Draft
of
Introductory Article
written for the
Congregationalists in America

No 13

Subject
Congregationalists
in
America

13

When a young man the writer of this introductory article, soon after his conversion, ~~was seen under~~ found himself associated with the strong advocates of the Episcopacy. His friends were decided 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 through the centuries without a break, (in the line of Bishops). The writings of the Rev. Dr Pusey were put into his hands. The impression upon his mind & heart were so strong that not only did he ~~conclude that~~ it seem for a while that Bishops, Priests &

Deacons 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. Soon the arguments carried ~~him~~ him on to the Roman Church. Then he said to himself: If the ministerial 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 at last joined the Roman catholic communion.

Further, reading of the Scriptures, study & thought brought the writer back to his proper home in the Congregational household. and there he was admitted & confirmed with ~~his~~ his parents of his family. This is too

personal for the general reader, yet it may chance to influence & keep some other searcher 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 & 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 instrumentalities to reach all the nooks & 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 our ism is not of great moment; it is but an indication of the division lines in the hosts of the Lord who are

however for the punishment of sin, yet it may allowed to influence weak souls either temporarily for the good of others. This is no very pleasing view of the spiritual character of the young convert of the Lord or not good & wise, but in that sense under special circumstances, but the opposite truth, many down upon a mere heart may come Lord & in at his invitation and that Not Without a profound by our Christ-love. It tends to set the ~~the~~ in the wrong relation to God & the world & serious of the Word. But that natural morality the Apostle not have spoken for what a Christian Gospel in this volume for mankind!

The Three long we ~~see~~ is not of great necessity: it is but an illustration of the dominion Christ in the hearts of the Lord who care

on the march or battling with the foes of truth & righteousness. 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 Apostolic time till now showing the origin of the Congregational polity in the earliest period, and following it thro' the ages without prolixity, with comprehension clearness, and with clear & full statements of facts pro & con, has done a great work. Perhaps a little of sectarian spirit could be detected by some old fashioned christian, a follower

of John Knox or John Wesley. He rather feels that our Church is the real church, and that the others have somehow departed from the original simplicity of organization & worship. Once a gentleman, member of a Congregational 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, & also hoped for that 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 head over is mine! Your home may be nicer than ours, yet ours is ours!" So we delect

of Apollo Lessing's great statue. He
soothing feels that even Jesus is the
real church, and that the others
have somehow departed from the
original simplicity of organization
& worship. Even so Paul the-
man, man in a homogeneous
church and that, was nothing
organization
to a house of non-christ reality in
an about Christendom. The test
is where does the supremacy of the
Apostolical service is among other,
also must for that the other come
of the true test. The Jesuits
replying on this natural the weakness.
All right. Christianity is better than
so open claims. But the true Church is
Jesus! Jesus teaches is wise than
one, but one is one!" So Christ

little human present or prospective in an author who clings with such fervor to ~~the~~ a lovely description of his own household of work & worship, and who is able to trace his pedigree of his family connection to the very ~~primary~~ fountain head.

The readers with particularly enjoying the history of the Congregational Churches of New England - for the right & the liberal interpreters are alike given a fair exhibit. The

Ir

& the Pilgrim

The causes of leaving England, the sojourn in Holland, his arrival in America, his faith & purposes & trial on New England shores. No descendant of ~~these~~ his is ever averse to the story - and yet ~~this~~ - an old one it is told concisely & well.

It will become a text for the jovial & eloquent speakers at the yearly anniversaries of New England Societies ~~of the 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~~ ~~had~~ on board the May flower but secured at Plymouth. Mass.

a government of the people, when the flag forever an emblem of the people's sovereignty sums a free church.— The church that best assimilates that government of Republican form & order is very near & dear to patriotic hearts.

The chaplain on growth & expansion, taking us to Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, 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 early congregational church in Virginia & its transference to Maryland & what came of it.— The new Va. churches of our order will be charmed at their regular succession after a lapse! and Washington Congregationalists

will take on a new courage & vigor, and push on to extend their simple methods of form & ordination to every unoccupied fields of the south. Baptists in the south at bottom are usually good congregationalists will read with avidity a history which strengthens their claim to divide with our Methodist brothers their exile 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 Episcopalians, witchcraft delusions; but if of "orthodox blood" he must have a degree of satisfaction to answer solemnly the laughings of Oliver Wendel Holmes & other humoristic reformers. Here with some showings in the bottom of the chasms he can pick up the

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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 Banyan 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 other 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. Then they root themselves. All these up & down growths keep increasing in number & size till 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 polity as he understood it, and showed them the ordinary expressions of faith that our people adopt. A church was formed & by the help of the home-society a church was organized & a house of worship was erected. Outside were independent growths, bands associated for prayer, Sunday schools, shoots thrown off from other churches from one came & another. All these 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 more & more homogeneous by the converts who seemed to spring from the branches & growths till they seemed 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 a wearisome & sometimes exasperating concern at first in all its make up. It took begging & pleading to secure money enough to build a Meeting House. It took ex parte councils, & general councils and much fostering care to get it well rooted. Off shoots then in time were seen in the District of Columbia & several more in the bordering States. They were seemingly rivals & wonderously independent. But by the common sap of God's Spirit the central trunk has become at least large & flourishing, and all the rootlets are now united by a large conference where fellowship so prevails as to suggest the likeness of but one great tree.

It was a Bonanza Church
that we planted at Mustang Ian
in 1866. It was organized
at first in all its merits up-
stairs, paying a pledge to build
some money enough to build
a Meeting House. It took
a year's growth, repeated
sermons and hard pleading
even to get it built and
finished. Mr. Jones was appointed
in charge by a journal
here in the Conference Year. He
was seventy miles, & mostly
independent. That is the amount
of work Which the central
Church has received Every
Morning, Noon & Night
we have meetings in a large
conference where laboriously so
friendly as to support but one pastor

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

Our brethren of other communions see in us many weaknesses. The independence of the individual church every home born & bred congregational believer in sects does not seem so strange to us.

How can heresy & schism be prevented where there is no authority beyond the individual church?

"Look", they say: "There went off from us the Baptists; then the unitarians.. They all preserve your methods so that now there are three bodies instead of one.. You cannot even maintain a uniform creed!" 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.

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST,
GOVERNOR'S ISLAND, NEW YORK.

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the most part 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 where it is expedient to have a society for holding property; but this is not essential to any church, congregational or other, but merely a way of doing business thro. a competent agent. The society being the agent.

Again the old proverb is quoted against our congregational efficiency, namely, "What is everybodys business is nobody's business." This is never true to us for, all democratic bodies work thro. chosen committees or agents – so this is the latter working for directly to their orders by.

But we must not be betrayed into a prolonged discussion which is not at all profitable.

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

like Peter & 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 copartnership the better for its healthful & effective growth & ~~work~~ undertakings. The Congregational History before us gives us in graphic & acceptable shape the best defense of our polity that I have seen.

Let us, now, be, considered part & parcel of the army of Christ. We have our distinctive flag. Our division is known by the other Communions for we are in the field of enterprising work. We go to all climes & to all peoples along side of Presbyterians & Episcopalians.

We have like them our 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 banner shows to all Christians & to all opposers that whether in the trenches or in the skirmish on the 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, the spirit of light & knowledge & for the salvation of human souls.

All the methods of all communions working together with one Saviour, one faith & one baptism of the Spirit are best of all. But each independent church must perform its function, as each independent man & woman & child must perform the individual part

(12)

We do not meant to be in error nor ~~or~~ be deceived.

"But being sincere in love grow up into him in all things which 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, maketh the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

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

Introduction 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 to him to be strong and conclusive that "the true Church" was indeed a small one which by "the 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 his hands. The impressions upon his mind and heart were so strong that not only did it seem for a while that bishops, priests and

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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 there he was admitted and conformed with his family. This is perhaps too personal for general reading; yet it may chance to influence and help some other searcher 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

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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, the hosts who, are now on the march or already 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 book a 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 explicit and full statements of facts pro and con, has done a great work. Perhaps a little sectarian spirit could be detected in some of his pages by some old fashioned Christian, some 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 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 one, dear Madam, 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 of this book will particualrly enjoy the history of the Congregational Churches of New England, where the rigid and the liberal interpreters of Holy Writ are all given a fair exhibit. The

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causes of the Pilgrim 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 become a text for the jovial and eloqurnt 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 sovereignity, 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 at church in Vriginia , and its transference to Maryland, and what came of it! - the new Virginia Churches of our order at their regular succession after a lapse ! and Washington Congregationalists will take on new courage and vigor, and push on to extend their simple methods of formal ordination, to cover unoccupied fields of 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 blodd" he must have a degree of satisfaction

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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 other 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; therethey 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 felloship 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 the Home-Society a Church was organized and a house of worship 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 brought nearer and more homogeneous by the converts who seemed to spring from the branches and other growths, till they secured their own bases, filled up the spaces and made a strong central, yet wide spreading tree.

It was a Banyan-Church also that we planted at Washington in 1865. It was a worrisome & sometimes exasperating at first, in its 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 in time there were several in Washington and in the District of Columbia, and several more in the

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

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

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 and will ever be a huge failure. ¶ Again they maintain that for the most part we a have a double-headed system: a 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 this society is not essential to any church, congregational or other, but merely a way of doing business through a competent agent. the Society being the agent Again the old proverb is quoted against our congregational efficiency, namely: "What is everybody's business is nobody's business". This is never fair to us, for all democratic bodies work through chosen committees or agents, so that very little work is done directly by the whole body. But we must not be betrayed into a 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 liberty of the individual Church in similar co-partnership, the better for its

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This banner shows to all Christians and to all opposers that, whether in the ranks, or the skirmish, or 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, ~~and~~ for the spread of light and knowledge, and for the salvation of human souls.

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

Introductory letter

healthful and effective growth and ~~work~~ usefulness.

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, or on the skirmish or 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, and for 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 in some degree the largest charity, we join our brethren in offering Christian people and seekers after knowledge this book which the author has so diligently and faithfully prepared.