

## Correspondence.

### THE REV. MR. STEVENSON'S LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER,—I cannot but admire the manly utterances and plucky spirit of Bro. Stevenson's communication, in the last number of the magazine. He writes as a man strong in his convictions, independent as a thinker, and proud of his ecclesiastical relation.

To speak of weakness, comparative or otherwise, of our churches in Canada, is to him both painful and distasteful ; so much so, that if he could have his way he would not hear it again.

We can sympathise with his wounded feelings, and allow for his strong utterances, when we consider he is fresh from the land where Congregationalism is a great power, intellectually, socially, politically and religiously, having few equals ; himself accustomed to move in the front rank, with men who know its strength. In his change of residence from that land to this, he has settled in the commercial and financial capital of our Dominion ; among a people both liberal, intelligent and socially influential ; ready with their purses and influence to strengthen and encourage him in his work and equal to the desires of his noble and impulsive heart. But painful as it is for him to hear his brethren making confessions of weakness, so far as our work in Canada is concerned, it is stern truth which we cannot deny.

Other brethren, full of city life and Old Country experience, have so thought before and spoken of us, when a better acquaintance with our actual condition has wonderfully changed their views and modified their feelings towards those who, in their difficulties and privations, do sometimes, as they stand alongside their stronger neighbours, feel they are weak in this land, great as they know they are in relationship in other lands. Remembrance of the fact that they belong to a great people far away, is very inspiring ; but does not meet their

real want. It is the hand of strength held out to them they need, to enable them to rise and prosper.

To insinuate that the great want of such brethren or churches is a more self-reliant spirit, and say that in the event of their failing to be independent and walk alone, they have no mission in this land, is, to say the least of it, unsympathetic and ungenerous. We have brethren and churches who have battled with error, intolerance and priestly conceit, and have endured poverty and hardships year after year for principle's sake, that they might do the Lord's work in this land, who, if they had consulted flesh and blood, would have sought richer fields and better incomes, leaving their few sheep in the wilderness to die, or sacrifice their conscientious convictions to stern necessity.

The longer we are in the field, the more we are convinced of two things, viz. : with few exceptions, our weaker churches are doing all they can, financially ; and without outside help, let it come from whence it may, they will go down, as some have done already. Inability to be self-sustaining is no evidence, in either nature or grace, that we are not needed here.

Again, the more we know of Canada, the more we feel the need of vigorously maintaining the weak places of our Zion, instead of quenching the smoking flax, for in them there are elements of power that will bring great honour to God and good to our land.

It comes hard to those who, after years of toil and struggle, when their hairs are getting grey in service, to be told, Your work is a failure, and that, if you cannot be self-supporting, you are not wanted. Our Master will not so judge us. We are expecting to hear Him say, though we may not have much that men count as success, " Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

If our stronger churches in this land