

quest. They are the weapons which God blesses with victory, and He blesses no other. State churches, supported by State taxation, may continue to exist after the spiritual life has ceased, after Christ no more walks in the midst of them; but free churches, supported by the free offerings of the people, to live, must preach the doctrines which renew the heart, through the Spirit, which show a substantial reason for the divine urgency in Christ Jesus. Schools may speculate, but Christ conquers the heart of the world, not by speculation, but by the truth. Standing on the truth as it is in a crucified Redeemer, let us multiply our labours, and complete our fellowships, and hope for the speedy triumph of the Gospel of the Son of God in all the earth.

Fathers and Brethren: We leave with you the salutations of all the Congregational churches of the Republic, and they join in the hope that our fellowship may be constant and sweet. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love."

We are one. Our churches are opening their hearts to a broader communion of saints than formerly, as become the fellowship of the one and indivisible kingdom of our Lord. And we, who live so near together, who have so many bonds to unite us, ought henceforth to bear each other's burdens, share each other's joys, and live in each other's fellowship.

ENGLISH UNION NOTES.

THE English Congregational Union held its semi-annual session in May, at the Memorial Hall, London. Dr. Parker has been elected chairman by one of the largest votes recorded. As Dr. Parker sits in an editor's chair, he must permit us to tender our editorial congratulations.

Dr. Parker's election to the Chairmanship is kindly noticed by the leading Nonconformist papers, and the *Christian Chronicle*, which Dr. Parker edits, speaking of the Doctor's feeling in the matter says: "We know it to be one of fervent desire that his relations with all the parties immediately concerned should be cordial and helpful."

Of the address by the present Chairman, Dr. Fairbairn, we can only say it was worthy of himself:

"Christianity in the First Century" was the subject. Distinguishing between the political and the spiritual ideal of the Church, Dr. Fairbairn asked his hearers to look at the Christian religion dissociated from sects and sectarianisms. The only moment when it could be so seen was the ideal period of its history, when it issued, fresh and beautiful, from the mind of Christ, and began in the hands of His apostles its glorious battle against evil and sin, and for God and humanity. Jesus had spoken His words, created His society, died His death, made Himself in His

three years' ministry the wonder and the salvation of man. He had called men to be His apostles, had endowed them with the spirit and the tongues of fire, and they had gone forth preaching His Word, erecting churches, saving men, making a literature that was to be the most sacred literature of civilized man, and man it civilized. Sixty years ended, all seemed at Babylon, and Athens, and Rome as it had been when they began. But all was changed—man to the world, the world to man. Another notion of God, another idea of religion, another ideal of humanity, had come to reign over man's spirit, a vaster immensity had opened round his soul, a mightier eternity appealed to his imagination and kindled his hope. The change penetrated everywhere; was to affect political institutions, making them freer and humaner; was to recreate literature; supplying philosophy with sublimer subjects of speculation, poetry with grander themes, history with its most wonderful pages and devotion with its loftiest inspiration. Art was to feel the new spirit, and rise from the rudest beginnings in dark catacombs to the most splendid achievements: architecture, building temples to the honour of Christ's name; painting, through its love of Him, idealizing the manhood, the womanhood, and the infancy of earth, that they might become symbols of the humanities that live in God; music, exalted and transformed by His influence, if not changing her very nature, yet becoming a new art, that she might the better sing the praise of His passion, and the more fitly render the exaltation of His victory. The supreme moments in the later centuries have been the moments when the first had been mightiest, when the Christ has, as it were, entered anew the spirit of man, inspired it with a deeper hate of tyranny, falsehood, sin and wrong, and a more victorious love of freedom, truth and righteousness. The centuries and peoples that love these most know Christ best; the more of Him there is in an age, the nearer the age stands to Him. It is His growing mastery over the human spirit that makes our day struggle so strenuously to stand in the presence of His. Man feels that if he had once pierced and possessed the mystery of Christ, his last problem would be solved, his deepest need be satisfied. Men may say, "the religion owes less to Jesus than to Paul; he made its high and spiritual universalism." But Paul made no part of the matter, made only the form in which it could best be stated, the terms in which it could most fitly be explained. The theology of Paul was a science of Christ, without the Christ no science of Him had been possible. The religion, then, thus created and instituted, springing from its living root in the Person of its Founder, begins to be, and begins to be a religion at once missionary and universal. It is intended to embrace "all nations," to be preached to all men everywhere. Paul did not create this universalism. Jesus did. In the far East, indeed, an immense missionary religion was already four centuries old. Buddhist preachers had spread throughout India, were penetrating the farther east, were seeking a way into the sated and sceptical and superstitious west. But Buddhism was no genuine universalism; it could associate with other faiths, would accept a divided homage, and, when alone, was too fatal to the social sanity of man to be capable of life in lands where the social ideal was plastic and sovereign. But the religion of Jesus was, as it were,