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CONGREGATIONALISM VERY ABLY

Discussed—Historical Data—Believes in Home Rule—Delivered at Bethel Literary Society to a Large Audience—"We are Independent Under Christ"—By Rev. A. C. Garner.

Congregationalism takes its name from two principles, viz: (a) the independence and autonomy of the local church, under Christ as head, (b) and the perpetual obligation of fellowship with others. These have been called the forces of its ellipse and Dr. Storrs said, "They are the two responsive and regulating forces in its organic system." But before saying more, I wish to confess that we do not claim that our polity is the best for everybody, nor that other denominations have not some advantages not possessed by us, nor that it is the only or easiest polity suggested by the New Testament Scriptures. In fact, so far as I know, the New Testament does not directly command any specific church polity. Congregationalists claim that in so far forth as we are able to read history and analyze scripture facts, the earliest polity of the Christian Church seems to have been more like our own than any other. We find that the early churches were simple and free in their government, so are our churches. We claim that the Christian church was first Congregational, then Presbyterian, then Episcopal, then Papal in its government.

The papal authority began in the 4th century, when the church and state became allied, and for twelve centuries Rome ruled the world. But in the fullness of the time Martin Luther, destined to break tyrannical authority, began, with his coadjutors, the work of reformation. The death of universal despotism was the birth and hope of individuality; hence the politics that antedated papal authority took form again. England went back to the Episcopal type, Scotland to the Presbyterian, and America settled by the Pilgrims and Puritans, went back to the original simplicity of apostolic Congregationalism. Their first minister ordained in this country was Francis Higginson. It was he who first encouraged and established independence of the local church, and the fellowship of the churches. He did the former by submitting to re-ordination in and by the local church at Salem; the latter, by inviting other churches, as fast as they were organized, to come into fellowship relations with his church. Congregationalism does not consider itself the reformed



HON. JOHN C. LEFTWICH.
Receiver of Public Money and Mayor of Klondike, Ala.

wing of any other denomination. It is not in the strictest sense the product of England or of any of her monarchs—whether Henry or Elizabeth or Cromwell.

Our polity is the direct product of the New Testament. "It is born of God; belongs to Jerusalem and the first age of Christianity." Since the rise and spread of more highly organized forms of church government our polity was like truth, "crushed to earth," but it rose again and was maintained in England in a submerged way from the time of Wycliffe (1380) but it was not until two hundred years later (1580) that it has to be reckoned with as a definite movement in church history.

Now all the church polities may be classed under two fundamentally different theories; (1) that of transmitted grace; (2) that of immediate grace. The former theory, which is: that the only power to organize, and guide a church comes down from Christ through the apostles and their successors—a continuous line of bishops, is held by episcopal and papal types. The latter theory which is: that Christ calls with

his own power, the body of Christians to construct and govern churches, and the organizing power is the immediate gift of Jesus Christ, is held by Baptists, Unitarians, Universalists, Disciples and Congregationalists. We believe in the immediate grace of God. Congregationalists define the visible church universal as a body composed of all those who publicly confess their faith in Christ as their Saviour and Lord. All Christians being equally related to Christ the Head of the Church, are equal in all rights and privileges and should be in communion one with another. We hold that those believers who dwell together in one place become, by their recognition of each other, and their mutual agreement to observe Christ's ordinances in one society, the local church. To form a local church no outside authority is necessary; for the church has power to make rules, select its officers, call its pastor, arrange its worship and manage its own affairs.

It is a covenanted association of brethren with equal vote and equal responsibilities; holding the cardinal

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ALABAMA'S KLONDIKE.

A Story of a Modern Alladin—A Child of Slavery Now the Receiver of Public Money in Alabama's Most Enterprising City—A Town Wholly Officered by Afro-Americans.

Klondike, Ala., Special.—Having seen one of your latest issues and finding it a very helpful paper to read to know the doings of our race, I therefore beg leave to allow me a small space in your newsy columns. Klondike City is situated seven and a half miles from Montgomery, Ala., on the W. R. R. of Ala. This place was commenced some time ago by Hon. John C. Leftwich now Receiver of Public Monies in Montgomery, Ala.

It is indeed marvelous how this little place began. Mr. Leftwich ten years ago passed through this section of the country as a book agent and lecturer, this place was inhabited principally by colored people and some of the best kind of white citizens. He then was a poor boy travelling from one place to the other trying to make a place in life, and as he went about doing good in the State he moved the people with compassion to love him, but he would never forget those who stood by him when he was in need. Through push and energy he made his way to the top having experienced many hardships in life. But when the time fully came when his financial condition would permit, then he started this town of Klondike. In this place we have two leading churches, two strong secret orders, The H. and A. Association is one of the strongest we have. We are now erecting a large building and hall. This school house and hall was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day with music and speeches, some of the best people of the State were with us.

Mr. Leftwich runs a nice store and employs a colored clerk. We also have a post office here run by the writer. This office has not been established a year yet, but is in excellent condition. And in connection with this coming little city Mr. Leftwich has plantations, farmers, herds of cattle and city property elsewhere. In short Klondike will be in the future one of the first colored towns in Montgomery, county, Ala.

T. M. LEWIS, Postmaster.

Klondike, Ala.

Next Tuesday evening Mr. Robert Pelham, Jr., will read a paper before Bethel Literary entitled "The Negro in the West—a Factor in the Progress of this Country."