

of, if mentioned at all. The character and conduct of living men, or of men so lately dead that their surviving relatives are among us, could not with propriety be discussed with the freedom which impartial history requires. Nor can any one who may undertake to tell the story be free from personal bias in almost any instance. To write the *true* history of this and that church,—any of our readers can point to an instance in their own section,—would require a free handling of the names of ministers, deacons, members, and surrounding denominations, that would bring a hornet's nest about the unfortunate historian's head. A bald statement of dates, names and figures only, would not be valueless, but it would be very dry, and give us no soul of history; no example to follow or to avoid. To clothe these dry bones with flesh, to say enough and not too much, would require rare skill and temper.

Another question will arise at the outset of the undertaking:—What method shall be followed in the recital of the facts? There are four possible methods. 1. The *personal*, under which the story of each Missionary's labours could be given, in whatsoever place or places carried on. This, however, would be a series of biographies of the ministers, rather than a history of the churches. Many would not be willing to give what they would consider "a full, true and particular account" of their public life. Autobiography is seldom satisfactory to readers. Nor could we secure a mutual taking of likenesses that would answer the purpose, A. (we want this word if it is in no dictionary,) biographing B., and B. performing the same office for A., and so on. The personal method, though not without certain advantages, would not serve alone. 2. The *local* method would be, to take up church by church, and write its story from the beginning. This would make the history complete, and could be done very graphically, but it would inevitably involve us in all those personal questions of which we have spoken above. We fear, too, that in many places, it would now be impossible to discover the facts. And this method would require to be supplemented by an outline of the Missionary, Collegiate and other general institutions of the body, and of its action in relation to politico-ecclesiastical matters. 3. The third method is the *chronological*, according to which the order of time would be followed, and the labours of missionaries, the progress of churches and the general proceedings of the denomination, would be woven together in a continuous narrative. This plan, under a judicious division of the time into certain periods, would probably be found to be better than either of two preceding. 4. The fourth method we call the *topical*. Adopting it, a series of sketches could be given under such headings as these,—“American Congregational Missions in British North America;” “The London Missionary Society's Missions in Canada;” “The Colonial Missionary Society,—its Formation,—Principles,—Agencies, East and West,—&c;” “Canadian Congregational Home Missions;” “The Congregational College;” “Gorham College;” “Congregational Periodicals;” “The Widows' Fund;” “The Congregational Unions