

Union is a theme on which our lips often dwell, but, brethren, if our hearts get hold of it as an experience, it will be at the cross of Christ. There, where I learn to love my "elder brother," I learn to love the whole family, the "many brethren," among whom he is "first-born." There, where I bow my own sinful and unworthy head, confess my sins, obtain mercy, find grace to help, and learn to pour out my heart to the Saviour, "whom having not seen I love;" there, where I find my brother similarly exercised, shall we both instinctively feel that we are *one*. It will need no effort to join our souls in a compact of holy fellowship, or our hands in a co-operation of earnest labor; the love of Christ will be a sweet, yet irresistible restraint to both. Oh! might but our present gathering be thus a true "*Union meeting*," with what inward resuscitation and refreshment should we go back to our respective spheres of duty, and how plainly would our people see, that we had come to them "in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ!"

And now, ere I close, need I frame an apology for the style and tenor of this address? I might have chosen a topic of a more pleasing kind, but many things are good which are not pleasant, and I much question if I could have found a subject more fitted in our present circumstances to be useful. When the night is dark, and you have a journey to perform, pyrotechnics are not what you need; the starlight, though it only glimmers, is better. Eulogy of our principles, glowing statements as to our usefulness, bright pictures of our future, might have been more agreeable, and there might have been these without the unreal or the untrue; but we are confronted with serious difficulties and if we are ever to conquer them, we must first marshal and measure them. Without vanity or assumption, may I not say, I have earned some sort of right to speak freely in reference to the defects and necessities of Canadian Congregationalism, from the fact that I have been, somewhat prominently, its champion and defender? "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." I trust that I do not over-estimate our imperfections, nor underate our excellencies and our usefulness. We have not toiled in vain these weary years during which we have been contending with the impediments that have strewn our way. Our influence has done something to leaven other bodies. Through God's grace we have turned many to righteousness. A feeble despised, unnoticed agency, has often accomplished more than was indicated by outward appearance. And it is probable much good has been effected through our instrumentality, the knowledge of which is one of the joyful surprises reserved for us in the world of vision. "Now we see through a glass darkly," and in some respects, it is well that it is so. Our vision is weak and cannot bear the full blaze of day. But while we have a care not to depreciate God's good work, it is our duty to look even discouraging facts full in the face. And we shall certainly deceive ourselves, if we do not yield to the full persuasion, that it is essential to our success for us to be "men of understanding to know what Israel ought to do," and to "discern the signs of the times;" that we must have a revived spirituality, a truer denominationalism, a more manifest consistency, a deeper devotedness, and a heartier union.

"Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things."