of your articles. Nor have I heard, in any quarter, the least whisper of dissatisfaction as to the course of the INDEPENDENT.

On the contrary, I know I will be borne out when I say that the paper has never been more appreciated in the body than it is to-day, under the present editorial management. We are under great obligations to you for taking it up at the time you did, and I am sure the Congregationalists of Canada don't want any change, either in the editorial or in the principles enunciated.

I have been a subscriber since 1854, and have much pleasure in testifying to its increasing excellence.

Yours very truly, B.

Montreal, Jan. 13, 1880.

[With reference to the subject above mooted, we have received a letter from one of the friends from whose former letter we made the extracts which were the basis of our article, "Our Presbyterianism." It is personal and not intended for publication, but we venture, notwithstanding, in justice to the writer, to quote one portion. He says, "I have no regrets that the sentiments of the letter are made public, but I do feel some regret that I had not made a direct letter to yourself the vehicle of communication. I might have said the same thing with accompanying words of commendation and qualifications, which would have been as truthful representatives of my feelings towards the C. I., as those you have seen and published." We thank our friend for these words, and believe from the general tone of his letter that we are much nearer accord in our views than the extracts of last week would have led us to think. —ED., C. I.]

BOND STREET CHURCH.

[The following has been handed to us for publication. —ED., C. I.]

On the invitation of the Executive Committee of the above church, the pastors and deacons of Zion, the Northern, Western, and Yorkville churches met with the male members of the Bond St. church in conference on November 23rd last, the pastor of that church, Dr. Wild, being in the chair. Views were interchanged, and the conference adjourned. Subsequently the following resolution was sent to each of the churches there invited to the conference:

BOND STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, TORONTO.

Resolution passed at Church meeting, held Wednesday evening, December 8th, 1880.

Resolved—That we, the members of the Bond Street Congregational Church, desire to express our deep regret that the results which have followed upon the call and settlement of our late pastor have been of so unhappy a nature.

While we cannot admit that in giving that call, or in our subsequent action, we were actuated by any motive other than that of seeking and securing the best interests of the church, we see in the results the evidence that we were unfortunate in our action, and have accordingly taken those steps which we deemed right and proper, and have erased the name of our late pastor from the church roll.

We further desire to give expression to our regret that a reproach should have fall-

en upon the cause of Christ, and especially upon the churches of our own denomination, in consequence of the late course of events at Bond Street, but we hope and believe that our Lord and Master, "Whose we are and Whom we serve," is guiding and leading us in the present, and that the future of our church will be a happier, a brighter, and a more successful one.

It is therefore our desire to be in bonds of fellowship and Christian union with all God's people.

The church rejoices in the settlement of Dr. Joseph Wild in the pastorate, and pledges itself to hearty labour with him in the extension of the Gospel of our common Lord.

A united meeting of the pastors and deacons of the churches thus addressed met December 23rd at the residence of Rev. W. D. Powis to unitedly consider the above resolutions. It was agreed to submit to the respective churches the following:

A careful consideration of the resolutions passed at the meeting of the Bond Street church, on the 8th of December, 1880, leads to the conclusion that the said resolutions are not fitted to restore the confidence which has been broken, seeing that regret for the "results" is mentioned, but any expression of regret for the actions which necessarily led to those results appears to have been studiously avoided.

We desire to say that, recognizing the right of a church to regulate its affairs, whatever individual opinion may be, we would not have made the unhappy events which have occurred in connexion with the church in Bond Street the present subject of church action, had not that church requested our pastor and office bearers to meet with them in formal conference, and subsequently have laid these resolutions before us: it is therefore forced upon us to allude to those actions by which the Bond Street church placed itself outside the Congregational Union and of the fellowship of their sister churches, and to that constant justification of the course, which perpetuates the alienation.

We believe the Bond Street church to have acted not only "unfortunately," but unwisely even to wrong-doing, in forming a connexion with their late pastor with his known antecedents and the peculiar relation in which he stood to the denomination to which he belonged when the call was given to him: we also believe that the action of the majority towards a large and worthy minority, who protested against the induction of the late pastor, and were in consequence of that induction obliged to withdraw from the church, was unkind; that the persistency of the church in retaining Mr. Handford in spite of reports which had become matters of public notoriety, even to the finding their way into the public press, was at least most strange; we also think that the action of the Bond Street church in refusing to meet with the committee appointed by the Union was wrong and uncourteous, calculated at once to destroy all fellowship, and we believe that the results which have been so injurious not only to the Congregational body in Canada, but also to the Christian churches of Toronto, and which the resolutions deplore, have been the inevitable results of the unwise and unkind action above referred to, and that, therefore, the separation which exists between that church and other churches of the denomination in which the Bond St. church was once one of the most honoured and useful members has been solely occasioned by that church's determined action.

We consider that the Bond Street church should not only express regret for the sad results, but frankly acknowledge regret for their erroneous conduct, and thus in simple justice to themselves, to the minority who were driven from amongst them, and to the Christian public generally.

In our judgment, therefore, it is the Bond Street church alone that can place itself in true fellowship with the Christian community and with the once sister churches, and until this is done we are constrained to say that a mere formal fellowship would be worthless to them and unworthy of those who tendered it.

We unhesitatingly say that we desire the true prosperity of the Bond Street church, that these utterances are made in no unfriendly or critical spirit, but being called upon by that church to take action we find it incumbent upon us to take and maintain such a position as will honestly show our views with regard to those unhappy events that have so troubled and disturbed our denomination in this city and province.

The Northern and Yorkville churches, at their regular church meetings on December 29th, adopted these last resolutions *simpliciter*; the Yorkville church adding their readiness to grant fellowship when the conditions were fulfilled; the Northern appointing the pastor with Messrs. Baird and Nasmith to convey the resolutions to the Bond Street church. Zion continued the consideration to an adjourned church meeting on the 5th inst., and adopted the same, simply adding to the last paragraph so as to read, "we desire the restoration and true prosperity," &c.

The Western resolved that their fellowship with Bond St. had not been broken, and that therefore no action was needful on their part.

THE NEW CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SARNIA.

This church, situated on the corner of Queen and Wellington streets, and occupying an important position opposite the site of the proposed town park, was formally dedicated to the worship of God on Sunday, 2nd inst. In the morning at 11 o'clock, after the invocation and singing, the Rev. W. J. Cuthbertson read suitable passages of Scripture, and offered the prayer of dedication. The pastor, Rev. W. H. A. Claris, next made the usual declaration, and the Rev. D. McGregor, M. A., preached an able and effective sermon. Basing his remarks on Mark xi. 11, he proceeded to show that Christ should enter, (1), into the common affairs of life; (2), into the home; (3), into the church; and (4), into the heart of every man. At 3 o'clock the Rev. A. Hastings Ross, of Port Huron, preached a telling discourse in his own particular line; his text was Psalms xlviii. 12, 13. Beginning with Voltaire's utterance respecting Christ, "Crush the wretch," and his declaration in 1778, that "Christianity would be dead in fifty years from that time," he went on to show that this was far from the case. A comparison between that date and the present in regard to the circulation of the Scriptures, the extent and effect of missionary operations, and the work in home fields, served to show a remarkable energy and activity for a dying system. In reference to that, it might be truly said, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." In the evening at 7 o'clock, the Rev. D. McGregor, M. A., preached an interesting and beautiful discourse on "Hope," based on Romans xv. 13. The church is 60 x 44 feet, and is built of red brick, in the Gothic style of architecture, and is capable of seating four hundred people. At the front over the entrance, is a gallery with a seating capacity of fifty, in which the choir will be located. The body of the church is lighted with three large windows on the sides, each having a border of stained glass, with enameled centres, and were put in by R. Lewis, of London. They are good specimens of his skill in that line of business. The front window, which faces Queen street, is a really handsome one, being what is termed a trefoil window. It has a centre piece representing a dove in the act of descending, and was presented to the church by Mrs. C. C. Claris, in memory of a deceased granddaughter, a daughter of the pastor of the church. All the windows are the gift of the members of the congregation. The ceiling is angular, showing the trusses, and is twenty-five feet in height. The seats are constructed of white ash trimmed with black walnut, and were manufactured by Messrs. R. & H. Mackenzie, Sarnia. The pulpit is formed by an arched recess at the rear of the building. The main entrance to the church is level with the basement, and has stairs on both sides leading to the auditorium, continuing from there to the gallery. The basement is 39x36 feet, and is intended for a lecture and school room. A partition extends across the east end of

the basement, the space beyond being occupied as an infant class-room—12x14, furnace-room and vestibule from which a stairway leads to the pulpit. The building is heated by hot air, which is supplied from a large furnace cased in brick, which renders it fire-proof. The furnace is a good one, and was put in by Beecher Bros., of London. Dampers are placed at convenient points for the regulation of heat. The painting was done by Messrs. C. Taylor & Son, and plastering by Mr. James Ellison. The plans and specifications were drawn by Mr. Robson, who also superintended the construction of the building. The church, though by no means the largest in Sarnia, has a neat and comfortable look about it, and reflects great credit on the pastor, Rev. Mr. Claris, and the congregation, for their energy in erecting, under many disadvantages, so handsome a building. The total cost of the church will be, as near as can be ascertained, \$6,500, of which above two thirds are provided for.

On Monday afternoon at 3 o'clock a prayer meeting was held in the Church. At eight in the evening a public platform meeting was held, when addresses were delivered on "Congregationalism." The Rev. W. H. A. Claris presided. The Rev. W. H. Allworth spoke on "Our Essential Principles;" Rev. D. McGregor, on "Our Dangers;" and the Rev. W. J. Cuthbertson, on "Our Doctrines, their Basis and Forms." The Rev. J. Howie, D. Campbell, and E. Johnson made a few general remarks.

A MEETING.

According to announcement a tea-meeting was held in the basement of the new church on Tuesday evening last. Four large tables, extending from one end of the basement to the other, were well loaded with all the delicacies imaginable, which were eagerly disposed of by those present, dish after dish disappearing with wonderful rapidity. The waiters at one time seemed to be on the verge of a panic, so frequent were the calls for edibles, but they rallied a little after their numbers were reinforced. Some fears were entertained that there would not be sufficient edibles to feed so large and hungry a crowd as congregated at the tables, but the judgment of the ladies of the congregation was correct this time, as there was enough and to spare. The ladies deserve great credit for the quality of the eatables and also for the tasty manner in which the tables were decorated. After everyone had satisfied the cravings of their appetites an adjournment was made to the church proper. On motion, the newly elected deputy-reeve of Sarnia Township, Mr. Wm. F. Taylor, was elected to the chair, after which followed addresses by Revs. Messrs. Cuthbertson, Allworth, Howie, Thompson, and the pastor of the church. The addresses were listened to with great attention by those present. The choir furnished some choice selections of music during the intervals between the addresses. Mr. J. Mitchell and Miss Morrison each gave solos and received hearty encores. A duet by Misses Brown and Mitchell was also well received.

At 10.30 the meeting broke up, and the general opinion prevailed that it was a great success financially and otherwise.

SOCIAL.

A social was held in the same place on Wednesday evening, the bounty of the ladies making it an easy matter to supply the wants of a large assemblage.

The meetings were all most successful. On Monday evening seats had to be placed in the aisle, and then several had to leave for want of room. The pastor and people are to be congratulated on their energy and deserved success.

W. J. CUTHBERTSON.