

Religious Intelligence.

UNION IS STRENGTH.

The tendency of the times is strongly in the direction of an integration of forces. This is seen in the unification of Italy and Germany, in the confederation of Canada and Australia, in the union of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches of this country. A strong trend towards union is shown in the Methodist Churches of the Old Land. The benefits of union have been so marked in Canada that an extension of the principle is by many strongly desired. The response of the General Conference to the strong union sentiments expressed by the venerable Dr. Caven shows how receptive our highest court was to this generous sentiment. The address of Dr. Chown at the recent annual meeting of the Society of Christian Unity in Toronto was another mark of this trend. Referring to the political unions of the past he said: "But more glorious far will be the momer when the divinely-anointed leaders of the embattled hosts of our Canadian Zion shall meet in fraternal conference, and in solemn conclave, sign, seal, and deliver the holy compact—the constitution of the Federal Council of the Christian Church in Canada." The time for polemics has largely passed; the time for irenics has come.

At Ottawa recently the Rev. S. G. Bland strongly urged the appointment of a Federal Council of Presbyterians and Methodists with powers to direct the missionary and educational work of these two Churches. It would promote economy of men and means and would help on the cause of general church unity. It is especially important that such union should take place in the mission field. We are glad to know that the Methodist Churches in Japan have arranged a preliminary basis of union. "Such a union," the *Guardian* remarks, "will have the hearty approval of the Methodists of Canada. A united Church in Japan should mean a new life and power for aggressive work." It would also do much to move the cavil of the critics as to the disunion among Christians, would lead to the economy of men and means, and would promote a generous glow of Christian love and fellowship.

The versatile Dr. Parker, chairman of

the Congregational Union of England, has proposed in that body a plan for the union of the Congregational, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches of Britain. He urges, says *The Outlook*, the members of the Free Churches to unite in providing a theological education for their respective ministers, so both economizing expenditure and increasing results. Three high-grade colleges at Oxford, Cambridge, and Durham would replace the present eight existing theological colleges belonging to the above-mentioned denominations. Both economy of management and greater working power would be secured by the application to the religious world of that spirit of combination which has already achieved such success in the commercial world. If Dr. Parker's proposal is accepted, as we hope it may be. English Dissent may date a significant development from the 1901 meeting of the Baptist and Congregational Union. We hope that in the not distant future, British Methodism may follow this example.

THE ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE.

The third Methodist Ecumenical Conference will give a striking illustration of the way Methodism has spread throughout the world. Her sons shall come from afar, even from the ends of the earth. Special prominence will be given, says *The Methodist Recorder*, to Methodism in its relation to national life, to biblical criticism and Christian faith, to Protestantism and modern Sacerdotalism, to education, modern unbelief, secularism, and indifferentism. It will include all phrases of Methodist literature, young people's societies, spiritual vitality and family religion; the liquor traffic, gambling, wealth and luxury, pulpit effectiveness, the mobilisation of the whole Church, and, finally, a whole day devoted to foreign missions. Bishop Galloway will open the Conference in the old City Road Chapel, the mother church of universal Methodism.

The Conference will last twelve days. Our own Canadian Methodism is given a prominent part in this programme. We may be sure our delegates will acquit themselves with credit to the great Church they represent. Canadian Methodism has given a notable example to the