

the truth works its way into human minds and lives. The un-Congregational Congregationalists believe that they are the depositories of the truth, that whatever contradicts it is an obstacle to its progress; they do not believe that truth travels as the bird flies, by leaning on the very wind that blows against it.

REFERENCE is then made to the numerous boards, missionary and educational, who take to themselves, irrespective of the churches, control over societies which draw their life from those churches, which yet have no voice in the direction of the same, and closes thus:

To resume, then, the language of confession, I confess that Congregationalism does not possess some of the advantages possessed by other and more compact and highly organized communions; it does not possess the liturgical unity of the Episcopal Church, the visible and apparent doctrinal unity of the Presbyterian Church, the ecclesiastical unity of the Methodist Episcopal Church; its worshippers cannot reflect on Sabbath morning that they are repeating the same confession and the same thanksgiving that have been repeated since the days of Cranmer, and in the same language. The communion of saints has in the Congregational churches no such visible sign as is afforded in the Episcopal Church by the Book of Common Prayer; the ministers are not intrinched behind a common symbol of faith, held, or supposed to be substantially held, by all their order, and witnessed to for substance of doctrine by their united testimony; the church does not and cannot map out the country in parishes or circuits, as the Methodists do, secure, under episcopal supervision, a man for every work, and work for every man, and make sure that no pulpit is without a preacher, and no preacher without a pulpit. I confess that the free and fluid organization of Congregationalism, giving to its churches neither the advantages nor the disadvantages of ecclesiastical coherence and subordination, confers upon it only one superiority over all its hierarchical contemporaries, namely, liberty; it can entertain opinions, and try tentatively movements in worship, thought and work, without danger from discussion or disaster even from failure; it can lead in the great religious movements of the age, not by creating a spiritual oligarchy who are the divine repositories of the truth, but by eliciting the truth by means of a free exchange of contrasted and sometimes clashing opinions. But I must also confess that not a few Congregationalists appear to be ignorant of the true function of Congregationalism; belong to the Congregational Church without believing in Congregational principles; fear nothing so much as freedom; and impair the power of their own denomination to exercise that leadership which belongs to it, by compelling Congregational Congregationalists to divide their time and energy about equally between exercising their liberty for the benefit of Christendom, and fighting for the right to exercise it against foes who are of their own household.

THERE can be little doubt that the two aspects of Congregationalism indicated are struggling

for ascendancy. The principles advocated by the paper are the principles of Plymouth Rock and sturdy British Independency, with its faith and courage; the principles deprecated are those that New England State Congregationalism has caused to remain the traditional polity of the Congregational Churches of the Great Republic. Canadian Congregationalism is called upon to make its choice, and on that choice will depend its future in this rapidly growing Dominion.

AND the choice lies either in antagonizing two schools of thought, generating bitterness and virtual division; or in frankly, freely, cordially—if such a thing can be—welcoming both to live lovingly side by side, working toward the same end, and then approaching each other. Should our brethren convene, as has been hinted in these pages, for conference, this question must form one subject for free brotherly counsel.

THE UNION OF THE CHURCHES.

BY REV. WILLIAM WYE SMITH.

He would have been a very strong man—a wondrously hopeful man, who, a hundred years ago, would have spoken of the union of Christian churches; and he is a very unimaginative man—a veriest pessimist—who now thinks that the thing is, and will always be, impossible!

Let us get away behind and beyond all “sects,” and “denominations,” and “bodies,” away back to the time when they were all *one*. And in doing so, in order to have firm and well-known ground, we will go back to Apostolic times.

1. The basis of fellowship, both in the local church as members thereof, and between one local church and another was (as Rowland Hill used to say of his own preaching) the “three R’s”: Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost. Every church that had and held that basis, and every disciple who held that basis, was free to the confidence, the fellowship, of other Christians and other churches.

2. There were in the days of the Apostles two great divisions, or sections, of the church, the Jewish and the Gentile. There was, in many instances, as wide an apparent divergence between them as between the two great divisions of the church now—the Protestant and the Catholic.