

brethren may be sought, is assuredly the right of the freest section of the Church of Christ." It may not be unfair to put the question: Has Christian union ever been ignored by Congregationalists? We repudiate the imputation. It has been cultivated in our intercourse with others, encouraged in our churches, and taught in our pulpits, and manifested in the favour our ministers have always shown to ministerial associations, the evangelical alliance, and union prayer meetings. We have never been exclusive. There has been often more noted fellowship and Christian love between a Congregational church and its minister, and the churches of other denominations, than between some churches bearing the same name, and under the same organization, and in the same town. In the great schemes for Christian work where all unite, we have been never wanting. Bible and Tract Societies are our witnesses. The great London Missionary Society founded on the true basis of Christian union, was forsaken by others, and left in our hands, but we refused then to exclude others, by calling it after our name. We aver without fear of contradiction that the Congregational churches have been in advance of others in regard to Christian union. Union has been our cry, practical solid union.

More than thirty years ago a published article on the subject of Christian union from the pen of the writer of this article, was copied and republished by other denominations in Canada, as far as we know, without condemnation. We are now lectured on the subject and pointed to the great organized combinations of other denominations, and asked, cannot we go into it and call it union? We reply, the sort of organized combination such as the Methodists and Presbyterians have, is contrary to the very genius of Congregationalism, and we believe of Christianity. Great centralized organizations banded to govern and make laws for the churches of a province or a nation are dangerous, not only to the Christian liberty of the churches but to their spirituality.

The larger and more powerful the organization the more dangerous it becomes. This is not Christian union, if it is the Church of Rome has it to a greater perfection than any of the rest of them, for it is the largest, and most thoroughly organized.

We do not regard the Methodists or Presbyterians as having a jot more of the union of the Spirit than they had before their combinations. The people do not love one another any better; as denominations they are made not a whit more catholic. Being more powerful, they are likely to become more exclusive and intolerant of others, as Rome is. We desire no such union as this. From the first introduction of it among the churches of Christ, it brought evil, and led to corruption. If any minister desires it, or private member, it is always open to him to join such a

union and place his neck under the yoke. The Congregational Union, however, have mistaken their mission, when they conceive that they meet to discuss that sort of union for our churches. The union as it is, is open to every free church of Christ, or should be. Our constitution says: "That this union is founded on a full recognition of the distinctive principles of Congregational churches, namely, the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in its government and administration, and therefore that the Union shall not assume legislative or administrative authority or in any case become a court of appeal." It is then out of place for the Union to discuss the bringing of our churches into these large organizations. Our churches do not want it, are not sighing to belong to some powerful body which shall exercise control over them. We can now say, grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, whatever name they may bear, to whatever party they belong. As a brother is Christ's so we are Christ's, one in Him, through one Spirit; separate families, but of one Holy nation. We have one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism. This unity of the Spirit we have and cultivate. The other kind of union we do not want, and as far as the sentiments of our churches are known they will not have it.

Large organizations are always coming apart, and cement them as you will, they will divide again. United by the Spirit, nothing but sin—departure from the faith—can separate us from one another. Love is the only true bond of union. This we shall feel towards all who abide in Christ. This will unite us in Heaven, where there is neither Synod nor Conference.

We are in advance in our Christian union of that of denominations who are only bound together with creeds and formularies in a large organized body.

If it were possible, it is not desirable that we should go into any large human organization, and call it Christian union. Let us strive for more of the Spirit, if you will, more love to Christ, more love to all who bear His image. Let us be willing to unite in any Christian effort with all who are doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way. The great organized bodies with centralized power will, as such, have no place in heaven, and are not needed on earth.

"Head of Thy church beneath!  
The Catholic, the true;  
On all her members breathe,  
Her broken frame renew;  
Then shall Thy perfect will be done  
When Christians love and live as one."

Frome, July 8th, 1884.

W. H. A.

If I can put one touch of a rosy sunset into the life of any man or woman, I shall feel that I have worked with God.—George Macdonald.