

within her own pale. Much need is there on her part for conferences with other evangelical churches. It is sad that so great and good a man as Bishop Ellicott should indicate so coldly his regard for Christian churches which he would willingly receive into his own communion as is indicated in his own words—"freely avowing that we presume not to unchurch our Christian Brethren, but leave them to their own Master to stand or to fall."

Too much importance is at present attached to external union—and that often for mere display. The Church of Christ is not much hurt by the fact that its people belong to different denominations, but she is deeply wounded when the members of these denominations do not recognize, love, and hold communion with one another.

CHURCH UNION IN THE NORTH-WEST

MR. EDITOR, Even the secular journals are taking up the cudgels on behalf of Church union; the Christian conscience is uneasy; right and left appeals are pouring in; organic union, federal union, anything to make the spirit of fellowship more evident and more fruitful.

They tell us we have spiritual union—thank God for it—else this war of truth would be a weary battle; but this is a practical age, a realistic age, and we want ocular, tangible evidence of that union. Moreover, this is a sceptical world, and they cannot but laugh at the sanctimonious way in which we talk of union and brotherhood on the one hand, and the conceited Pharisaical manner in which we treat these brothers on the other. The world is demanding, the spirit of Christ is demanding, that John xvii. 21 be fulfilled, not in spirit only, but in the letter also.

And when we come seriously to consider the question, how little can be said in favour of the present condition, as a gentleman said to me the other day, he never knew how little was to be said against organic union until he came to sum up the arguments opposed to it. The real reason of denominationalism is Christian selfishness; we make too much of the things in which we differ and too little of those in which we agree. But the spirit of the age, the necessities of the Church and the Christian conscience are all demanding union and we will have it; those historical utterances of such men as Calvin, Crammer, Zwingli and Knox of the Reformation period, and of Hall, Usher and Chalmers of later times are bearing their fruits, are forcing the true spirit of Christ our Master upon the attention of Christians everywhere. Scripture proves its necessity, history, as Dr. Grant showed in Toronto the other day, proves its practicability, our part is the consummation. No one expects or hopes that this result can be gained by any single flourish of trumpets, or any single decree of a Protestant conference; but in answer to the question as to what can immediately be done I would like to present the North-West as a field for trial.

In the first place the necessities of the field. The mission fields are large and the people very much scattered, causing a great multiplicity of preaching stations; in some cases four or five families are all that can be gathered around one station. When these families represent more than one denomination how absurd, one would say, that two even whose differences in preaching and service amount in this country to practically nothing should be ministering to them. One would suppose that in these cases the good sense of the different churches would leave such fields to the denomination which first occupied it. But such is not the case; there are fields in the North-West of not five hundred inhabitants where the ministers of them, often four denominations, are preaching to them and travelling over precisely the same ground in visiting them, and at times the strange sight is seen of three ministers residing in a little town of not one hundred inhabitants, each holding service on the Sabbath for one-third of the little population, and oftentimes each having his own separate building. This state of things is the more to be deplored because there are many portions of this great country entirely unoccupied by Christian churches; I know of men in Manitoba who heard a sermon for the first time in ten years only last summer and this was not their own fault.

Then, again, the degrading spirit of sheep-stealing is fostered; churches are loath to build up new causes in distant and uncertain fields, and find it easier to open work in the midst of some flourishing congregation of a sister denomination.

Deplorable instances could be cited; I could tell of congregations of less than one hundred, less even than fifty, started in our North-West, every member of which was taken from one of the other congregations in the place. I know there are plausible reasons given for such action; but in the face of the great needs of the destitute and distant fields, and of the greater need of foreign fields this action is most deplorable.

Secondly, I believe that in the North-West union is to a certain degree, practicable. People in this country are not like people in older lands; Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen and Canadians are bundled together here in the most promiscuous manner. Constant contact serves to rub off prejudice; and prejudice in religion is just as fragile as prejudice in nationality. Moreover, we are all strangers here, bound together by one common grief—we have left old homes and friends—bound together, too, by common hopes for prosperity, common aims, common difficulties; nothing is more democratic than life on the prairie. The consequence is that where people have not the opportunity of worshipping as they were wont to do in the old land they fall in quite naturally, especially the better part of them, with the denomination

that is carrying on work nearest them. I have known some of the leading members of Presbyterian churches in the North-West who were Episcopalians and Methodists in the east, and similar instances are to be found in almost every congregation.

It is, of course useless to talk of organic union in the North-West unless we also have it in the east; but for the above two reasons I think some sort of federal union might easily be accomplished. Let us take a practical case; there are two fields in our North-West, not very many miles apart with both of which I am acquainted, in both Presbyterian and Methodist ministers reside and hold service.

In one of these fields some of the leading Methodists have expressed themselves as willing to give up their church and join with the Presbyterians; in the other some of the Presbyterians have taken the same attitude towards the Methodist church. Why not, I ask, give up our field to the Methodists, the other to Presbyterians? for divided as they are now, both congregations are weak and spiritless.

This I have cited as an example the like of which, I believe can be found in many portions of our North-West. It is not a visionary scheme, but a practical proposition. It may seem a small thing, but it means in each case the saving of two men to the work of God's Church. We have found the necessity of federal union in our foreign mission work. I believe we shall never have success until we have introduced it into our work at home. Only a worker on the field can understand the grievous waste of men and means in our North-West.

Some such scheme as the above suggests a means by which many men might be saved for other parts of the work. Perhaps a committee from each denomination meeting together for earnest practical work, could frame some plan by which fields could be justly apportioned.

God speed the day when the churches shall gather under one roof to worship the one God with one spirit; when we shall "walk by the same rule and mind the same thing" (Phil. iii. 16), when we shall all be of "one mind and one soul" (Acts iv. 32); then in truth shall we be "one" even as the Father and Son are One. NORMAN H. RUSSELL.

Winnipeg.

HOW TO DO IT.

MR. EDITOR,—In the CANADA PRESBYTERIAN of February 26th, "J. D." of Toronto, favours us with an article entitled "How Not to Do It." Under this heading he gives a picture of a congregation who illustrated the truth of "How not to do it" by giving a call to the wrong man, and this particular man in his own case and way illustrated the truth of "How not to do it" by finding himself after a short service of two or three years coming out at the wrong end of things, for he finds himself waited on by a deputation who politely inform him that his usefulness had come to an end and that his resignation would be gratefully accepted and that he would be quite at liberty to pull up his stakes and go west, or anywhere else, as the whole land was before him.

Now it will readily be admitted that pouring ice-cold water down the minister's spinal column by informing him that he had proved a failure and that he would oblige by making room for a better man, even when done in the most delicate manner, must awaken in that minister's soul sensations that could not by the utmost stretch of imagination be truthfully described as delightful or in the least degree pleasant or agreeable.

The serio-comic description of such an occurrence might provoke a smile, but in actual experience it would be difficult to see just where the smile would come in so far as the minister's part of the business was concerned. It is time for us to switch on to the main track of our subject and try to run along the line of How to do it. It is not our intention to inform congregations what style of a man or preacher they should fill their vacancies with in order to have him turn out a success, but to mention some things which if attended to may greatly help to make some ministers a success who have been declared failures by their congregations and turned adrift to wander hither and thither in search of a resting place and the needful daily bread.

When a congregation takes unto itself a minister, as in the case of a man who takes unto himself a wife, it is either for better or worse. Now in order that it may not turn out to be for the worse depends a great deal upon the congregation as well as upon the minister; for if a minister turns out to be what some people call a failure, it is not because he particularly desires such a thing. We are charitable enough to suppose that all ministers have a desire to preach well, and to be the means of edifying their people. Now in any case or circumstance all that we can reasonably expect of any one is to do his best. It may be said that some men do not seem to have any best in them. Well, even granting that after some men have done their best there is little to show for it, still there is no getting away from the truth that it remains the duty of the congregation to do its best to help its minister to do his best.

And the question now comes up, How much can a congregation do either to hinder or help its minister in preaching? We answer, very much either way. And this is just the place where "How to do it" comes in; for the ordinary minister is far more dependent on your sympathy, your appreciation and encouragement than you are likely to be aware of. So if you belong to a congregation whose minister's preaching seems to be in danger of proving a failure, ask yourself the

question if you have in any way helped to bring about this state of affairs by any neglect on your part. Have you earnestly prayed for his success and desired his welfare, do you always make it a point to be present at the weekly prayer meeting? And when some one is asked to lead in prayer do you and your brethren readily and gladly respond and by so doing help to bring life into the meeting and gladness into your minister's heart, toning up his mind and giving him new inspiration by your heart-felt utterances and whole-souled petitions to God for the power of His Spirit to work in the hearts of all present, that the word spoken might be greatly blessed in bringing sinners to the feet of the Lord Jesus, and for the upbuilding of those in the faith who love His name? Or have you ever expressed your appreciation of anything he has said in his sermon? Do you occasionally wait a little after the service to shake hands with your minister and say how glad you were to hear him do so well, or that what he said had helped you to see things more clearly, or that your faith had been strengthened, and that you thank God for the good done, and that you felt like going to work in good earnest, and asked your minister what he thought you could do or try to do, to help forward the good work; have you ever done this or anything like this? For doing this or something like this is just what we mean by "How to do it," if you do your duty by your minister. Pray earnestly for his success. Watch for the good and be ready to acknowledge it by your kindly expressed sympathy and recognition of benefits received, thus letting your pastor know that you are with him. The chances are that you will soon begin to talk about the great improvement in his preaching instead of being impressed with the idea that he is turning out a failure.

There are some other little matters if attended to that will greatly help in the way of "How to do it." Keeping your minister's salary well paid up, and when needed, adding a little to it, helps to give him backbone, puts vim into his preaching, and enables him to keep his head well above water, thus making the probability of his turning out a failure much less of a certainty.

Another of the little things that helps in the way of "How to do it" is sweet reasonableness on your part toward your minister. Make for him the same allowance that you make for yourself; for like yourself he is liable to get discouraged or to have trouble and sorrow and be perplexed at times. He will feel unwell occasionally and be out of sorts. But perhaps you think that your minister, just because he is a minister, is lifted high above all these things. Well if you think so you have made the greatest mistake of your life, and need to learn one or two things yet. For if that great minister and preacher the apostle Paul was in the habit of asking his flock to pray for him and thanking God for the comfort he had received from them, you can have some idea how much an ordinary mortal like your pastor needs to be prayed for comforted, and helped in many ways. And if it so happens that your minister is a young man, deal gently with the lad for a little until he picks up a bit, for like as not at his age he does not know everything. It takes time to lay in a stock of knowledge, especially that kind out of which good sermons are made.

If you are a farmer we do not need to tell you that even a young horse can be spoiled for future usefulness by overloading when the bones are tender and the shoulders unused to a heavy strain. So give the young man a fair chance even if he has as described in the article "How not to do it" a very high and stiff collar, and has had the misfortune to have passed through five or six colleges or universities—give him the right kind of treatment, work him as his nature requires. Give him the sympathy and help you would desire him to give you were you in his place, and the probability is that he will come out all right.

Remember also to make as much allowance for your minister's wife as you do for your own. Allow her the privilege of staying at home to take care of her children, and make things comfortable for her husband. If she manages her own household affairs anything like well she will be a success and worthy of all honour. Never mind where your minister got his wife. Like yourself he had a right to marry the woman he loved, no matter where he found her, whether in your own neighbourhood, or in a neighbourhood a thousand miles away. It is your duty to extend to her the treatment due to a lady and lead her to thank God that she finds herself among friends. If there is any congregation whose minister seems to be in danger of becoming a failure, let its members ask themselves if they are helping to bring this about by some failure on their part. It may not yet be too late to try the remedy of "How to do it" in some such way as given above and if that fails to save them from the performance of the most unpleasant of all duties, that of telling their minister that he is good for nothing and that they are prepared to see him off and some one else in his place, then perhaps we might have some good reason for bidding the unfortunate brother God speed in some other line of work than that of the Gospel ministry. AN ELDER.

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