

some other ecclesiastical organizations. But if we may judge by the numberless ruptures and secessions that have marked their history, it is those Churches which are held together by the constraint of human authority that are the rope of sand, in comparison with which the bond which holds Independent churches together is a golden chain, for

"Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above" ;

and love grounded in common religious views and experiences, in regard to all the fundamental truths of the Gospel, can alone unite us here below.

This, as it seems to us, is a most important part of our mission, alike in the old world and in the new,—to set forth the essential oneness of all true believers, and to illustrate our teaching by the maintenance of the widest christian fellowship. We must show to the world that Congregationalists are not a *sect*,—a religious party *cut off* from, and excluding the rest of the Church of God, by barriers of its own erecting,—but that our terms of communion are the same now as in the Apostolic Churches, and that it is others and not we, who are responsible for the divisions and jealousies that distract the christian world.

To do this effectually, however, we must ourselves "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Our *principles* no less than our *tempers* are on trial, for men will judge of the value of the one by their sweetening and mellowing influence upon the other. Absolute agreement upon minor doctrinal points is impossible. Let us not, therefore, hope for it, or waste our energies in the vain attempt to attain it. "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing," avoiding "strifes of words," and unprofitable discussions of things "which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith." Even knowledge may be bought too dearly, for "though we understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though we have all faith, so that we could remove mountains, and have not charity, we are nothing." Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another, remembering the grand old motto of our illustrious ancestor, John Milton, "IN ESSENTIALS UNITY ; IN NON-ESSENTIALS LIBERTY ; IN ALL THINGS CHARITY."

Something must be left as a test of the loyalty of the heart—in Paradise, the tree ; in Israel, a Canaanite ; in us, temptation.—*Cecil*.