

Mr. F. Maxwell spoke of Mr. Duff's work at the "Kitchen Meetings," and how he had tramped through the snow to attend them.

Miss Edith Nadin having read the verse, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee," the interesting meeting was brought to a close by singing "My times are in Thy hand," and by the benediction.

## Selections.

### CONGREGATIONALISM.

#### A DEFENCE OF ITS EXISTENCE IN THE DOMINION.

*"Why it Should not be Absorbed by Other Bodies" ably Discussed by Leading Congregationalists—Interviews with Rev. John Burton, B.D.; Rev. Chas. Duff, Mr. H. J. Clark and Mr. James Thomson.*

(From the *Globe*, 7th Sept., 1888.)

The recent official visit of Rev. W. S. H. Fielden, missionary agent of the British Congregationalists, to Canada, with a view especially to enlarge and energize the Congregational mission work in the North-West and British Columbia, led naturally to an inquiry as to the necessity for and the advisability of continuing Congregationalism as such in the Dominion; and as none would be more interested in nor more able to give a fair defence of their general position than the Congregationalists themselves, a representative of the *Globe* called upon several leading local members of the body and obtained the following expressions of opinion:

#### REV. JOHN BURTON.

Rev. John Burton, B.D., was seen at his residence and asked to give a *raison d'être* for Canadian Congregationalism. Mr. Burton declined the task of representing the entire denomination, but was willing to give utterance to his own opinions, which, he was confident, are in accord with those held by the leading members of the Congregational body in England.

He said: The only Congregationalism in which I take an interest is that form of Church life which aims to witness for Christianity as a spiritual and quickening power. A Church is simply an assembly of men professing faith in Christ, and who manifest as a result of that faith, a Christlike character. This was the fundamental principle of the so-called Brownists of history. Such an assembly does not depend upon a bishop's licence or a king's decree for order or for validity. It exists lawfully, simply because it has life in Christ. The liberty it asks is that its members may freely witness for Christ and have unhindered fellowship or communion with all who serve in love and loyalty

their common Master and Saviour. Its relation to creeds is that they should, when existent, express the form of the assembly's life and not be used as moulds into which life is to be cast, or as partition walls between churches. What I believe, not what you must. The unity it strives for is of the spirit and not of the letter. Assured that as each plant, left free, will develop after its kind, so true Christian life, left free from the special pleading of creeds, will develop after its kind; in other words, Christ will be preached wherever Christ is felt as a life. The great concern of true Congregationalism is the making of "men in Christ Jesus, and through them the making of a new heaven and a new earth in which shall dwell righteousness."

The question has been asked, Why should not Congregationalism unite its forces with other acknowledged Christian organizations? The answer is somewhat difficult. There are some tendencies which claim to be Congregational, which apart from the name have nothing to distinguish them from other bodies; there are other manifestations that shelter themselves under the name that no Christian body need to covet; but while such philosophic systems as result in what is known as Arminianism and Calvinism, or such traditional forms as the episcopacy or the baptismal rite, divide, there will be a loud and, we believe, a growing call for a manifestation of spiritual unity where, as in God's great world, diversity mingle in one great harmony to declare the praise of its author and its life. This we view as the great mission of Congregationalism. This spiritual conception of Christ's Church has led Congregationalism to place no dependence upon the Civil power for Christian work. In its English development it never sought to perpetuate a State Church. It does not desire a godless State, but it makes religion a matter of the heart and not of legal enactment. Thus persecution, State compulsion, intolerance, are utterly foreign to its genius. I have used the term Congregationalism. The composition of the word is unhappy, though its use seems inevitable. There is no ism in true Congregational principles, which aim at an ideal broad as the Gospel of Christ and as inclusive as His love.

#### REV. CHARLES DUFF.

After thoroughly understanding the point at issue, Rev. Charles Duff, of Parkdale, wrote as follows:

Congregationalism is a term of Church government. It designates the absence of certain corporate bodies, such as synods, assemblies and conferences in the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist churches, which exercise a legal control over the individual congregations. This is its negative aspect. Positively, it recognizes the