

Our business just now is with intelligent christian men and women who know why they are Congregationalists instead of something else,—liberal, earnest souls who, having first given themselves to the Lord, have chosen their present church connection from a love of what they conceive to be the truth for the truth's sake.

To such we shall not stay to prove that there is both abundance of room, and plenty of work for all the christian churches that have ever yet been planted in Canada, and that however feeble and unnecessary the body to which we belong may appear in some eyes, it is nevertheless capable of becoming one of the mightiest spiritual agencies in the regeneration of this land. Whether it shall ever attain to the position it ought to occupy in this country, and does occupy in Britain, and in the United States, will depend very much upon ourselves. The part played by the forefathers of the denomination in the great constitutional struggle for civil and religious liberty in the old land cannot but give us some little *prestige* in the estimate of the more thinking portion of the community. No one who has read Lord Macaulay will ever need to ask again, as a learned Judge is said to have done sneeringly a few years ago, "Who *are* these Congregationalists?" Only ignorance and prejudice can ignore the mark they have made in the world,—in the new no less than in the old.

Our neighbours across the border, inheriting the principles of their godly ancestry, have triumphantly demonstrated that the church of Christ needs no Royal "Defender of the Faith" to maintain her orthodoxy, no state endowment to support her ministry, and no Act of Uniformity to preserve the dignity and decorum of her worship. The people of England, though slower to learn, are rapidly reaching the same conclusions.

And if in this young and rising Dominion we are happily freed from the incubus of an established church, and from that governmental interference in ecclesiastical affairs which is inevitably, and in some sense justly, the price of it, there is still much to be done in the way of inculcating and exemplifying the principle of individual church independence. And it is one of the signs of the times for which we, above most men, have reason for mutual congratulation, that hierarchies and ecclesiastical courts are learning more than ever to respect the rights and power of the people, and are cautiously substituting counsel for command in their supervision of affairs. Men are beginning to discover that the New Testament economy is after all the true one; and that the less a church with a truly converted membership is ruled *from without* the better.

Apart, then, altogether from the obligation which presses upon us, in common with all other religious communities, to send the gospel to the destitute,—and that must ever stand foremost among the objects of our Missionary Society,—we have to assist in leavening this land with the principles of religious liberty and equality, in educating public opinion with