

a prayer-meeting be held once a month in our congregations, at which the subject of missions, home and foreign, would be dwelt upon, and prayers offered specially for the mission in the South Sea Islands.

Articles Contributed.

What Does "Union" Mean?

It has been wisely said: "Words are but counters—the coins of intellectual exchange. There is as little resemblance between the silver coin and the bread it purchases as between the word and the thing it stands for." This is shown in the ideas and feelings called up by the word "Union." To one person it suggests glory, to another disgrace. To one man it is another word for Christianity—to another man for treachery. To the Synod's circular one Kirk Session answers a simple or an enthusiastic yes! while another replies by a broken-winded affirmative, or an ill-concealed negative. The answer of one party sounds like a cheer of victory—of the other like a low wailing cry of surrender. When this diversity of conception in reference to the meaning of the same word exists among persons who are alike in their views and feelings—in political opinions—in attachment to the Gospel and the church—in love of the church's standards, form of worship and polity—alike in origin, prejudices and social customs; it is natural to conclude that each party attaches different meanings to the word "Union." There must be *misunderstanding*. Under the *same word* they are thinking of different *things*. The word is the same in the ears, but not to the minds of both. In such a case, the only preventive against disagreement and alienation is plain definition, and, if possible, simple explanation.

It would be a mistake too obvious to be common to confound union with oneness or unity. All true Christians are *one*, irrespective of churches. There are persons in the Armenian, Romish, Greek, Episcopal and Presbyterian churches—persons in geographical sepa-

ration over Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia—persons severed by centuries and the impenetrable veil which divides the outer sanctuary of time from the inner sanctuary of eternity, who are all dear to Jesus Christ, and who, if they were acquainted, would be dear to one another. The love of such unknown friends is potential but not present—it is in power but not in word—it is in sentiment but not in expression—it exists in essence, for it hath the spirit, but not in exercise, for it lacked the opportunity. Nevertheless, the foundation, the "elements" of Union, consisting in that essential unity catalogued by Paul—"one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all"—a sevenfold cord—are there, like seeds in the soil, awaiting spring.

Meanwhile, Christians love instinctively all true Christians whom they do know, and, by union and communion, seek to give to unity as great opportunity and utterance as they can. Union is not always possible where communion is; but in many cases it is possible; as has been proved by many Unions in modern times, which happily serve to keep alive the Church's ideal. They fan the feeble flame of Christian hope, flickering painfully amid gusts of passion and dark shadows of despair. They herald and typify the grand Union of the future. They are imperfect foreshadows of the meeting before the throne and the crystal sea of myriads of faces, seeing eye to eye. Then unity, union and communion shall for the first time be perfectly realised. Then love shall reign in power, opportunity and operation. Then our psalms of life sung in sorrow, temptation and tears, shall become new in pleasure and new in the perfection of blended harmony.

Union, which means, literally, a making of two or more into one—a word not to be found in the scriptures—denotes a process which had not become necessary in primitive times. In the Jewish church a rival worship was punishable with death. In the early ages of the religion of the Cross, believers in that symbol of infinite love were marvels of brotherhood, and, except where territorial or civil divisions compelled separation, there was