

Now the people would all like to meet together in one assembly, and they know if it could be brought about on equitable principles, that they would all enjoy themselves much better than it is possible for them to do, while meeting in two or four distinct groups. And each of the ministers admits, frankly, that it is extremely discouraging to continue preaching from sabbath to sabbath, to a scattered fragment of a congregation: and he also, knows well that a full assembly would obtain from him far superior sermons, by lifting from his heart a depressing load of discouragement, consequent on witnessing thin, death-like congregations. Is it not obvious then, if the union measures now suggested were realized, that preachers and people would all enjoy their respective positions much better than under existing circumstances; and that on each Lord's day, each village and town instead of not having enough, would have from one to three ministers to spare? This surplus, a *united church* would have the means of sending into the highways and hedges, for the purpose of building up congregations, where the people are scattered as sheep without a shepherd; and thus a minister of the Gospel would be found, to meet every legitimate demand.

In relation to the practicability of the measures now proposed, none can deny that much of the approximating work is already accomplished. Thirty years ago, it was a common occurrence to hear Presbyterian and Methodist ministers, reciprocally pronouncing each others distinctive doctrines, "damnable heresies!"—A Presbyterian Meeting House, in which the writer constantly worshipped God in the days of his youth, was within a few years after its erection, absolutely abandoned by the minister, because the trustees allowed a Methodist clergyman to preach within its walls! Parties are still living, who attest it to be a fact, within their personal recollection, that the Presbyterian Burghers, in Scotland, would not allow a servant of their membership, to join with his master in family worship, if that master happened to be a Presbyterian Antiburgher! Who, in the days of such occurrences, could have ventured to pronounce the coming together of these bodies practicable! Yet the approximating work was commenced, and completed; and several years have already passed, since their incorporated union was happily established, so that they are now, and have been for years, mutually enjoying full communion and fellowship together, as constituent parts of the United Presbyterian body. In the light of such historical facts, it is difficult to conceive, how any one can hesitate to admit, the practicability of the unions suggested.

As to the manner of effecting these unions, it is certainly safe to state, that all who clearly see their importance, should, at once, begin to call the attention of their neighbours to the subject; determined never to rest from the agitation, till the scripture measure of christian union, is fully enjoyed by the saints on earth.

In all those localities, where the church-going population is barely sufficient to form one good congregation, measures might at once be taken, to prevent its being weekly broken into fragments. If within the limits of such congregation, two, three, or more evangelical churches have been organized, let it be determined by the ministers, if they are in the advance of the people, that two of them shall not be found preaching at the same hour, in that community. Let them meet together and fix upon a plan for the year, that will give to each minister, such a number of appointments to fill, as shall bear the

same proportion to the whole number of the year's appointments, which the number of his adherents sustains, to the aggregate number of all the adherents in congregational connexion with the contracting parties. In corresponding localities, where the people are more in favour of union than their ministers, let them meet together, and inform their ministers, that they are not to be separated in the public worship of God; that they are prepared to hear such of them in rotation as may be willing to conform to a plan of appointments, as equitable as the one just stated; while those who will not so conform, they have determined to leave to find congregations for themselves. In some such manner, many of the most prominent advantages of the unions desired, might be realized immediately, in every community, where either the ministers or the people are determined to enjoy them.

#### LETTER.

When a well-manned and well-equipped vessel is pursuing its prosperous course o'er the smooth surface of a summer sea, the passengers, on whom no responsibility devolves, most wisely and most willingly abstain from an uncalled-for and presumptuous interference with its management and evolutions;—they still continue to pursue the same prudent system of passiveness when there is a mighty tempest on the ocean, and when the ships of a fierce and foreign foe are seen bearing down from a distance, if they can rely upon the skill and trustworthiness of the commander, and of those in authority under him. But if, whilst the sea works still more furiously, and is tempestuous against them, and the hostile fleet is rapidly approaching, they are compelled by irrefragable and alarming evidence to conclude, that the captain and his officers are not only lukewarm but treacherous; and that, whilst they are so acting as to place the vessel at the mercy of their enemies, and dispatching to them whole boatloads of provisions and ammunition, they lavish all their countenance and all their confidence on the least efficient members of the crew, and frown upon all such as, being impressed with a conviction of the common danger, presume to address them in the language of exhortation and rebuke, it becomes not only the right, but the duty, of every passenger to try and arrest the machinations of perfidy and treason, by lifting up an honest and indignant testimony, lest the ship, which is in jeopardy every hour from the ceaseless activity of its foes, and the criminal apathy of its defenders, should sink like lead into the mighty waters.

Such, my friends, has, in my judgment, during a course of years been, and such is at the present moment, the position of Protestantism in Great Britain. The political horizon has presented a lowering aspect. The blackness of Popish darkness has, specially in England, been gradually assuming a more formidable hue. The enemy's fleet has been strengthened by numerous desertions from our own ports. None of our most eminent statesmen of any party—none of those connected either with the late or with the present Cabinet, have shown any disposition to cope with the difficulties of this critical emergency in a spirit of scriptural and energetic faithfulness. On the contrary, they vie with each other in the alacrity and promptitude with which they succumb to every Popish claim, and in the cold superciliousness with which they repel every Protestant remonstrance. Whig-radical prints and politicians lay it down as an incontrovertible axiom,