

1. There is altogether too little acquaintance with, and appreciation of the distinctive principles of the body. Rightly understood and wrought out, they will everywhere be loved and prized. Only a small proportion of our membership, however, are Congregationalists by birth and early association, most of them having been led to unite with us either as a matter of local convenience, or because they have derived spiritual benefit from our ministry. Their only acquaintance with the practical outworking of Independency has been a comparatively short connection, perhaps, with some feeble country church, most of whose members, it may be, have enjoyed as few opportunities of studying it as themselves. They have been accustomed in other communities to see the officers of the church have all the "say" about ecclesiastical affairs, and having a general confidence that such things are all "in good hands," they take no trouble about them; and thus the business meetings of the church, which, when wisely conducted, form an admirable training school for those who are desirous of learning "our ways which be in Christ," are often wholly neglected. Many a Congregational church is practically Presbyterian from this cause.

The lack we complain of, then, is not wholly chargeable upon the minister. A more frequent exposition of the constitution and ordinances of the primitive churches than at present is heard, is probably desirable; although as many of our rural congregations are of a very mixed character, it is often felt to be difficult to do much in that way without the danger of giving offence. Nevertheless, "the whole counsel of God" must be declared, care being taken that if men be offended, it shall be with *the truth*, and not with *our spirit* in preaching it. We fear, however, that no great progress will be made in educating our people in the principles of the denomination, until they can be induced to attend the business meetings of the churches, and share in the responsibilities of their management.

2. We need a closer bond of union among the members of our churches. We are not sociable enough. We too frequently come and go from the house of God without having opened our lips to any one, except to exchange the customary enquiries about the health of our families, or pass a remark upon the weather. How many strangers might we attach to our place of worship, how many weary ones might we help, how many sorrowing and anxious ones might we comfort, how many wavering ones might we confirm, could we but spare a moment when we meet, to ask after their welfare! And how might we knit all hearts together in love!

Of course this charge does not lie against us alone; others are probably just as open to it as ourselves, for human nature is much the same the wide world over. But perhaps better provision is made in some other communities for the cultivation of the social element than in ours.

However that may be, it is a great want with us, and one which no amount of intelligence and refinement, either in the ministry or in the people, will