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Congregationalism in Canada;

BEING

A REVIEW

OF

“PRACTICAL MAN’S” LETTERS

Recently published in the “Canadian Independent.”

BY

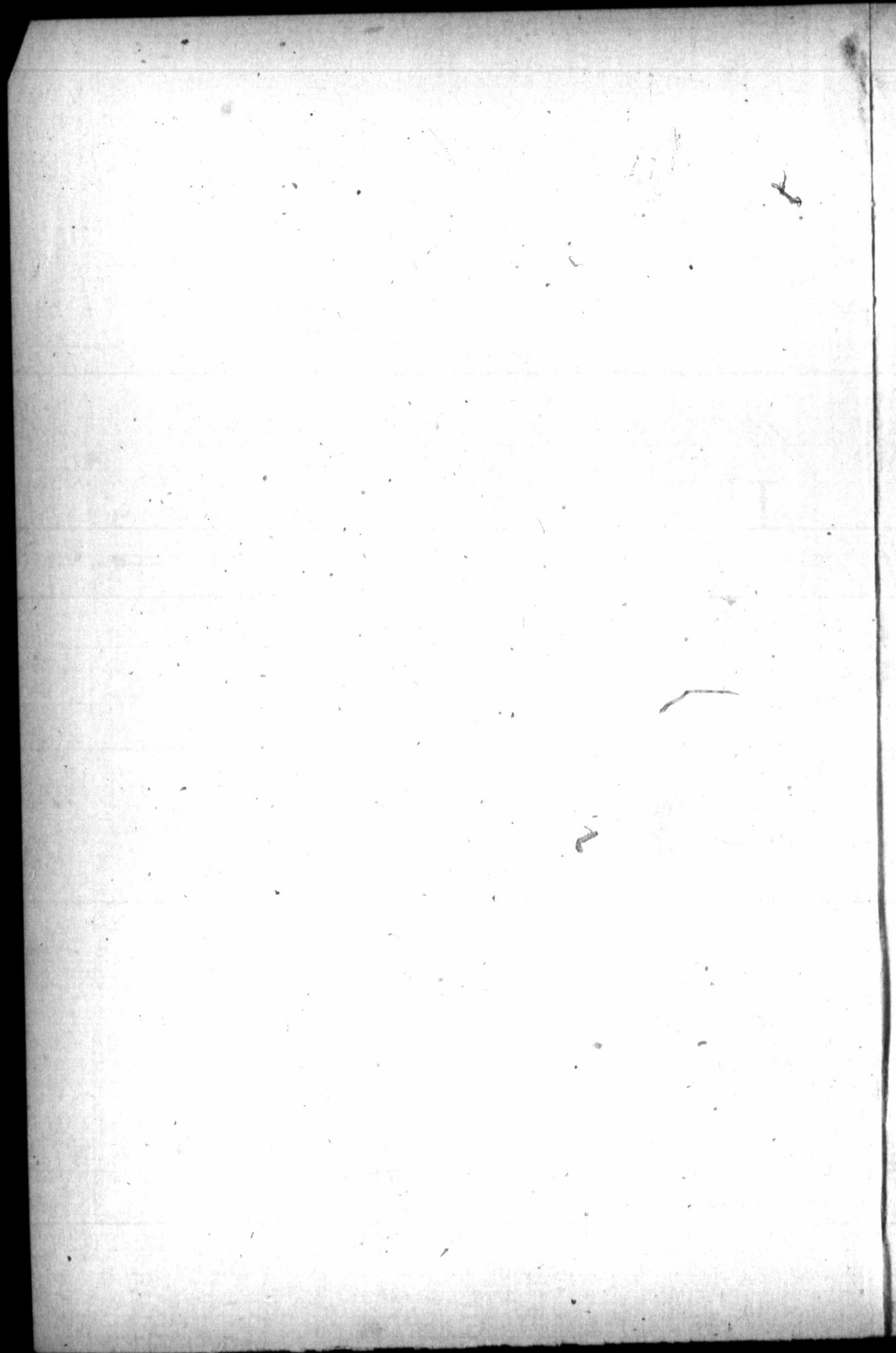
A STAUNCH INDEPENDENT.

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"A PRACTICAL MAN"

REVIEWED.

I HAVE read with much care the letters of "A Practical Man" on "Congregationalism in Canada," which have recently appeared in the *Canadian Independent*. Their author, whom I readily recognise, through the thin disguise of his *nom de plume*, has fairly earned the right to speak on the subject he has mooted, both from his long connection with Congregational Churches, and the eminent service he has rendered them in various ways. Perhaps I may claim an equal right to take part in this discussion, having been identified with those Churches even longer than he, and not less actively. My opinions, though differing widely from his own, are, also, "the matured judgment of a friend, and not the carping criticism of a foe."

LACK OF AGGRESSIVE POWER.

"P. M." sets out with the statement that "our ag-

gressive power is demonstrably weaker than that of other Christian bodies." The fundamental reason for this he considers to be, the opinion that for England or Canada to be "all Congregational" is "as undesirable as it is impossible." He read "with amazement" the expression of this opinion in the *Canadian Independent*, and thinks its prevalence the main cause of our weakness. I join issue with him here, most decidedly. For it is denominational aggressiveness which he has in his mind's eye, and this I regard as one of the worst evils now existing in the religious world. It is the strife who shall be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, which our Lord distinctly forbade. As an organized religious denomination, our aggressive power is weaker than that of other Christian bodies, because, in so far as we are consistent, we reject all exercise of lordship similar to that swayed by "the Kings of the Gentiles." Denominationalism is the transcript of civil government, has its permanent officers, rife ambitions, distinctions of ruler and ruled, after the model of civil government. Our Lord has declared "so it shall not be among you." The churches of Christ were meant to have a moral and spiritual aggressive power, and in this, by "P. M.'s" own showing, as we shall see

shortly, we have been demonstrably stronger than " other Christian bodies."

THE TRUE THEORY.

" P. M." evidently holds the theory of denominational aggressiveness with a view to monopoly and absorption. He wants to see Congregationalism the one only ecclesiastical system. This form of denominationalism must, like Aaron's rod, swallow up all the rest, in order to realize his ideal. My theory is the very opposite of his. I believe organized denominationalism with its offices, order, constitutions, and discipline, to be *all wrong*, a human addition to the Divine plan of the Christian Church. Denominationalism is to-day undergoing a process of disintegration. Its courts are losing their power ; its standards have less authority ; its functions are becoming more and more advisory. This process, I believe, is destined to go on,

" Till names, and sects, and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ is *all in all*."

When this consummation is reached, I do not expect to see uniformity, except in one feature, viz., the practical independence of each local Church. Some Churches will

do their business in a full assembly of members ; others will have a session ; some will be Calvinistic ; others Arminian ; forms of worship will vary ; but all will be one in Christ Jesus. Instead of denominational organization, with officers, titles, prerogatives, and authority, there will be great gatherings of Christians for *fellowship, consultation, and co-operation* ; the only functions that can be scripturally exercised outside the local Church. In the world of nature, there is no uniformity. Life and growth take on a variety of forms. Freedom is the all-pervading principle in the material world which causes this variety. It is even so in the world of grace. That the Churches will all, in due time, become free and independent, I confidently believe. They are moving toward that goal. When they reach it, they will not be consolidated into one mammoth organization, with grades of offices, from highest to lowest. They will meet as equals, but only for fellowship, consultation and co-operation. That, and not denominational monopoly, I believe to be the true theory.

RETROSPECT.

“ P. M. ” divides the history of Canadian Congregationalism, into two periods. “ The first is from the beginning

of things to the year 1855. The second embraces the period from 1855 to the present." Over the first he writes "gratifying success,"—over the second "mortifying failure." I should write "gratifying success" over both; the first numerical success; the second, moral success. "P. M." virtually does the same, for he says concerning the era of failure: "The principles of Congregational freedom are rapidly gaining ground in the great religious organizations." But here, he suddenly gets befogged, for he laments that while the *principles* have gained ground, the *polity* has not extended. How can this be? What is the *polity* but a set of *principles*? "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." If the *principles* of Congregationalism have extensively permeated other religious denominations, has it not been exactly according to the Master's method: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened?" If, as "P. M." states, and most truly, "the whole" is being rapidly "leavened," is there not cause for congratulation and rejoicing? We sing,

"Not for a favourite form or name,
But for immortal souls we care."

Do we mean it? If "immortal souls" are coming under the influence of right *principles*, what more or better do we want?

IMPOSSIBILITIES EXPECTED.

"P. M." says, "We ought to make up our minds to go up and possess the land;" that long ago, we should have had "well-devised plans for reaching every county, town, and village in the country;" and that "we have, undoubtedly, plenty of talent, influence, wealth, and leavening power." In connection with the other tribes of the spiritual Israel, we ought, no doubt, to "make up our minds to go up and possess the land," and I hope we have done so. But to suppose that "little Benjamin" was ever commanded or expected to swallow up the other tribes, and possess all the land itself, is to imagine an absurdity and an impossibility. Ability is the measure of duty. We have never had the ability to "reach every county, town, and village in the country." "P. M's" letters contradict his own assertion, that we have had plenty of talent, influence, wealth, and numbers, for his lamentation is, that we have been and are so short of these. "Leavening power" is the only thing we have

had plenty of. Only a little of that is required, and it has worked in accordance with its nature, as "P. M." testifies.

VISIBLE RESULTS.

"P. M." is too anxious for these. "The Kingdom of God *cometh not with observation.*" It grows when appearances are most untoward. Christ's disciples were never so despondent as on the eve of the resurrection. With the "principles of Congregational freedom" bursting forth from vast ecclesiastical sepulchres in which the rights of Christian men and women have been entombed for ages, "P. M." is downcast, and the Master might well administer to him the gentle rebuke He gave of old to the Emmaus pedestrians:—"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad?" "P. M's" trouble, like theirs, is, that we don't get the kingdom, and the glory. Let us be satisfied that Christ gets them. They are His, not ours. An aching for sect-expansion and disappointment at its absence, are the chief mistakes that run through "P. M's" letters.

THE CAUSE OF FAILURE.

As already stated, I do not agree with "P. M." in re-

garding the second period as one of failure, except in a numerical and denominational sense. Through all that period, "the principles of Congregational freedom" have been steadily marching on." The people are gradually getting hold of the reins of Church government in other Christian bodies. The "laity," as they are termed, have now a place and a voice in Methodist Conferences, and even in Episcopal Synods. There is a back-door consultation of the will and wish of the local Church, before a minister is appointed by Methodist Conference or Episcopal bishops. In a variety of ways, the presence of "the principles of Congregational freedom" is manifest. Numerically the multiplication and increase of Congregational Churches has been slow during the past twenty-five years, and applying only an arithmetical standard, "P. M." is perhaps justified in using the term "failure."

Into the reasons for the failure, so-called, during the second epoch, "P. M." scarcely enters at all. He hints that complacency at being a little flock has had something to do with it; but I confess that I have never detected anything of the kind. There has always been a very manifest anxiety among us to grow bigger. He slurs the early system of ministerial education; but let

me tell him the College has never done such good work as it did when Dr. Lillie was at the head of it. Dr. Lillie was a host in himself; a thorough scholar, a broad-minded theologian, and possessed of an amount of energy which those who only saw him in his quiet moods never gave him credit for. But his students appreciated him, and the list of alumni during his presidency comprises names, of which far more pretentious Alma Maters would have no reason to be ashamed. For every effect, there must be an adequate cause. I fail to find it either in the little flock idea, or the system of ministerial education.

I can explain the matter, if " P. M." cannot. Want of large, liberal, energetic ideas on the part of the Colonial Missionary Society had much to do with it. These men began to build a tower without sitting down to count the cost. They never apprehended the magnitude of the work of Congregationalizing Canada. Results did not come quickly enough to please them; so they harassed their missionaries with complaints, doled out the funds grudgingly, and, in various ways, crippled their own work. They tried to do a large business on a small capital, with the usual result.

" P. M." says he does not believe in it, but it is a fact

nevertheless, that there has been only an insignificant Congregational emigration to this country. The great bulk of our people in Britain are a comfortable, well-to-do, middle-class people, who stay where they are, instead of seeking "fresh fields and pastures new." It is emigration, chiefly, that has built up Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Methodism. Even the Baptists have had a larger emigration than we have; while their incessant proselytizing has laid all other denominations under tribute for their increase.

The abolition of Church and State, the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, and the establishment of complete religious equality in this country, opened a wide and effectual door for the entrance of "the principles of Congregational freedom" into other Christian bodies. They entered accordingly, and have been making themselves more and more at home there ever since. They will yet verify the fable of the camel, which, having got his head into the tent, slowly, but surely, advanced until he had full possession. When disestablishment takes place in Britain, and all denominations become equal in the eye of the law, Congregationalism will make more rapid advances in other bodies, while its mere numerical increase

will become proportionately less. While one business firm has a monopoly of a certain line of goods, it will do a far larger trade than when all other houses deal in the same article. One house will suffer loss, but the general public will be better served.

But the most potent cause of the failure " P. M. " deplores, has been want of fidelity to our own principles. We have not maintained them pure and simple. The most fine gold has been suffered to become alloyed. Here I must be permitted to " use great plainness of speech. " During the period of " gratifying success, " as " P. M. " deems it, there was a much closer adherence to " the principles of Congregational freedom " among us than there has been since. Mr. Roaf was the leading spirit among us then, and whatever his defects may have been, a more staunch and thorough Independent never drew breath. In all his administration, there was the most scrupulous regard for *the independence of the local Church*. This was considered by him and his associates as the palladium and bulwark of " the principles of Congregational freedom. " They were right. Messrs. Lillie, Baker, the Climies, father and son; Clarke, sen'r.; Nall, Wastell Martin, &c., were all clear and sound as a bell in their tes-

timony and procedure in regard to that point. But there came a change in this respect.

A DIOCESAN EPISCOPATE

sprung up. The reins of power were gradually and firmly grasped by Dr. Wilkes, of Montreal; who soon became virtually Primate of all Canada. He held Montreal as his own parish. Messrs. Carruthers, Marling, and many more, could "a tale unfold," which would show that, like the Great Mogul, he suffered no rival near his throne. With iron hand, though covered always with a velvet glove, he ruled the destinies of the Congregational Churches throughout Canada. If a pastor was wanted, Dr. Wilkes was applied to. His nominee was always ready; and it was invariably *some one whom he could sway*. If a Church was in difficulty of any kind, Dr. W. was consulted, as the embodiment of all ecclesiastical wisdom. He never disclaimed or repudiated the exercise of those diocesan functions which were incessantly being invoked. Independent-minded men chafed under a despotism that was too mighty for them. The one-man-power ran the whole machine for years. It was like the autocracy of the late George Brown in politics.

There are many who could speak on this subject, and a pamphlet, larger than Dr. W.'s, on the "Administration of the Churches," could easily be filled with facts illustrative of his autocratic administration of affairs. Why has his influence perceptibly waned of late? Not on account of his age, for "years should bring wisdom," and a riper experience ought to make advice more valuable. The simple fact is, that the Churches have grown weary of a despotism which, like every other, has at length worn itself out. Dr. W. has ever been the silent, but determined antagonist to the advancement of any and every minister possessed of a thoroughly independent spirit. A clique, who have fawned about him and done his bidding, have sustained him, until they too have lost influence, and the upshot of it all is that the Congregational *Union* is an utter misnomer. Dr. W. is a good man, and has many excellencies; but has ever been fond of power—determined to wield it; and *has* wielded it, to the sore detriment of Independency in this "Canada of ours." He has made a sorry mess of it. Witness the "demoralized" state of Congregationalism in Montreal, and the want of cohesion, brotherliness and union, apparent throughout the whole country. It is only as a band of brothers, exercising and

conceding "liberty, equality and fraternity," that Congregationalists can prosper. The struggle for power is always an element of weakness among them. Each of them may say in this sense what Paul said in another, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

PRESBYTERIANISM.

A new evil has sprung up of late years. Associations and Unions have been claiming and exercising Presbyterian functions. A sapping and mining process has been going on for some time, and at length the magazine has exploded. For a twelvemonth past the *Canadian Independent* has been openly advocating views of ecclesiastical polity and coercive measures in certain cases which are utterly subversive of the independence of the Churches.

The prerogative of an association or union to tender advice in the imperative mood; withdrawal of fellowship as the penalty for not following advice so given; obligatory association of churches as such; and the Divine right of councils, are among "the principles of Congregational freedom," which have been taught with constant iteration in its columns.

" RAMPANT INDEPENDENCY."

This is deprecated by "P.M." in the strongest terms. What is it? "A system," he says, "under which every Church does what is right in its own eyes." If a Church refuses to own the Bible as the guide and law-book for its action, its independency is doubtless "rampant;" but, as a matter of fact, any independency is considered "rampant" by "P.M.," "J.B.," the "C.I.," and others of that ilk. Let a Church act out its proper functions in the untrammelled management of its own affairs, though in the kindest spirit of brotherly love towards its neighbour Churches, and with the most reverent regard for the supreme authority of the Divine Word, and it is guilty of "rampant independency" in the opinion of "P.M.," and those who view matters as he does.

I suppose that "P.M." would cite Bond Street Church, Toronto, as an example of "rampant independency." In my view it is not open to the charge. That it acted unwisely, it has admitted with a frankness that is most commendable. But even in that action, it believed itself to be sustained by the teachings of the New Testament. If the issue had been different, this Church would have

done a noble and Christ-like thing, in rehabilitating a minister, whose great talents were capable of rendering eminent service to the cause of religion. Perhaps, if more fraternal sympathy had been shown this Church and its late pastor, the issue *might* have been different. I do not covet the responsibility some have taken on themselves in this matter. I would have preferred to have failed in the attempt to reinstate a fallen brother, instead of contributing to that failure by turning the cold shoulder toward him and the Christian brethren who so nobly rallied round him, until disaster and defeat came upon them. When the Master makes inquisition among his servants, what will those have to say in self-defence, who refused to help a struggling brother and a chivalrous Church in their time of need? Will they plead holy horror at "rampant independency?"

Just now, it is the opposite of "independency," which is "rampant" among us. It is that arrogant, domineering spirit which is trying to force association at the point of the ecclesiastical bayonet; which, while professing to hold, in theory, the self-governing function of the Churches, insists that they shall abdicate that function in favour of councils; which converts advice into law, by demanding

that it be taken on pain of withdrawal of recognition and fellowship. " Rampant independency ! " This is no time for independency to slumber. " TO YOUR TENTS, O ISRAEL ! "

" ORGANIZATION, ORDER, CO-OPERATION."

These are the new watchwords, " P. M. " proposes that we adopt. Before we do so, let us know their meaning. " Organization, " let all the missionary and other societies connected with the Churches, be managed by Committees of the Union. " Order, " connection with the Union should be the ground of recognition, both for Congregational Churches and ministers. Separation from it should be equivalent to withdrawal from the body. " Co-operation, " " closer connection with our American brethren, " who are largely semi-Presbyterialized ; female education ; foreign missions. Let me amend " P. M. 's " watchwords thus :—

INDEPENDENCE, FELLOWSHIP, CO-OPERATION.

Independence—first, last, and always. How is it we are so seldom called " Independents " now ? Because we have, to a large extent, parted with what the name stands

for. That name used to be our glory. Now we are considerably ashamed of it, as we have reason to be.

Fellowship—independence is not isolation, though it is being held up to reprobation as if it were. Fellowship must be spontaneous to be worth anything. When Christian men come together at the authoritative call of a bishop, a conference, or a church court, it is a misuse of terms to call it fellowship. The term is only applicable when it expresses the mutual attraction of kindred hearts. It is for fellowship chiefly that we should meet in association, union, conference or council: the fellowship of consultation, advice, sympathy, communion of mind with mind and heart with heart. We have plenty of organization and order; too much of them; the noisy, creaking wheels of the ecclesiastical machine are always making turmoil and confusion; but give us independence and fellowship, then we shall have *co-operation*; the willing co-operation of a true spiritual manhood, inspired with a loving Christian heart.

CONNEXIONALISM.

“P. M.” contends that we *are* a connexion,—in other words, a sect, a denomination; and he wishes this to be

acknowledged, proclaimed, acted on. You may write "Ichabod" with too much truth on every Congregational Church that becomes enamoured of this idea. The New Testament knows nothing of any permanent ecclesiastical organization but the local Church. All else is only temporary, optional, and matter of expediency. There is unbounded liberty of assembling ourselves together for prayer, praise, breaking of bread, fraternal fellowship, mutual consultation, and all practicable co-operation; but the local Church only is a Divine institution, membership in which is a *sine qua non* of recognition, and separation from which alone is the act of withdrawal from the "body." During the epoch which "P. M." labels as a "gratifying success," this was the ground occupied by the Congregationalists of Canada with scarcely an exception. As our independency became "ring-straked, speckled, and spotted," first with Episcopacy, and secondly with Presbyterianism, decline set in. I predict, that just so far as "P. M's" views obtain adherence, failure, as he deems it, will be accelerated. We cannot compete with the sects. When we become a sect we surrender the Church polity of the New Testament. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is very explicit on this point. The sect spirit made and

kept them weak. They were in a state of babyhood. Now, what are the characteristics of spiritual infancy? Weakness,—selfishness,—helplessness. The attempts we have been making for some years past, in the direction of Connexionalism, have done us no good, and the sooner we are convinced that this line of policy is a mistaken one, the better. Our weakness is largely owing to our having encumbered a living organism with the dead weight and cumbrous machinery of denominationalism. The Divine rule of faith and practice knows nothing of sect but to reprobate it, forbid it, warn us against it. Sectarianism is disguised carnality, and organized selfishness. To-day most of the evils that afflict us may be traced to our foolish and vain aping of the “fantastic tricks” played by denominationalism “before high heaven.” Let us return to the simplicity of Christ, be willing to occupy the platform of brotherly equality laid for us by him, give up aching for a great, swelling, ostentatious denominationalism, and rest

“Content to fill a little space
If God be glorified.”

OUR MISSION.

I believe this is truly set forth in what “P. M.” char;

acterizes as "the Scottish idea of Independent Churches," viz., that their chief function is to bear witness for principles. "With the sacred ambition of possessing the whole land," that fires "P. M.'s" soul, I have no sympathy whatever. To me it seems a selfish, rather than a "sacred" ambition. I want Christ to reign over the whole land. He will do it when all are gathered into His Church, and His headship is fully owned in the predominance of "the principles of Congregational freedom." It appears to me an absurdity to say that the triumph of these principles will "put an end to the reason for our existence." As well say, that when the people are all righteous, there will no longer be any need of Churches. Grant all that "P. M." contends for, as to the Divine origin and authority of these principles; we have but imperfectly carried them out ourselves; Congregationalism has only been an approximation to the New Testament standard; there are Churches called by other names, that now differ practically very slightly from ours; the approximating process will go on, as the years roll round, under the orderings of Providence and the workings of grace, until perhaps our neighbours will catch up with us, possibly outstrip us in the race of conformity to the Divine ideal.

Zion's watchmen are yet to sing in harmony; they are in process of time to see eye to eye. It will not be by any one denomination absorbing all the rest, but by every fellowship of Christians, coming nearer to Christ, and so nearer to one another. We Congregationalists have, no doubt, been very unfaithful and unprofitable servants; we have made many mistakes; we are chargeable with much shortcoming; but instead of keeping up a dismal croaking and bewailing, let us "rejoice evermore," in Him who says to the weakest and unworthiest of His followers, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." I do not wish to encourage spiritual sloth and indifference, but I want to see my brethren "put a cheerful courage on." I have been through all this fever of anxiety for denominational glorification, and have toiled for it with a zeal and ardour worthy of a better cause. There *is* a better cause; it is making known the love of Christ and His power to save. Bring these into contact with human hearts, and they will be quickened into life, and the life will take unto itself "its own body." Dr. Post, of St. Louis, has well said of Congregationalism, that it is "the polity which trusts the forces of life rather than external props and outward propulsions. It relies on a

living, present Christ, as present now as on the day of Pentecost." Let us trust not only the life, but the Divine Life-giver. Work for ecclesiastical uniformity as we may, there is a Divine law of diversity in unity, which will be too strong for human organizers. No two fully-developed human beings are alike, save in the life principle. Let it satisfy us that Christians are alike in this, and let us endeavour to train them up to that stage of holy development which will produce an endlessly varied manhood and womanhood in Christ Jesus.

THE RIGHT TO EXIST.

" P. M." appears to think that unless Congregationalism can assume something like respectable dimensions, and become numerically the equal of other Christian bodies, it has no right to exist. The *Canadian Spectator* takes the same grounds. It says of our College: " Its *raison d'etre* is by no means easy of demonstration." Why? Because Congregationalism is " a plant of feeble growth in this country," and because it is doubtful if it has " any prospect of greatness in the near future." This writer, who, from a very different standpoint, sees things in much the same light as " P. M.," tells us that " Presbyterianism

has covered the ground which Congregationalism might have occupied had it come first." In some cases, Congregationalism did "come first," and, for a time, Presbyterians, availed themselves of its open door to enjoy church privileges. But as soon as they were strong enough they started a Presbyterian congregation, and left the religious home that had given them temporary shelter. They received some inoculation from "the principles of Congregational freedom" during their temporary sojourn with us, and this has helped to leaven Presbyterianism. But it will take several generations yet before the tinge imparted by John Knox's blue bag will completely disappear. The *Spectator* thinks Congregationalism has failed through not offering "a larger liberty" to independent and thoughtful minds. "Its doors have been of the narrowest, and its sect of the straitest." This is not true as to doctrinal matters. Calvinism and Arminianism; the narrowest and the broadest views as to future punishment, inspiration, and other moot questions of the day; are to be found not only among the membership, but among the ministers, frankly avowed, unchallenged and fellowshipped. The straitness has been of another kind. Not liberty of thought, but liberty of action has been

fettered, by unwarrantable assumption of ecclesiastical power, by a narrow pietism, and a Pharisaical sanctity. The *Spectator* evidently thinks Congregationalists a stupid lot. It says: "That they will consent to an act of self-effacement, by joining the Presbyterian body, is hardly to be looked for,—because it is wise, and would lead to good results." Coalescence with Presbyterianism has been a common dream on the part of those who have fallen asleep in the act of bewailing the weakness of Congregationalism. They have persuaded themselves that there was little practical difference between the two systems. In a few cases the experiment has been tried by individuals. They have discovered that joining the Presbyterians was literally "self-effacement." A margin of liberty is given born-and-bred Presbyterians which is not allowed to importations from Congregationalism. Notwithstanding the progress which "the principles of Congregational freedom" have made in the Presbyterian body, the system retains not a few of its worst features. Creed-enforcement, laxity of communion, authoritative oversight, and the like, prove that "Ephraim is a cake not turned," half-cooked, only as yet partially under the influence of "the principles of Congregational freedom." Amalgamation with

Presbyterianism would be practicable enough to some, because they now wear the mantle of Congregationalism very ungracefully over a Presbyterian heart. It would not be "self-effacement" for them. They would come out in their true colours, and feel at home. But there are those among us to whom Presbyterianism would be an ecclesiastical prison, in which they would sigh and groan for Congregational liberty.

The sum of it is, that we are like Gideon's army, too large because of the number of faint hearts who are among us. "Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him return" to Episcopacy with "P. M.," or to Presbyterianism with the *Canadian Spectator*. There will be enough left when every test has been applied to them, to encompass opposing hosts, and stand their ground with trumpet and lamp. Small bodies have a right to exist equally with large ones. Some of the choicest plants make but a feeble growth; but most people prefer a tiny rose to a huge fungus. "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks." Any number of Christian people, few or many, may organize themselves into a Church. Christ will be in the midst where only two or three are gathered together in His name. The Lord has

need of Congregationalism, and it will not become extinct. Congregationalists are the advance guard of the Christian army. They are the pioneers of the Church. They are like the few men who go ahead in a boat to fasten the hawser, at the point to which the vessel must be brought, as she is warped into port. It is pleasant to have many with you in the battle for the principles of truth, but it is, nevertheless, a glorious thing to be

" In the right with two or three."

If " P. M.," or any one else, prefers numbers to " the principles of Congregational freedom ;" denominational prestige to the simple polity of the New Testament ; order and consolidation, to independence and liberty, the exchange can be easily made ; but it will only be a sorry bargain if, after the thing is done, there is left the feeling that Esau had when he sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, or that Judas had, when he betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. He who sides with God is always in the majority, and will certainly win in the long run, whatever be the odds against him. " P. M." has presented the dark side of the picture. There is another and a brighter side to it. He has told us the worst. But

in the words of the dying Wesley, "The best of all is God is with us." Azariah of old laid down the true basis of things in his message to Asa: "The Lord is with you while ye be with Him, and if ye seek Him He will be found of you, but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you."

Let us be true to our convictions, and proclaim them fearlessly, "speaking the truth in love." We need not worry about results. One who is infinitely better able than we are, has engaged to look after them, and will do it, overruling all to the accomplishment of His own glorious will. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged," until all usurpations of His authority are banished from the Church, and the world. "HE IS LORD OF ALL," and will yet be acknowledged such in the overthrow of every system that clashes with His absolute headship of the Church. "ZION, THY GOD REIGNETH!"

A STAUNCH INDEPENDENT.