

1. Of the lateness of entering into the field. The Episcopalians came with the first English settler; the Presbyterians have been here more than a hundred years; while Congregationalists have been in Canada only fifty years. He will likely win the race who gets a good start.

2. Congregationalists have always refused aid from the State. The English and the Scotch Presbyterian Churches formerly received State aid. By this means they had large resources with which to push their work forward. Our people never received a cent from the State. Moreover, they were actually hindered in their progress; in Quebec our ministers for a time could not baptize or marry or bury. We students will not soon forget the day in class when Dr. Wilkes told us of the difficulties he and his co-workers for civil and ecclesiastical liberty encountered from the opposition of State-assisted churches. The eyes of the veteran flashed brighter, and the voice grew stronger, as the memories of the battle came back to him. The battle was won, and now all Protestant churches stand on equal footing, as they should.

3. Our intense catholicity. We are too liberal-minded to prosper as much as more sectarian denominations. For example, it is one of our principles not to go into a community that is well-churched, whereas some of the denominations are not so particular. They come in, sit down beside us, and being well sustained from without, wait till they have gained a good cause. We might have been more denominational, but we would have been less Christian.

4. Not been aided by immigration. Congregationalists in the Old Country belong to the middle class, which does not emigrate. The emigrants from England have been Episcopalians or Methodists, from Scotland, Presbyterians. A Presbyterian minister said that, apart from increase by Scotch and Irish immigrants and their descendants, the Presbyterians of Canada have not even held their own. What we have we have gained largely by active work among ourselves and the unchurched.

5. Ignorance in relation to our principles. Many have become Congregationalists from convenience; they should be well drilled in our principles, and remain Congregationalists from conviction. Behind us lies the grandest history of any church. If silence be any proof, many of our ministers know little about it.

6. Extensive independency has prevailed. It was English Congregationalism that was planted here, and English Congregationalism makes much of the independence of the local church. For this reason our churches have been too much separated in sympathy; they have been a number of scattered republics, which might have done more if more thoroughly one in purpose and work.

7. The work of the Home Missionary Society has been largely spent upon country churches, to the partial neglect of the centres of population.

8. We are few, because we have always been few. Every small denomination is hampered by its smallness, and works against odds continually. A dozen members leave one church to go to a dozen different places, and probably one of the dozen finds a Congregational church home.

This long list of causes was supplemented by a few of the remedies. They were briefly—a closer drawing together of the churches; a stronger denominational spirit in the spring of denominational life, the college; a greater missionary interest; a diffusion of literature on Congregational history and polity, and, above all, a more devoted loyalty to Jesus Christ. Most of these remedies are already at work, and there are signs of better times. There is need of us; in the future there may be greater need. Let us do with our might what our hands have found to do.

#### CONCERNING THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Illustration is a fine thing in discourse. It awakens interest, lets in the light, clinches an argument, sends home an appeal, and is very likely to remain in the memory when every other thing in the discourse has fled. One or two real good illustrations redeem a dull sermon. Many a sermon that has been voted dull by even the good people who heard it would have been voted "splendid" by everybody, had the preacher rolled up the blinds here and there as he went along, and let in a blaze of light in the form of a good illustration of some kind. We say *some* kind, for there are a great many kinds, and all are good when they do good.

There are a few preachers in this world who condemn the use of illustrations. Usually they are men who cannot make or use a good figure. Preachers are too much given to the abominable habit of belittling what they cannot do. If a lawyer sees his brother of the bar do some exceptionally clever thing, he generally has sense enough to remain silent, or praise the performance and credit it to his profession. Some preachers pursue just the opposite course. They cannot see a brother do a good thing without sneering at it, or in some way trying to belittle it. The greatest sinner in this way is Dr. Dry-as-dust. He never uses an illustration himself. He doesn't know how. If he did try, he would suggest an elephant going through a quadrille. When he hears a brother using discourse, well lighted up, and sent home with good illustrations, he tries to screw up his countenance into a shape that will suggest the profound, the patronizing and the pitiful in combination. His countenance having taken on this triple cast he says "Shal-