

Abdool's death, all of them former pupils of our school. I still have Annie Mena, she now has a class in the Sabbath school; Jessie Campbell also assists in mission work, she and Annie, with Thomas Anaja and Mr. Sudeen, go out every Sabbath afternoon to villages near, sing, hold meetings, and do all they can. Ellen is another little girl, who will, I trust, grow to be a useful woman. Our dear Ada was married last June to a young man, a merchant, who will give her a comfortable home. Belle came to visit us last week; she married a policeman last year; she came to show her baby "to its grandmother," as she styled your agent, a fine boy; but you can hardly expect a "maiden grandmother" to care very much about babies. Mrs. McLeod and I are to attend Ah Toon's wedding on the 26th, one of our Chinese boys, a former pupil of ours. Young people grow so fast in this land that many I used to see as little children are now men and women.

We spent a very happy vacation with our dear friends the Mortons. Miss Morton has a very nice school at Orange Grove Estate. She is quite fluent in the Hindu tongue. The children all seemed so glad to see her, some came running through the rain with a rice bag over their heads; others with bright handkerchiefs on, all seemed in eager haste to meet the young teacher. Misses Semple and Hilton were visiting the Wrights in Couva. Miss Copeland was in the mission, so I did not see them.

Our children are all very anxious to see Miss Hilton, or, as they say, "the little white lady," she being very fair. I suppose they almost take the rest of us for coolies now, we are so brown and yellow. She has promised to come and see us at Christmas.

I like the liberal idea of your society taking over the support of the ladies. All would have greater interest in the workers, and the latter would feel stronger and braver by knowing that such a Christian force was at home to sustain the burden of the care of young souls in the mission fields. We find that sympathy of numbers is a great help in the army, the school, and why not in the mission work? I wish all could see their way to join the Halifax Society, it would work well, and you could and would do more for the cause. Another pleasant departure is that of meeting sisters of other Christian Churches. I cannot tell you how your report of last year has strengthened and encouraged us in the work here.

Our catechist, James Anajee, is doing well. He has now quite a large family of children, three girls and two boys.

The Mohammedans are under a cloud just now; some of the leading men have died, others are in prison for various crimes; so the more thoughtful among them think that perhaps God is punishing them for not listening to good words. They, and the evil example of the white people and Creoles, are the greatest earthly obstacles in the way of the heathen.

Please remember us in prayer. We have a hard fight to carry on in the enemy's country, and need all the Christian help we can get. May the Lord bless and keep you all. With great respect,

A. L. M. BLACKADDER.

Princetown, Trinidad, 1885.

CONGREGATIONALISM IN WOODSTOCK.

BY AN OUTSIDER.

MR. EDITOR,—A Congregational Church (so called) has completed its organization in Woodstock, Ont., by the induction and settlement of the Rev. Wm. Cuthbertson, M.A., formerly of London, England, and more recently of Chicago, U. S. We desire to make a few remarks on this movement, and shall endeavour to do so in a broad and impartial spirit, more concerned for the interests of truth and righteousness than for those of mere denominationalism.

The nucleus of the Congregational Church in Woodstock was formed by a malcontent minority which split off from Chalmers Church (Presbyterian). Into the circumstances that led to the rupture it is not needful, for the purposes of this article, to enter minutely. Suffice it to say that an anti-organ controversy which awakened strong feeling, and led to much personal antagonism, ripened into a secession. That the secessionists had some ground for thinking themselves aggrieved, and that there were faults on both sides, will probably be conceded by most intelligent people who are familiar with the circumstances, and able to take a dispassionate view of the case. But

the salient point to be noted is that the seceding parties had not come to any new views of church polity; they were still Presbyterian in principle, so that their action in organizing themselves into a Congregational Church was in no sense the outcome of conviction. This they openly and somewhat ostentatiously avow, declaring themselves to be as much Presbyterians as ever. But, unwilling to submit to any adjustment of their difficulties which could be had in connection with their own ecclesiastical system, and resolved to have their own way, they made overtures to the Congregationalists, who, seeing their opportunity, fostered the dissension and, with the material supplied by it, proceeded to organize a church.

At this stage of the narrative two or three questions crop up. First, is it not an anomalous thing that a denomination should be brought into existence in a place without conscientious preference for its principles on the part of its adherents; that it should be made a thing of convenience; and that not even the office-bearers of the new organization should be able to subscribe *ex animo* to its peculiar doctrines and polity? Surely this is to build a cave of Adullam, rather than a Church of Christ.

Secondly, is it quite in accordance with the comity which should prevail among organizations often called "sister denominations" that secession should be encouraged and crystallized into a church, when there is no conscientious difference as to doctrine and polity? A spirit of mutual concession and forbearance, not to say forgiveness, would have terminated strife and caused the "jagged atoms" to "fit like smooth mosaic." It is, perhaps, expecting too much from poor, imperfect human nature; but certainly it would have been a noble and Christian-like thing had our Congregational brethren, on ascertaining the facts of the case, replied to the overtures made them: "Brethren, we decline to profit by the misfortunes of our neighbours. Presbyterianism is your native ecclesiastical home. You will feel like strangers and exiles away from it. Accept our good offices to mediate reconciliation with your spiritual kith and kin. Shake hands with one another. Be friends again. And 'may the God of love and peace be with you.'" It only shows how far away the millennium still is that it is too much to expect this sort of thing; but it must come about if the time is ever to arrive when "Ephraim shall not vex Judah, and Judah shall not envy Ephraim."

Thirdly, is it a wise and legitimate expenditure of missionary funds to appropriate them for the maintenance of a church brought into being under such auspices as have been indicated? It was announced that the salary to be given is \$1,000. Of this it is understood that the people are to raise \$600, while the remainder is to be contributed by the Congregational Missionary Society. There is no spiritual destitution in Woodstock. The town is well churchied, and the Gospel abundantly and faithfully preached. That \$400 spent in helping some "church in the wilderness," or some missionary on a heathen field, would have been money well expended. Can this be said of its outlay in the town of Woodstock?

Of the newly-installed pastor at Woodstock it is impossible to speak too highly. For many years he has stood in the foremost rank of English Congregational ministers. He was chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1879, a certificate of character and ability of the very highest order. It is understood that his departure from England resulted from severe domestic affliction which incapacitated him for the labours he was performing, and necessitated change of scene and thought. He found an uncongenial sphere for a brief space of time in Chicago, and hearing of the opening in Woodstock during a short visit to Canada, was induced to accept a call thither. It is but charitable to believe that he could have been but imperfectly informed concerning the antecedents of the congregation to which he has come to minister. His discourse on the Sabbath morning following his acceptance of the call was based on Acts xvi. 10: "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them." The sermon was an able presentation of the nature of Gospel preaching, but did not dwell on "the vision" of duty. Naturally drawn to a field on British soil, and depending on the representations of the Congregational Missionary Superintendent—a most zealous denominational propa-

gandist—it is probable, if not certain, that he came in ignorance of facts, which had he known them, would have given him pause and perhaps led to declination.

Mr. Cuthbertson was evidently a "fish out of water" during the installation proceedings. They were conducted on the council system, which is unknown in Britain, and peculiar to American Congregationalism. He frankly confessed that the whole thing was new to him, and that he was very much in the dark as to what was expected of him. Had he been aware that he was being manipulated according to a system which British Congregationalism rejects as opposed to the fundamental principle of Independency—which it undoubtedly is—he would hardly have submitted to it. He had been called by the local Church, had accepted the call, and was, to all intents and purposes, the veritable pastor of the Woodstock flock; yet the council sat on his ministerial standing, doctrinal views and the regularity of the proceedings connected with his settlement. Having done this, it graciously resolved that, all being satisfactory, it would proceed to install. In England, what is there styled a "recognition service" would have been held. The Church, in the exercise of its prerogative of independence, having gone through the necessary preliminaries, adjacent churches and ministers would have been invited to participate in the services, as a matter of fellowship and not of authority. This was, evidently, what Mr. Cuthbertson expected, and, at the very outset of his experience, he has had a rude awakening to the fact, which will glare upon him more and more unpleasantly as he proceeds, that English and American Congregationalism are wide as the poles asunder. It must have been a genuine surprise to him to hear one of the members of the council affirm as he did that although it was usually considered that there were three distinct church polities in existence—Episcopacy, Presbyterianism and Independency—he was prepared to deny that there were more than two. This declaration was made by no other and no less than the editor of the *Canadian Independent*. He also stated that some people spelled liberty l-i-c-e-n-s-e, and independence d-o-a-s-y-o-u-l-i-k-e. This may be true, but it is also true that enlightened, able and conscientious men—such as Wardlaw, Lindsay-Alexander, Payne, Dale, and a host of other eminent British Congregationalists who might be named—contend for the true and proper independence of the local Church and reject all authority outside of it. That is British Congregationalism—Independency pure and simple—welcoming counsel, co-operation and fellowship; but believing that all ecclesiastical authority is vested in the local Church. Congregationalism in Canada has not been true to its antecedents; but has departed from its historic principles, and become a mongrel ecclesiastical system. This is one reason for its weakness. Opposing spirits exclaim: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" The Congregational ministry in Canada is largely made up of deserters from other bodies, who, carrying the traditions and habitudes of their former ecclesiasticisms with them, are engaged in a futile attempt to blend water and oil. While dissenting from Independency as the only scriptural church polity, members of other communions can respect the convictions of those who adhere to it in sincerity, but they cannot thus feel toward a system which is inconsistent with itself, and false to its ecclesiastical ancestry.

It was a painful exhibition of the way the new movement is regarded in Woodstock that not a solitary pastor of any other denomination was present at the installation service or tea-meeting. The addresses and speeches, with the exception of Mr. Cuthbertson's magnificent oration—for it was nothing less—were of the tamest, most puerile and wishy-washy character. There was no enunciation of great principles, no lofty presentation of the claims and work of the Christian ministry, and no worthy delineation of Christian or church life. Mr. Cuthbertson stood—as indeed he was—a giant among pigmies, a pyramid among molehills. There were allusions, almost irrelevant, in view of patent facts, to the wonderful providence which had ushered into being the first Congregational Church of Woodstock; glorifications *ad nauseam* of Congregationalism, and threadbare platform anecdotes in repletion; while the grand and glorious truths that should ring out their sublime peal at the marriage of a Church with a minister were conspicuous, mostly, by their absence.

Woodstock, Dec., 1885.