

# The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN."

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## CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

BY REV. C. DUFF, M.A.

My Lord was crucified;  
'Twixt heaven and earth suspended on the 'rec,  
Delivered up by God's most wise decree.  
Yet slain by blind, inhuman cruelty,  
From sin's dread-power and guilt to set me free  
And bring divinest, holiest, life to me;  
"Jesus, the Christ," thus died.

Ocean of love! how deep!  
No mariner hath line to measure it;  
Man's life experiences are all unfit  
To sound this depth of deepest infinitude.  
And now no more the Law's chained culprit,  
Beside its rolling tide, I watchful sit;  
The scene, mine eyes doth keep.

Jesus, with thorns, see crowned!  
"Saviour and King of Israel! forsooth!  
This Nazarine, of men most vile, uncouth!"  
Derision thus, in madness, speaks the truth.  
*Real Kingship his: truth's from his youth;*  
Now beyond all renowned.

Here, heaven's law unfolds;—  
The thorny path for pilgrim's feet's not loss;  
Suffering with Christ for men refines from dross;  
The life and crown to come are by the cross,  
Not roads of comfort, such as down or moss;  
Thus God, his people, moulds.

With Jesus, let me reign;  
With his baptism, be baptized; his cup  
Of sorrow, if need be, drink up;  
And count the cost as nothing, that I sup  
With-Him in His Kingdom; and thus fill up  
Life's purest joy amain!

## CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY.\*

In a previous issue, *The Canadian Independent* drew attention to this latest and most valuable contribution to Congregational literature. We would direct attention to it again, and urge all, who desire to get a knowledge of the first facts and principles of Congregationalism, to procure a copy, and make its contents their own by careful study. Dr. Dexter has made the subject a life study. He has spared himself no labor in his search for the bottom facts. In thoroughness of research this book is without a rival. The author has visited England and Holland, and has found and consulted works hitherto unknown to writers on Congregationalism. The last three hundred pages of Dr. Dexter's work contains the richest contribution ever made to the bibliography of Congregationalism. He has given a list of 7,250 publications, in chronological order, from the year 1546 to 1879. Not only has the title of the books been given, but the libraries where they may be found. The list is followed by a full index of the authors. The reading of the titles of these 7,250 works is neither dull nor unprofitable, but the very reverse. Perhaps there is no way in which one could obtain a better idea of the character and temper of the writers and debaters on ecclesiastical matters during this period than by simply reading the titles of these books and pamphlets here collated. We give a few specimens. In 1582, R. Browne publishes "A booke which Sheweth the life and manner of all true Christians, and howe unlike they are vnto Turkes and Papistes and Heathen

folke." In the following year, R. Harrison issued "A Little Treatise upon the firste verse of the 122 Psalm. Stirring vp vnto carefull desiring & dutiful labouring for true Church Government," etc. These bring forth a reply entitled "A Proclamation against certaine seditious and scismaticall and erroneous Bookes and libelles, etc., set forth by R. B. and R. H."

In 1558 began the famous Martin Mar Prelate controversy. The title of one of Martin's books will indicate the style of weapon used by this opponent of prelacy. He singles out Bishop Cooper, of Winchester, for attack. His book is entitled, "Hay! any work for Cooper. Or a brief Pistle directed to the reverend Bishoppes counselling them if they will needs be barreled vp for fear of smelling in the nostrils o. her Majestie & the State, that they would vse the advise of reverend Martin for the providing of their Cooper. Because the reverend T. C. (by which mystical letters is understood eyther the bousing Parson of Eastmeane or Tom Coakes his Chaplain) hath shewed himself in his Admonitions to the people of England to bee an vnskillfull and beceyful tub-trimmer. Wherein worthy Martin quits himself like a man I warrant you . . . and makes the Cooper's hoops to fly off and the Bishopes tubs to leak out of all Crye, etc." This calls out an ecclesiastical work with the following euphonious title—"Pappe with a hatchet, Alias a figge for my God sonne, Or cracke me this nut. Or A Countrie cusse, that is a sound boxe of the eare, for the idiot Martin to hold his peace seeing the patch will take no warning. Written by one who dares to call a dog a dog. sold at the sign of the Crab-tree cudgell," etc.

In 1610, J. Robinson publishes "A Justification of Separation from the Church of England."

In 1641, J. Spencer sent out "A short Treatise concerning the lawfulness of every man's exercising his gift as God shall call him thereunto." This calls forth a book "On the sin of hearing Unordained men." In 1646, J. Cotton issued a pamphlet entitled, "The Controversie Concerning Liberty of Conscience in Matters of Religion." Then we have "A discourse of the Liberty of Prophecy, shewing the Unreasonableness of prescribing to other men's Faith, and the Iniquity of persecuting different opinions," etc. On the other side such works as the following, "The Casting Down of the last and strongest hold of Satan, Or a treatise against Toleration and Pretended Liberty of Conscience," etc. This again answered by "A Discourse on Liberty of Conscience. Proving that Liberty of Conscience ought to be granted to all, and that no man should be punished for matters of conscience."

The controversy between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, in the years following 1647, is indicated by the following works: "The Trojan horse of the Presbyteriall Government unbowed," "Plaine Truth without feare or flattery, or a true Discovery of the unlawfulness of Presbyteriall Government." "The Levellers levelled or The Independents Conspiracie to root out Monarchie," etc. "Tub-Preachers overturned or Independency to be abhorred as destructive to the Ministry, Church and Commonwealth." "The Presbyterian's Litany set forth and ordained to be used for the more speedy suppressing of the growth

of Independency now in a thriving way." What a significant title is the following. "An Endeavour after The reconcilment of that long debated and much lamented difference between the godly Presbyterians and Independents about Church Government." This was published in 1648. About twenty years later a similar work was issued, entitled "Comunion of Churches . . . in the hope that by the blessing of the Lord it may be the means of uniting these two holy and eminent Parties, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists." But they are not united yet. At one time Baptism is debated. Among the many books in the list on this subject we find, "The Way to Heaven by Water, concomitated by the sweet-breathing gales of the Spirit." In the early part of the present century we find many works on the Person of Christ showing the battle between Unitarian and orthodox Congregationalists. This bibliographical list of works on Congregationalism is itself a notable book, and will well repay perusal.

Dr. Dexter's work shows clearly that Congregationalism grew out of an earnest desire for a purer religious life. "The one original, urgent, controlling thought which grew to be a burden upon his (Browne's) soul which he could no longer carry was that of the laxness, the corruption, the prevalent ungodliness of those parish assemblies of all sorts of persons, which were the only churches that the Church of England knew." The actual starting point of those early Congregationalists was the conviction that it is the duty of every true Christian to seek the highest attainable purity of faith and life. These first founders of modern Congregationalism had their mightiest motive in the desire for purity of doctrine and purity of life. The polity of the church at Norwich made special provision for the culture of purity. "Their polity had in it the elements of a better manliness and a better godliness than any which it labored to supplant." The after history shows that this prime idea,—holiness of life, separation from the world, purity of communion, was ever insisted upon. The five Independents in the Westminster Assembly, in their appeal to Parliament, showed that the "Presbyterian Way" was deficient in one vital element, "the practical part," said they, "the power of godliness and the profession thereof, with difference from carnal and formal Ceristians, had not been advanced and held forth." That these early Congregationalists were men of superior moral character is witnessed by the fact that the exiled church in Leyden won the confidence of the business men and merchants of that city, who testified that "they had found by experience how careful they were to keep their word." The Magistrate of Leyden, in an official document stated that, "These English have been amongst us now twelve years, and yet we never had any suit or accusation come against any one of them." Congregationalists cannot afford to forget this lesson from their history. To be strong we must be pure. "Purity of doctrine and purity of life," as Dr. Dexter says, "are equally fundamental to a genuine and victorious Christianity." And again, "Congregationalism is pre-eminently the spiritual polity. It is less than nothing and vanity if the power of a godly life be not behind it."

The chapter on ecclesiastical Councils should be specially interesting to Can-

adian Congregationalists at the present time. The Council system has been developed to its fullest in New England. In the chapter on "Congregationalism in England," Dr. Dexter says, "Our English brethren have been led . . . to emphasize the sufficiency of each local church to act for itself." "They have never used, and, practically, know nothing about our system of ecclesiastical Councils." Both purity of doctrine and purity of life can be preserved and developed without an organized Council system, as the history of our English churches abundantly proves. The literature of Congregationalism shows that more than one attempt has been made to Presbyterianize it. In 1665, John Elliot "proposed an exaltation of the Divine Ordinance of Councils." But his scheme came to naught. After him one Rev. W. Homes, who came from the north of Ireland, "bringing strong Presbyterian attachments with him," endeavored to introduce some Presbyterian spokes in the Congregational wheel. Among his suggestions are the following—"That each Ministerial Association (each member having with him a messenger from his church) make up an ecclesiastical Council or Presbytery to hear and determine all affairs too mighty for disposal by a single church."

In 1735, a minister in Boston made another approach towards Presbyterianism by declaring that "the consociation of churches is the very soul and life of the Congregational scheme, necessary to the very *Esse* as well as *Bene* of it, without which we must be *independent*, and with which all the good of Presbyterianism is attainable."

But these views did not meet with acceptance. Dr. Emmons, concerning councils, declared *they have no divine authority at all*. His famous axiom was, "Associationism leads to Consociationism, Consociationism leads to Presbyterianism; Presbyterianism leads to Episcopacy; Episcopacy leads to Roman Catholicism; and Roman Catholicism is an ultimate fact." He sought to put New England Congregationalism on the corner stone of Christ's one command, and insisted that: "If we depart from the platform of church discipline, which Christ has given up in this eighteenth chapter of Matthew, there is nothing in Scripture to prevent our being Presbyterians, or Episcopalians or Papists." There are lessons here for Canadian Congregationalists; there is a tendency among some to look to Egypt for help. There are those that want a "strong" government; they want to drive more hoops on the barrel; they want to fence in Congregationalism by outside legislation. But our strength is not in these things. "Our government is not strong in externals; it just has God's indwelling to control it—that is all; "all along the years we can see it—the real strength and security of Congregationalism has always been most developed when it has most humbled its human pride, and most exalted its Divine leadership." This work is timely; we all need to carefully study it. As Dr. Leonard Bacon says, "We need to be recalled, as this book so grandly recalls us, to the first principles of Congregationalism, as illustrated in its history." J. B. S.

We shall be pure as the angels the more we give ourselves up to the ministering angel's work.

\* THE CONGREGATIONALISM OF THE LAST THREE HUNDRED YEARS, as seen in its Literature. Twelve Lectures, delivered in the Theological Seminary at Andover, Mass., 1876-1879. With a Bibliographical Appendix. By Henry Martyn Dexter. New York: Harper & Bros. Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.