

### CONGREGATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the Canadian Independent.

DEAR SIR,—I have much pleasure in acknowledging receipt of the following contributions to the retiring ministers branch of the Provident Fund:

George Robertson, Esq., Kingston, \$10; H. W. Powis, Esq., London, England, \$20; Northern Church, Toronto, \$20.

Hoping I may have to make further acknowledgements soon.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours Respectfully,

CHAS. R. BLACK,

Sec.-Treas.

Montreal, April 4, 1881.

## Correspondence.

### CONGREGATIONALISM IN CANADA.

To the Editor of the Non-conformist and Independent.

SIR,—The last mail from England brought us that issue of the *Non-conformist and Independent* which contains a very suggestive comment on Mr. Batchelor's paper on the aggressive power of Congregationalism—a subject quite as germane to this side of the Atlantic as it is to yours.

It is specially so to us in Canada, inasmuch as our aggressive power is demonstrably weaker than that of other Christian bodies, all of them working under conditions of perfect religious equality. We fought the battle of disestablishment and disendowment twenty-five years ago, and won it. But it is a fact, much to be pondered over, that the Congregational churches in Canada have been left entirely behind in the race, and are at this moment, as compared with other religious bodies of the country, far, indeed, from being relatively as numerous and influential as they were twenty-five years ago. This state of things gives special value and interest to any suggestions which may be made by our brethren of the mother land on the subject.

It was, however, with no little amazement that I read in your comments such a sentence as this.—“A religious England, all Congregational, or Baptist, or Presbyterian, or Methodist, is hardly likely to be dreamed of by the most sanguine of these bodies, and is a consummation as undesirable as it is impossible.” Is this the case? Do leading members of the Congregational churches of England, then, think it *undesirable* that all England shall be covered with Congregational churches? If this is their deliberate opinion, does it not suggest a fundamental reason why they are delicate in aggressive power? The first condition of successful aggressive work is a conviction that we are right, and our principles are true, and that it is our bounden duty to extend them.

With regard to our own Church system, do we not hold and proclaim that Congregationalism is Scriptural? If so, is it not desirable? The fundamental point of the whole matter is this—Is Congregationalism right? If not, what right had we to separate from the Church of our fathers, and to organize in this mode and fashion? And what right have we to remain so now? We have withdrawn our religious force, our energy, talents, and means, from an organization which once covered the whole country, and was undoubtedly the Church of the land. And we have not simply separated and remained separate; we have organized, we have built up another system; and we have organized, not on the ground of what is politic, or prudent, or apparently suitable to circumstances, but what is right, what is scriptural, what is, in fact, the will of God and the command of Christ.

Now, are we prepared to say that Christ commanded one thing to us and another

thing to another portion of the people of England? Was there a revelation of Church order for the rich and titled, another for the commercial and middle classes, and another for the masses of the poor? Charles II., of pious memory, once said that Episcopacy was the only religion fit for a gentleman. I am not aware that Congregationalists have any particular reverence for the witty sayings of that “most religious” prince, but do they not unconsciously acquiesce in them when they quietly submit to the idea that it is vain to expect that Congregational churches can ever make their way amongst the noble and the titled? In our heart of hearts do we not feel and act as if we felt that Congregationalism is not a thing for lords and gentlemen? And yet we profess to have a Divinely-ordained polity.

Now, unless we are prepared to take the ground that kings, rulers, and titled personages are not according to the Divine will and ought to be abolished, we should seriously reflect upon the incapacity (for it is practically incapacity) of our church system to exist and maintain itself in these upper regions of the body social and politic. For the same phenomenon is observable in this country, free as all churches are. Further, we sometimes say that our system is not well adapted for the poor and uneducated. We cannot make progress in that direction. Methodism does, Anglicanism does, Romanism does, but we do not. Yet we are firm believers in the book which tells that the common people heard Him gladly, and that the poor had the Gospel preached to them.

We then, with our Divinely-ordained church system in our hands, deliberately say that it is not desirable that this system shall generally prevail. We are content that it shall strike a certain stratum of society, and leave all the rest untouched. It is evident, then, that we have not the courage of our convictions. And it becomes a question whether we have such convictions at all. For men who are thoroughly persuaded that they have a Divinely-ordained system are found to be thoroughly bent on extending it as far as their influence reaches.

But to come down from this high and scriptural ground to the mere ground of wisdom and expediency. Let us ask ourselves, Have we a good system of church government or have we not? A good system, some will say, but it has its defects. Let us, then, amend the defects. We are perfectly free to do so. A good system for us, others would say, but not for others. Then let us modify it until it is good for all, rich and poor alike. Meantime, ought we not to do our utmost to spread it among the class for which it has an undoubted affinity. And when, by amendment, we have made it suitable for the rich and noble (for I suppose the gentlemen of England have souls), let us endeavor to spread it to them. And when suitable to the poor, to them also.

What is the value of our freedom or flexibility unless it gives us greater power to work, greater possibilities in every direction of doing good. We speak of the evils of Connexionalism. But is not this mere verbiage? Are not the Congregational (or, if you prefer it, the Independent) Churches a “connexion”? We constantly call ourselves a “denomination.” We act together in that most vital matter of connexional arrangements, the education and ordination of ministers. Our churches are bound together in close fellowship, for, practically, a member of one is a member of all, and the minister in one is a minister of all. Freedom, when it means freedom from the necessity of labour and sacrifice, is mere license and abuse. And flexibility, if it renege the restraints of co-working, if it will not submit to the judgment of others, insisting on either working, or sitting still, or following its own course, independent of

what may be done or advised by others, such a flexibility as this is a thing to be dreaded and avoided, not valued and cultivated.

I have been a member of Congregational churches in England and Canada now for nearly forty years, and have taken a tolerably active part in their proceedings, and I have long come to the conclusion that the great want amongst us is not more freedom and flexibility, but more of order, organization, and co-operation. Are we thoroughly convinced that we are right, that is, that our churches are organized in the main according to the Divine Will? And do we believe, as an inevitable consequence, that all others should be organized after the same general model? If we do, then let us amend defects in matters of detail (modes of worship, for example); let us purge out our weaknesses, and strengthen everything that is vital and good amongst us. Then let us make up our mind to go up and possess the land. It is time we had done with sentimental cant. It has done enormous mischief hitherto. In God's name, let us either take our rightful place, or return to the folds—Anglican or Presbyterian—that we have left. We have, undoubtedly, plenty of talent, influence, wealth, and leavening power. We should, then, utilise them all in acting with those who have convictions; and who, being convinced, are doing all that in them lies to spread their principles through the country.

A PRACTICAL MAN.

Montreal, Canada, Dec. 9, 1880.

To the Editor of the Canadian Independent.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—We take great pleasure in writing a few lines to your journal, just to tell you and the many readers of THE INDEPENDENT, what good times and refreshing seasons we are receiving from the Great Giver of all love, joy, and peace. We have been holding special services in the Congregational Church, Alton village, for two weeks, during which time we were greatly encouraged, built up, and blessed; after which we held special services for two weeks in the Congregational Church, North Erin, with large congregations, and the ever blessed Spirit of God was with us both in our house-to-house, Prayer and Bible meetings, as well as in our public services in the church, and that He may own and bless our work of faith and labor of love for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of precious souls, remember us in your prayers, so will we give all glory to the Father, Son, and ever blessed Spirit.

We have been favored with a short visit from the Rev. Stephen King, of Toronto city, who came amongst us with his heart full of love to Jesus and souls of men. Glad to meet—sorry to part—it is not for ever.

We held our tea meeting at Alton on the 22nd of March, after which Mr. W. H. Parsons, of Hamilton, gave us an account of his trip to the Old World and back, which was well received. The choir was on hand with choice music, not a bit behind our city churches.

Wednesday night, the 23rd, tea was served to the S. S. children and others. All had a grand time together, and of course it was a good success. Object—Sheds for the Alton Church.

UNA VOCE.

Alton, March 30th, 1881.

### LITERARY NOTES.

MARION, OR SAFE IN THE SHADOW OF THE ROCK.—American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia. “This little book has been written solely to illustrate the way in which a child may come to Christ,” writes the authoress as a very brief preface. The story is simple—a little orphan girl cast upon the charity of a poor family in one of the poorest parts of a great city led through a house of refuge to an opulent and Christian home, converted during a

revival, and proving a blessing in the home and circle where she had been adopted. We confess ourselves not in a position to impartially review this work, having little sympathy with the numberless children's stories in the hands of our Sunday School Scholars with the inveterate “moral” to be gathered therefrom. We cannot hail with delight any addition to the supply which only stimulates the demand already unhealthy, and which finds expression in the constant experience of our librarians. The children won't read anything else but stories. “Marion” as a story is unobjectionable, is simply and truthfully told, has no thrilling adventure, and is decidedly religious in tone, though it may be questioned whether the minister's summing up of what constitutes a Christian is much nearer the apprehension of a child than the old deacon's appeal, which is thus given: “Got religion, little girl?”

“No, Sir.”

“Why, don't you get it?” “Any Achan in the camp, eh?”

“Any what?”

“Anything you won't give up, vanities of the world, pride of the eyes, lusts of the flesh. We've got to come to Christ empty handed, give up everything and then you'll find Christ.”

Indeed we are old fashioned enough to believe our gospel to be yet, with their history and parables, and the twenty-third psalm, to be about the best milk for babes yet, and a simple exposition thereof the best way under God of leading children to Christ.

Having thus unburdened our conscience we feel free to say that “Marion” has excellencies, and submitting to things as they are, we should certainly catalogue the work with those comparatively few from which a selection can safely be made.

LITTEL'S LIVING AGE.—The numbers of *The Living Age* for the weeks ending 26th March and April 2nd respectively, contain the following articles: The Progress of Ship Building in England, *Westminster*; Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and Ophelia, *Blackwood*; Voltaire and Shakespeare, and The Origin of London, *Cornhill*; Singular Connection between Dust and Fogs, Effects of Frost and Thaws upon Plants, and Recollections of a Highland Census, *Chamber's Journal*; The Lesser Barbarians, *Spectator*, with instalments of “Don John,” “Visited on the Children,” and the “The Freres,” and the usual amount of poetry.

A new volume begins with the number for 2nd April.

For fifty-two numbers of sixty-four large pages each (or more than 3,300 pages a year), the subscription price is \$8. Littell & Co., Boston.

THE PREACHER AND HOMILETIC MONTHLY, published by I. K. Funk & Co., New York, for April, is received. It is full of excellent matter for the study, the pulpit, the prayer-meeting, and the Sunday-school. For \$2.50 per year it gives a large mass of helpful reading.

THE GOOD GRAMMAR LESSON.—School-mistress: “What is an object?”—Spiteful Young Lady:—“You are, Miss,” (Has her ears boxed, and properly too.)

REST AND COMFORT TO THE SUFFERING.—“Brown's Household Panacea” has no equal for relieving pain, both internal and external. It cures Pain in the Side, Back or Bowels, Sore Throat, Rheumatism, Toothache, Lumbago, and any kind of a Pain or Ache. “It will most purely quicken the blood and Heal, as its acting power is wonderful.” “Brown's Household Panacea,” being acknowledged as the great Pain Reliever, and of double the strength of any other Elixir or Liniment in the world, should be in every family handy for use when wanted, “as it really is the best remedy in the world for Cramps in the Stomach, and Pains and Aches of all kinds,” and is for sale by all Druggists at 25 cents a bottle.

MOTHERS! MOTHERS!! MOTHERS!!!—Are you disturbed at night and broken of your rest by a sick child suffering and crying with the excruciating pain of cutting teeth? If so, go at once and get a bottle of MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately—depend upon it, there is no mistake about it. There is not a mother on earth who has ever used it, who will not tell you at once that it will regulate the bowels, and give rest to the mother, and relief and health to the child, operating like magic. It is perfectly safe to use in all cases, and pleasant to the taste, and is the prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians and nurses in the United States. Sold everywhere at 25 cents a bottle.