

And this offer of so priceless a gift is not to be made by *proxy* only,—not by the missionary, or Bible-reader, to whose support we contribute, it may be a paltry dollar a year, that he may do it *for us*. It ought to be considered too great a privilege to be the messenger of salvation to the perishing around us, for any one to be willing to delegate it wholly to others. It *will* be so regarded by every one who has the spirit of the Master, for he “came to seek and to save that which was lost.” If a man has no other way of preaching the Gospel except by proxy—through a church, or a missionary society,—let him do it so with all his might. In this *secondary* way let him “freely give” what he has so freely received. Better through another than not at all. But his first, and most imperative duty,—his first Christian instinct, as a saved soul, is to preach Christ *himself*.

“Now will I tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found,  
I'll point to Thy redeeming blood,  
And cry, Behold the way to God!”

Brother! are you doing this?

## AMERICAN CONGREGATIONALISM DURING THE CENTURY.

BY CHRISTOPHER CUSHING, D.D.

The life of a denomination, like that of an individual, is complex, and is so variously related that it is not easy to portray it in its unity and completeness. This is peculiarly true of the Congregational denomination. Its spirit has been so catholic and diffusive that, as a denomination, it has hardly had a distinct and separate existence.

A century ago the Congregationalists stood first in this country in the number of their churches. Now they rank in this regard as the seventh among the different denominations. Their increase has only been from 700 churches then to 3,500 now. But, while these numbers indicate the limits of its separate and organised existence, they by no means represent its real life.

A large part of the Presbyterian Church is composed of Congregational elements. Under the old “Plan of Union” the stronger form of government gained the advantage of the weaker. The intense denominationalism of the Presbyterians was careful to gather up the material which the more catholic and prodigal neighbour had placed within its reach.

The ministers of the Presbyterian Church are derived to a large extent from Congregational sources. Not less than 250 of the present number are graduates of a single New England College. Of the seven professors in the Union Theological Seminary at the present time, five were formerly pastors of Congregational churches. If we would estimate what Congregationalism has accomplished the last hundred years, we must include more than what appears inside its denominational links. Several of the bishops of the Episcopal Church were taken from Congregational stock. It is no slight honour to furnish much of the best material for the growth of other denominations, and through that material to mould their character.

By some it would be esteemed a higher honour to retain a hold upon all the legitimate growth in population, and make it subserve the interests of the denomination; but to the claims of this denominational interest the Congregationalists have been strangely oblivious.

When we cease to look at mere numerical strength, and consider what Congregationalists have *done* the past century in the different departments of Christian work, we see their true and distinctive glory.

The benevolent operations of Christians in this country commenced with a