

the pilgrims may take a roundabout way to their Father's house. Nay, some may display rather unseemly gambols in the exercise of their freedom. These will generally be the younger and more exuberant spirits, but age and experience will generally correct this tendency without much harm being done. The great body, however, will travel on in the enjoyment of the free air of heaven, the fragrant turf under their feet, in the untrammelled exercise of their faculties, and guided by the only unerring chart, they will reach the haven of rest not the less surely that they have not trusted to two guides—the one fallible and the other infallible—that they have not permitted the human standard to override the Divine. Objectors naturally enough say, according to the Independent system, we can never hope to see removed that which has so long been a scandal and a reproach to Protestants—the great diversity of opinions and denominations among them; and that which has been the object of desire and prayer to so many pious men must thus remain unaccomplished—the union of all the flock of Christ in one fold, by which they mean one great church or ecclesiastical organisation, which they generally expect will be on their own model. I humbly think that there has been a great deal of unnecessary lamentation expended over the divisions among Christians. Instead of mourning over them, I confess I rather like them—for unless the intellectual constitution of man were completely changed, the body of professing Christians could only be held together in a grand ecclesiastical corporation, either by a powerful coercion or by a general hypocrisy. As men are constituted, it is impossible that they can all think alike, especially on subjects embracing moral and intellectual elements; therefore, in regard to Christian fellowship, to avoid disputation and strife, it is convenient and profitable that those who generally agree on the main questions should form one society or church, or sect if you will. This, however, does not or should not hinder Christians of every name from regarding as brethren all who worship with them one God and Father, one Lord and Saviour, and one Spirit of all grace; nor should it hinder them from joining cordially in every good work. This spiritual union I believe to be the true union of all believers, and that it is in this sense alone that as there is one Shepherd there will be one flock and one fold. Holding such views, I confess that I don't look with favour on a project which many good men consider as highly desirable—I mean a union of the United Presbyterian and the Free Churches—and some even contemplate the probability that in due time it may embrace the Established Church also. Not long since the Established Church may be said to have been actually in this position; it embraced almost all the professing Christians in Scotland, but its extensive union and power, so far from being beneficial, was baneful both to civil and religious liberty. I am old enough to remember hearing read from the pulpit the pastoral admonition of the Church of Scotland, which was read from all the pulpits of the Church, warning all its members against the sin and danger of encouraging or hearing preachers whom they had not regularly ordained, meaning thereby such men as the Haldanes, Rowland Hill, Aikman, and others who were zealously engaged in preaching that Gospel which many of them despised. Was there ever a large and powerful ecclesiastical corporation that did not attempt to encroach on the liberties of the people? and if you had the three great denominations in Scotland in one confederation, do you suppose they would not use their great and overwhelming power like other corporations for their own aggrandisement? That this would be the case with the three great denominations united, is very certain, but you would not be quite safe with the incorporation of the