

Draft  
of  
The Introduction of Fitchell  
written for the  
Congregationalists in America

no 13

Subject  
Congregationalists  
in  
America



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When a young man the writer  
of this introductory article, soon  
after his conversion, ~~was surrounded~~  
found himself associated with  
~~the~~ strong advocates of <sup>the</sup> Episcopacy.  
His friends were devoted Christian men  
of extensive reading & research; and  
for a time their arguments appeared  
to him to be strong & conclusive.  
That "the true church" ~~had~~ was  
indeed a small one which by  
"the apostolic succession" had  
come down to us ~~there~~ <sup>through</sup> the  
centuries without a break, (in  
the line of Bishops).

The <sup>other like advocates</sup>  
writings of the Rev. Dr. Pusey were  
put into ~~my~~ <sup>his</sup> hands. The impression  
upon ~~my~~ <sup>his</sup> mind & heart were  
so strong that not only did he  
~~conclude~~ that it seem for a  
while that Bishops, Priests &

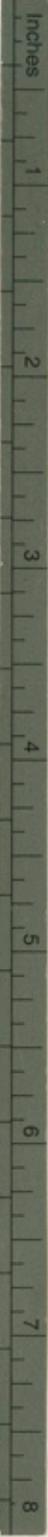


Decisions were essential to  
the church of Christ, but that  
other branches like the presbyterian  
~~methodists~~ & Congregationalists  
were in error: and that their  
clergy were not ordained ministers  
of Christ. Save the arguments  
carried ~~on~~ <sup>him</sup> on to the Roman  
Church, till he said to himself:  
If the <sup>unbroken</sup> Apostolic Succession in the  
line of Bishops is essential to the  
living Church the Roman faith  
has the precedence. Since then  
it has never seemed at all  
strange to him that so many  
of his friends who were high  
Church men <sup>at last</sup> joined the Roman  
Catholic Communion.  
Further <sup>reading of the Scriptures;</sup> study & thought brought  
the writer back to his proper home  
in the Congregational household.  
and then he was <sup>admitted</sup> confirmed with  
of his family. This is <sup>perhaps</sup> too



personal for the general reader, yet  
it may chance to influence & help  
some other searcher for the fold of  
Christ. It is in no way claimed that  
the Episcopal divisions of the grand country  
of the South are not good & wise, and  
in that sense under special divine  
favor, but the grander truth  
may dawn upon a man's heart  
that our Lord is in all his branches  
and that that Wisdom is justified  
by all her children. It takes  
all the ~~the~~ instrumentalities to  
reach all the nooks & corners  
of the world. But what would  
the writer not have given <sup>during his probation</sup> for  
such a historic Compendium  
as this volume furnishes!

In these days our own is not  
of great moment; it is but an  
indication of the division lines in  
the hosts of the Lord who are

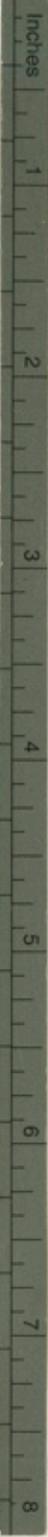


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the birds are not food & were not  
 in that sense under special  
 favour, but the specimens were  
 many years before a major part  
 that were birds in all his  
 and that that Wilson is justified  
 by all his children. At last  
 see the ~~the~~ interrelationship to  
 see all the birds & even  
 of the birds. But what would  
 the matter not have been for  
 such a further explanation  
 as this volume for birds?  
 See these birds are seen in not  
 of great moment: it is but an  
 illustration of the division line in  
 the birds of the bird world

the species division of the birds were  
 about. It is no way showing that  
 some other reason for the fact of  
 the birds to influence a part  
 of the birds for the specimens were  
 in that sense under special favour

on the march<sup>41</sup> or battling with the  
forces of truth & rightness. But  
organization is important and a  
christian wants to feel that he  
belongs to one that is fairly  
good; to one that is at least  
defensible. The author of  
this review of all the divisions  
from the Apostles till now  
showing the origin of <sup>the</sup> Congre-  
gational polity in the earliest  
period, and following it thro. the  
ages with ~~prolixity~~ <sup>prolixity</sup>, with  
comprehensive clearness, and with  
clear & full statements of facts  
pro & con, has done a great  
work. Perhaps a tittle of sectarian  
spirit could be detected by some  
old fashioned christian, following



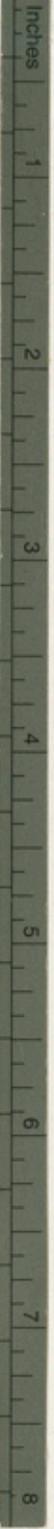
on the whole or looking into the  
 faces of both very numerous. But  
 organization is important and a  
 Christian wants to feel that he  
 belongs to one that is fairly  
 good; to one that is of some  
 benefit. The author of  
 the review of all the churches  
 from the Episcopalian to the  
 showing the origin of George  
 Gardner's party in the earliest  
 years, and following it then the  
 also ~~the~~ party with  
 various elements, and out  
 then a full statement of facts  
 two or more, but show a great  
 work. Perhaps a letter of section  
 spirit would be better to have  
 or following character following

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of John Knox or John Wesley. He  
rather feels that our True is the  
real church, and that the others  
have somehow departed from the  
original simplicity of organization  
& worship. Once a gentle-  
man, member of a Congregational  
church out West, was meeting  
to a <sup>congregational</sup> house of worship with <sup>a lady</sup> an  
ardent Episcopalian. She tried  
to show him the superiority of the  
Episcopal service to any other, &  
also tried for short the other came  
of the True faith. The gentleman  
replied as they entered the vestibule.  
All right. Perhaps yours is better than <sup>mine</sup> ~~ours~~  
as you claim. but this dear head over is  
mine! Your house may be nicer than  
ours, yet ours is ours!" So <sup>was</sup> defect



6  
little name present or prospective in  
an author who clings with ~~some~~  
fervor to ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> hearty description of  
his own household of work & worship,  
and who is able to trace the pedigree  
of his family connection to the very  
~~spring~~ fountain head.

The reader will <sup>particularly</sup> enjoy the history of the  
Congregational Church of New England -  
for the rigid & the liberal interpreters  
are all given a fair exhibit. The  
A



Little known present or past  
 on either side of the  
 border to the north  
 his own knowledge of  
 and who is able to trace the  
 of his family connection to the  
~~frontier~~

The reader will enjoy the  
 for the night & the  
 are all again a fine exhibit

The following is a list of the  
 names of the persons who  
 were present at the  
 meeting of the  
 committee on  
 the 10th of  
 the month of  
 the year 1861

4 The Pilgrims

The causes of leaving  
England, the voyage in Holland,  
his arrival in America,  
his faith & purposes &  
trial on New England shores,  
no descendant of ~~these~~ his  
is our avorse to the story -  
and here told in an old one  
it is told concisely & well.

It will become a text for  
the jovial & eloquent  
speakers at the yearly  
anniversaries <sup>of New England Societies</sup> ~~of Boston~~  
which gather in all our great  
towns from Boston to  
San Francisco.  
Our youth cannot be made  
too familiar with the actual  
foundation of our Government  
~~changed for~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the Mayflower  
but secured at Plymouth, Mass.

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Inches

The Journal of the  
 Expedition of the  
 Corps of Discovery  
 under the Command  
 of Meriwether Lewis  
 and William Clark  
 from the Mouth of  
 the River St. Louis  
 to the Pacific Ocean  
 in the Years 1804  
 & 1805  
 Edited by Howard  
 Chandler Christy  
 with an Introduction  
 by George Catlin  
 and a New Map  
 of the West  
 by George Catlin  
 and a New Map  
 of the West  
 by George Catlin

4.  
1 a government of the  
people, <sup>an emblem of the people's sovereignty</sup> when the flag for ever  
isms a free church. - The  
church that <sup>best</sup> assimilates that  
form of Republican form  
& order is very near to  
~~our~~ patriotic hearts.

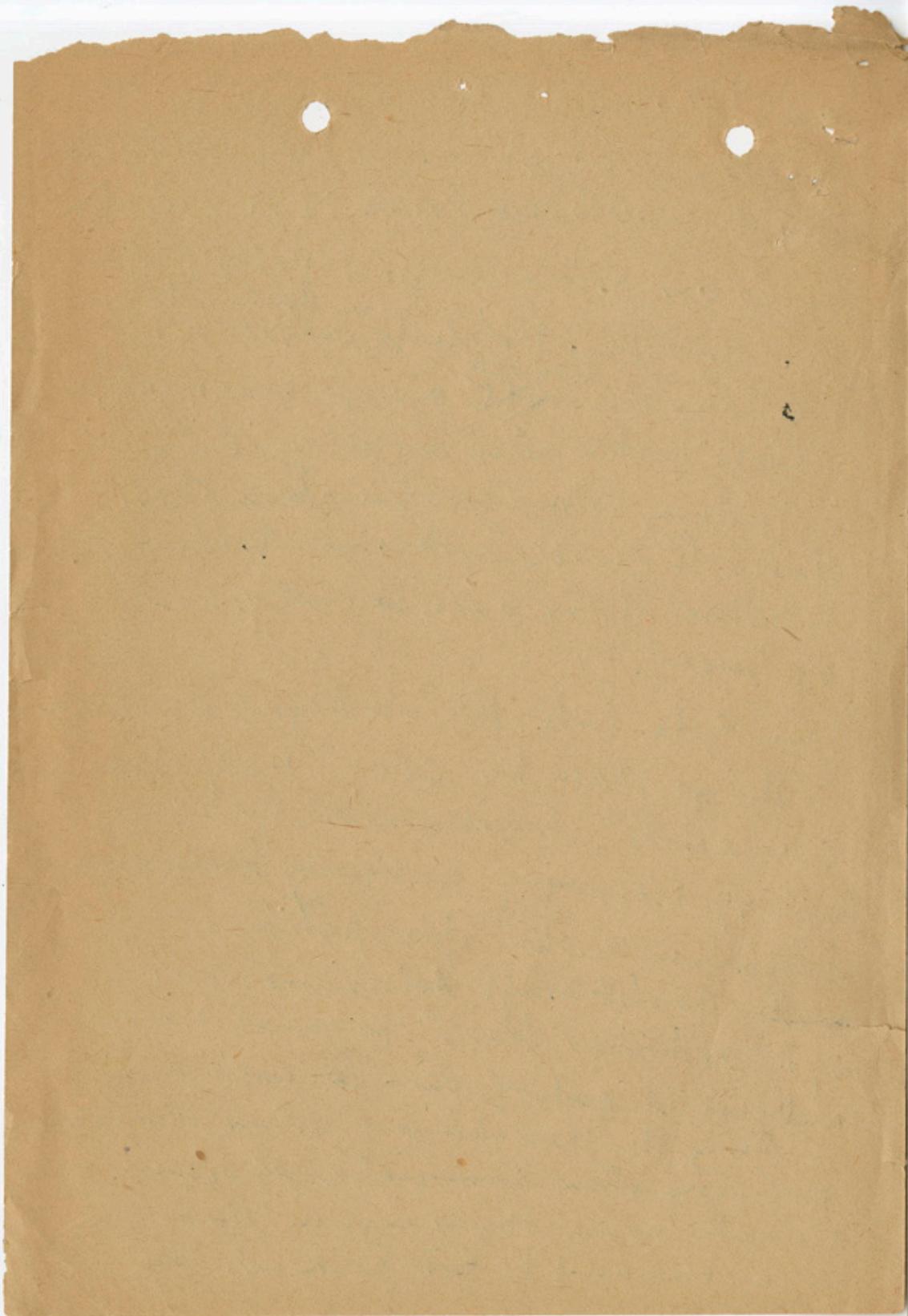
The chapter on growth &  
~~expansion~~ expansion, taking us  
to Maine, New Hampshire,  
Massachusetts, <sup>Connecticut,</sup> Rhode Island, Maryland &  
Virginia, is of marked interest.  
Who does not want to know  
more about Roger Williams, John  
Elliot and the Indian Missions?  
An <sup>early</sup> Congregational church in  
Virginia & its transference to  
Maryland & what came of it.  
The new Va. Churches of our order  
will be chartered at their regular  
Succession after a lapse! and  
Washington Congregationalists



v..

will take on a new courage &  
vigor, and push on to extend their  
simple methods of form & or denation  
to cover unoccupied fields of  
the south. Baptists, <sup>in this south</sup> who at  
last are ~~at~~ <sup>usually</sup> good congregational-  
alists will read with avidity  
a history which strengthens their  
claim to divide with our Methodist  
brothers their care to all races  
of men.

One gets into the valleys & shadows  
of things when he sees "Half way  
covenants", troubles with quakers,  
lines of cleavage, religious declension,  
differences with the Episcopalian<sup>s</sup>,  
~~with~~ witchcraft delusions; but  
if of "orthodox blood" he must have  
a degree of satisfaction to answer  
solently the laughings of Oliver Wendell  
Holmes & other humorous reformers.  
Here with some showings in the bottom  
of the chasms he <sup>can</sup> pick up the



a

At Key West Florida the writer  
of this article recently found two  
plants that greatly interested him. One  
was an East Indian tree called the  
Bayana and the other was a ~~new~~  
Congregational Church. To his mind  
there ~~was~~ <sup>are in general</sup> many ~~striking~~ points  
of resemblance. There is a center  
tree; ~~then~~ <sup>also</sup> there are <sup>smaller</sup> other trees  
quite independent in their growth  
which ~~rise~~ <sup>rise</sup> from the ground; and  
more <sup>little trees</sup> still that start from wide-  
stretching branches and grow down  
till they ~~touch~~ touch the ~~earth~~ <sup>ground</sup>, then they  
root themselves - all these up & down  
~~grow~~ <sup>grow</sup> keep increasing in number &  
<sup>^</sup> <sup>till</sup> size they finally become one immense  
tree. Then at Key West came the  
Congregational Home Missionary.  
He found a few Christians scattered  
about that place who wanted some  
fellowship & house of worship. He

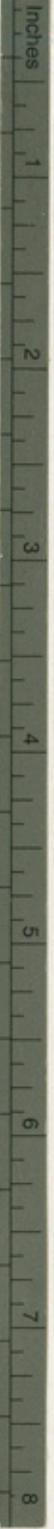


explained to them the Congregational  
policy as he understood <sup>it</sup>, and showed  
them the ordinary expressions of  
faith that our people adopt. A  
church was formed & by the help  
of the home-society <sup>a church was organized &</sup>  
a house of worship was erected. Outside  
were independent growths, bands  
associated for prayer, Sunday schools,  
shouts thrown off from other churches  
from one camp & another. All  
then began to group around the  
original plant which the Missionary  
had nourished. New converts then  
came from the church & its accessories.  
The apparently independent growths  
coming from the ground were made  
near & more homogeneous by  
the converts who seemed to spring from  
the branches & growths till they secured  
their own bases, filled up the spaces  
and made a strong central, yet  
wide spreading, tree.



It was a <sup>a</sup> ~~Banyan~~ Church  
that we planted at Washington  
in 1865. It was <sup>a witness & sometimes</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>concern</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>at first</sup> in all its make up.  
It took longings & pleadings to  
secure money enough to build  
a Meeting house. It took  
by parts councils, & general  
councils and much fostering  
care to get it well rooted.

Off. shoots <sup>in time</sup> ~~then~~ <sup>seen; several</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in the District of Columbia</sup> ~~Washington~~ & several  
more in the bordering States. They  
were seeming rivals, & wandrously  
independent. But by the common  
sage of Gods Spirit the central  
trunk has become <sup>at least</sup> ~~larger~~ <sup>larger</sup> &  
thinning, and all the ~~shoots~~  
are now united by a large  
conference where fellowship so  
prevails as to suggest <sup>the likeness of</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> ~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> ~~tree.~~ <sup>tree.</sup>



It was a very poor specimen  
 that we placed at Washington  
 in 1858. It was expected  
 at first in the water up  
 to the top of the  
 second wing enough to reach  
 a meeting house - It looks  
 as if the insects, appeared  
 in great numbers, but  
 soon to get a better water  
 off about three years ago  
 in Washington & several  
 more in the country than they  
 were seen in. It is  
 independent. But by the  
 sale of food that the  
 insects had become larger  
 than in the water  
 can now be seen in a large  
 conference at the  
 finally to support out

(d)  
We cannot maintain very well  
that our order is the best of  
all.

Our brethren of other communions  
see <sup>in us</sup> many weaknesses. The  
~~the~~ independence of the individual  
church every man born & bred  
congregational believer insists on.

How can unity & order be  
preserved where there is no authority  
beyond the individual church?

"Look", they say: "There went off  
the baptists; then the unitarians..  
They all preserve your methods  
so that now there are three  
bodies instead of one. You  
cannot <sup>even</sup> maintain a uniform  
creed!" <sup>Pranger</sup> Are you sure brethren

that it is necessary to Christ's Kingdom  
to keep solidly to one trunk of opinions  
on all topics? If so Christ's Church  
is & will ever be a huge failure.

Again they maintain that for



Inches  
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The most important <sup>E.</sup> we have a double headed system - a Church & a Society to take care of the individual Church. Surely there is no harm in this arrangement <sup>where</sup> it is expedient; <sup>to have a society for holding ~~the~~ ~~property~~</sup> but this is not essential to any church, Congregational or any other, but merely a way of doing business thro. a competent agent. <sup>the society being the agent</sup>

Again the old proverb is quoted against our <sup>congregational</sup> ~~efficiency~~ <sup>to us</sup> namely, "What is everybodys business is nobody's business." This is never fair, for all democratic bodies work ~~thru.~~

thru. ~~of~~ chosen committees or Agents. <sup>so that my little work is done directly by the</sup>  
But we must not be betrayed into <sup>a</sup> prolonged discussion which is not at all profitable.

Any church of any communion is efficient enough if its <sup>individual</sup> members have in their hearts the Spirit of the Master and by the ~~inspiration~~ <sup>inspiration</sup> ~~of~~ his presence do the best they can to

Inches 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

The most important one being a double headed  
system - a church & a society to take care  
of the individual church. Surely there

is no harm in this arrangement unless  
it is inefficient, but that is not  
assured to my church, Congregational

at a certain point, but surely on  
any of being business there -

As for the old church is quite  
different report. But surely the

agreement was referring to a church  
which is a very large business in reality

business. It is a new form, for  
all these ecclesiastical bodies work

to do the same work in different  
ways. It is not to be destroyed

but a new church is necessary  
is not of the profane.

Any church of any denomination  
is different enough of its

own denomination. It is in their  
hands the spirit of the church

and the independence of his  
presence to the best they can to

live like him & carry out his  
injunctions. The larger the  
individual liberty in co-partnership  
with the Lords Spirit the better.  
The larger the liberty of the  
individual Church in similar  
co-partnership the better for  
its healthful & effective  
growth & ~~work~~ undertakings.

The Organizational history  
before us gives us in graphic  
& acceptable shape the  
best defense of our polity  
that I have seen.

Let us <sup>ever</sup> <sup>consider</sup> part & parcel of the  
Army of Christ. We have our  
distinctive flag. Our division  
is known by the other <sup>Conventions</sup>  
for we are in the field of <sup>enterprising</sup> ~~work~~.  
We go to all climes & to all peoples  
along side of Presbyterians & Episcopalians.

Inches 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

The first thing I noticed when I stepped  
 out of the plane was the fresh  
 air. It was a relief after the  
 stuffy cabin. The pilot  
 smiled and said, "Welcome  
 to the state capital. We  
 are glad to have you here."  
 I looked out the window  
 and saw the beautiful  
 landscape. The fields were  
 green and the trees were  
 tall. It was a sight I had  
 never seen before. I  
 felt like I had entered a  
 new world. The people  
 were friendly and the  
 atmosphere was warm.  
 I was in luck. The  
 weather was perfect. It  
 was just what I needed  
 after a long flight. I  
 was ready to start my  
 new life here.

we have like <sup>of</sup> them <sup>our</sup> conflicts  
within & without. But we do try to  
always keep unfurled to the breeze the  
great common banner of our Lord -  
on which is inscribed "Go ye into all  
the world and preach the gospel to  
every creature". This <sup>banner</sup> shows to all  
Christians & to all opposers that  
whether they are in the ranks <sup>or in</sup> or on the  
stormish <sup>or</sup> <sup>on the</sup> retreat line, that  
we do belong to the Army of  
the Lord our Saviour and are  
~~we~~ determined to bear our part in  
the great contest for truth  
against error, for right against  
wrong, <sup>the spreading of light & knowledge &</sup> for the salvation  
of human souls.

All the <sup>of all commissions</sup> methods <sup>working together</sup>  
with one Saviour, one faith &  
one baptism of the Spirit are  
best of all. But each <sup>individual church</sup> must  
<sup>perform its function</sup> ~~the church~~, as each <sup>individual</sup> man & woman  
& child must <sup>perform</sup> the individual part



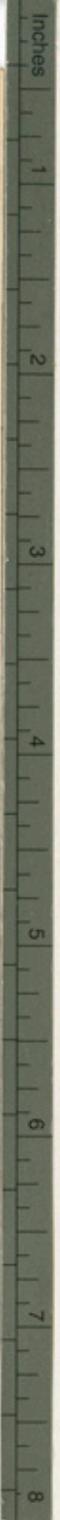
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We do not want to be in ~~it~~ or nor  
to be deceived.

"But being sincere in love grow up  
into him in all things who is the  
head, even Christ;  
from whom the whole body fitly  
joined together & compacted, by that  
which every joint supplieth, according  
to the effectual working in the  
measure of every part, unto the  
increase of the body unto the  
edifying of itself in love."

In the hope of promoting to  
~~in~~ some degree the longest  
charity we join our  
brethren in offering to  
Christian people & sects after  
~~knowledge~~ this book  
which the Author has so  
diligently & faithfully prepared.

*[Faint, illegible handwriting on aged paper, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side. The text is mostly obscured by the paper's texture and fading.]*



*Introductory letter.*

( Draft, to be corrected. )

Page 1 of Manuscript.

When a young man, the writer of this introductory letter, soon after his conversion, found himself associated with strong advocates of the Episcopacy. His friends were decided christian men of extensive reading and research; and for a time their arguments appeared <sup>to him to be</sup> strong and conclusive that "the true Church" was indeed a small one which by <sup>"the</sup> apostolic succession" had come down to us through the centuries without a break, in the line of bishops. The writings of the Rev. Dr. Pusey and other like advocates, were put into <sup>his</sup> hands. The impressions upon his mind and heart were so strong that not only did it seem for a while that bishops, priests and

~~Page 2, of manuscript.~~

Deacons were essential to the Church of Christ, but that other branches like the Presbyterian and Congregationalists were in error; and that their clergymen were not ordained ministers of Christ. Soon the arguments carried him on to the Roman Church, till he said to himself:- "If the unbroken apostolic succession in the line of bishops is essential to the living Church, the Roman Faith has the precedence". Since then it has never seemed at all strange to him that so many of his friends who were high-churchmen at last joined the Roman Catholic communion.

Further reading of the Scriptures, study and thought brought the writer back to his proper home in the Congregational household, and <sup>(there was)</sup> ~~then~~ he admitted and conformed with his family. This is perhaps too personal for ~~the~~ <sup>ea</sup> general reading; yet it may chance to influence and help some other ~~sr~~ <sup>er</sup>cher for the fold of Christ. It is in no way claimed that the Episcopal divisions of the grand army of the Lord are not good and wise, and in that sense under

*Bevinsbury*

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special divine favor; but the grander truth may dawn upon a man's heart that our Lord is in all his branches and that that wisdom is justified by all her children. It takes all the instrumentalities to reach ~~the~~ the nooks and corners of the world. But what would the writer not have given during his probation for such a historic compendium as this volume furnishes !

In these days an Ism is not of great moment; it is but an indication of the division lines in the hosts of the Lord, who, <sup>the hosts</sup> are now on the march, <sup>already</sup> battling with the foes of truth and righteousness. But organization is important, and a Christian wants to feel that he belongs to one that is at least defensible. The author of this <sup>book</sup> review of all the divisions from the Apostles' time till now, showing the origin of the Congregational polity in the earliest period, and following it through the ages without prolixity, with comprehensive clearness, and with <sup>sufficient</sup> ~~clear~~ and full statements of facts pro and con, has done a great work. Perhaps a little sectarian spirit could be detected <sup>in some of his pages</sup> by some old fashioned Christian, <sup>some</sup> ~~the~~ follower of John Knox or John Wesley. He rather feels that our Ism is the real Church, and that the others have somehow departed from the original simplicity of organization and worship. Once a gentleman, member of a Congregational ~~house of worship~~ church out West was walking to a Congregational house of worship with a lady, an ardent Episcopalian. She tried to show him the superiority of the Episcopal service to any other, and also how far short the others came of the True Faith. The gentleman replied as they entered the vestibule:- "All right. Perhaps yours is better than mine as you claim, but this dear <sup>one, Madam,</sup> ~~meadow~~ is mine.!: Your home may be nicer than ours, yet ours is ours!" So we detect little harm present or or prospection in an author who clings with some fervor to a hearty description of his own household of work and worship, and who is able to trace the pedigree of his family connection to the very fountain head. The readers will <sup>of this book</sup> particularly enjoy the history of the Congregational Churches of New England, <sup>where</sup> ~~the~~ the rigid and the <sup>liberal</sup> ~~literal~~ interpreters are all given a fair exhibit. The

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historic compendium as this volume furnishes!

In these days an iam is not of great moment; it is but an indication of the division lines in the hosts of the Lord who, ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> on the march or battling with the foes of truth and righteousness. But organization is important, and a Christian wants to feel that he belongs to one that is at least defensible. The author of this review of all the divisions from the Apostles' time till now, showing the origin of the Congregational policy in the earliest period, and following it through the ages without prolixity, with comprehensive clearness, and with ~~clear~~ <sup>clear</sup> and full statements of

facts pro and con, has done a great work. Perhaps a little sectarian spirit could be detected by some old fashioned Christian, follower of John Knox or John Wesley. He rather feels that our iam is the real Church, and that the others have somehow departed from the original simplicity of organization and worship. Once a gentleman, member of a Congregational ~~church~~ <sup>church</sup> out West was walking to a Congregational house of worship with a lady, an ardent Episcopalian. She tried to show him the superiority of the Episcopal service to any other, and also how far short the others came of the True Faith. The gentleman replied as they entered the vestibule:—"All right. Perhaps yours is better than mine as you claim, but this dear ~~manor~~ <sup>manor</sup> is mine! Your home may be nicer than ours, yet ours is ours!" So we detect little harm present or

or profection in an author who clings with some fervor to a hearty description of his own household of work and worship, and who is able to trace the pedigree of his family connection to the very fountain head. The readers will particularly enjoy the history of the Congregational Churches of New England, the rigid and the ~~liberal~~ <sup>liberal</sup> interpreters are all given a fair exhibit. The

causes of the Pilgrims leaving England; the sojourn in Holand; his arrival in America; his faith and purpose and trial on New England shores; no descendant of his is ever averse to the story, and here though an old one, it is told concisely and well. It will be-<sup>hereafter</sup> come a text for the jovial and eloquent speakers at the yearly anniversaries of New England societies which gather in all our great towns from Boston to San Francisco.

Our youth cannot be made too familiar with the actual foundation of our government, arranged for on board the "Mayflower", but secured at Plymouth, Mass. , a government of the people, when the flag, an emblem of the people's sovereignty, forever ensures a free church. The Church that best assimilates that government of republican form and order, is very near and dear to patriotic hearts.

The chapter on growth and expansion, taking us to Maine, New Hampshire, Massachussets, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland and Virginia, is of marked interest. Who does not want to know more about Roger Williams, John Elliot and the Indian Missions ?

An early congregation <sup>at</sup> church in Vrginia , and its transference to Maryland, and what came of it! - the new Virginia Churches of our order <sup>can trace</sup> at their regular succession after a lapse ! and Washington Congregationalists will take on a new courage and vigor, and push on to extend their simple methods of ~~formal~~ ordination, to

~~cover unoccupied fields of the South.~~  
 in the south  
 Baptists, who at bottom are usually good congregationalists, will read with avidity a history which strengthens their claim to divide with our Methodists brothers their call to all races of men.

One gets into the valleys and shadows of things when he sees "Halfway covenants", troubles with Quakers, lines clearage, religious declension, differences with Episcopalians, witchcraft delusion; but if of "orthodox blood" he must have a degree of satisfaction



shinings

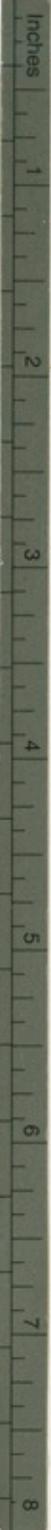
to answer soberly the laughings of Oliver Wendel Holmes and other humoristic reformers. Here, with some showings ~~in the bottom of the chasms~~ <sup>in the bottom of the chasms</sup> he can pick up the facts; one should want nothing better?

At Key West, Florida, the writer of this article recently found two plants that greatly interested him. One was an East Indian tree, called the Bayan, and the other was a new Congregational Church. To his mind there are in general many points of resemblance; there is a center tree; there are also <sup>other</sup> smaller trees, quite independent in their growth which rise from the ground, and more little trees still that start from wide-stretching branches, and grow down till they touch the earth; there they root themselves. All these up and down growths keep increasing in number and size till they finally become one immense tree. There at Key West came the Congregational Home Missionary. He found a few christians scattered about that place who wanted some fellowship and a house of worship. He explained to them the Congregational polity as he understood it, and showed them the ordinary expressions of faith that our people adopt. A Church was founded, and by the help of

polity not policy

the Home-Society a Church was organized and a house of worship ~~was~~ erected. Outside were independent growths, bands associated for prayer, Sunday-schools, shoots thrown off from other Churches from one cause and another. All these began to group around the original plant which the missionary had nourished. New converts then came from the church and its accessories. The apparently independent growths, coming from the ground, were ~~made~~ <sup>brought nearer</sup> more and more homogeneous by the converts who ~~seemed~~ <sup>seemed</sup> to spring from the branches and growths, till they ~~secured~~ <sup>secured</sup> their own bases, filled up the spaces and made a strong central, yet wide spreading tree.

It was a Banyan-Church that we planted at Washington in 1865. It was <sup>a worrisome & sometimes</sup> exasperating <sup>at first</sup> in ~~its~~ <sup>its</sup> make up. It took beggings and pleadings to secure money enough to build a Meeting-House. It took ex-parte councils and general councils and much fostering care to get it well rooted. Off ~~shoots~~ <sup>in time</sup> there were several in Washington and <sup>in</sup> the District of Columbia, and several more in the



*shining*

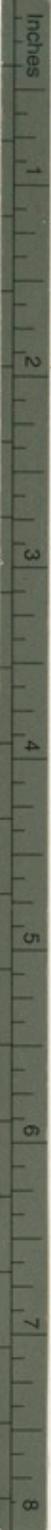
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*John Van Hook*



bordering states. They were seeming rivals and wondrously independent. But by the common sap of God's Spirit the central trunk has become <sup>at last</sup> larger and thriving, and all the rootlets are now united by a large conference <sup>we</sup> when fellowship so prevails as to suggest <sup>the likeness of</sup> but one great tree.

We cannot maintain very well that our Order is the best of all. Our brethren of other communions see <sup>in us</sup> many weaknesses. The independence of the individual church every home born and bred congregational believer insists on. <sup>as a sine qua non.</sup> How can heresy and <sup>have</sup> scism be prevented where there is no authority beyond the individual church? "Look", they say, "there went off <sup>from you</sup> the Baptists; then the Unitarians! They all preserve your methods, so that now there are three <sup>even</sup> bodies instead of one. You cannot maintain a uniform creed!!"

Are you sure brethren that it is necessary <sup>in</sup> Christ's Kingdom to keep solidly to one trunk of opinions on all topics? If so, Christ's Church is and will ever be a huge failure. <sup>¶</sup> Again they maintain that for the most part we have a double-headed system: a ~~Church~~ Church and a Society to take care of the individual Church.

Surely there is no harm in this arrangement where it is expedient to have a society for holding and managing property; but <sup>Society</sup> this is not essential to any church, congregational or other, but merely a way <sup>of</sup> doing business through a competent agent. <sup>the Society uses the agent</sup> Again the old proverb is quoted against our congregational efficiency, namely: "What is everybody's business is nobody's business". This is never fair <sup>to us,</sup> for all democratic bodies work through chosen committees or agents. <sup>So! that very little work is done directly by the whole body.</sup> But we must not be betrayed into prolonged discussion which is not at all profitable.

Any Christian Church of any communion is efficient enough if its individual members have in their individual hearts the Spirit of the Master, and by the spur of his presence do the best they can to live like him, and carry out his injunctions. The larger the individual liberty in co-partnership with the Lord's Spirit, the better. The larger the ~~individual~~ liberty of the individual Church in similar co-partnership, the better for its

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Mr. W. W. ...

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healthful and effective growth and ~~work~~ <sup>undertakings</sup>

The Congregational History before us gives us in graphic and acceptable shape the best defence of our polity that I have seen. Let us ever be considered a part and parcel of the Army of Christ. We have our distinctive flag. Our Divisions is known by the other communions, for we are in the field of enterprising work. We go to all climes and to all people alongside of Presbyterians and Episcopalians. We have like them our conflicts within and without. But we do try to always keep unfurled to the breeze the great common banner of our Lord - on which is inscribed "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature".

This banner shows to all Christians and to all opposers that, whether in the ranks, <sup>or</sup> on the skirmish, <sup>or</sup> picket-line, that we do belong to the Army of the Lord our Saviour, and are determined to bear our part in the great contest for truth against error, for right against wrong, <sup>and</sup> <sup>for</sup> the spread of light and knowledge, and for the salvation of human souls.

All the methods of all communions working together with one Saviour, one faith and one baptism of the Spirit are best of all. But each individual Church must perform its function, as each individual man and woman and child must perform the individual part. We do not want to be in error, nor be deceived. "But being sincere, in love ~~we~~ grow up into him in all things who is the head, even "Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love".

In the hope of promoting <sup>to</sup> ~~in~~ some degree the largest charity, we join our brethren in offering Christian people and seekers <sup>honest</sup> after knowledge this book which the author has so diligently, <sup>and</sup> faithfully prepared. <sup>and acceptable</sup>

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*Introduction  
Letter*

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