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Christian Union.

It occurs to us that there is a good deal of loose thinking done on the subject of Christian union, and out of a general confusion of ideas many erroneous and hurtful things are spoken and written. It is comparatively an easy thing to talk and write in a general way about Christian union, and to insist that such a thing is taught in the Scriptures and is therefore desirable and necessary; but it is not always such an easy task to fully understand that about which we speak and write. It is not a difficult task by any means to preach Christian union to the people and to show that the Bible is to be the only true basis of such a union—that all must unite upon the Bible and the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice; but when it comes to telling just what is meant by uniting upon the Bible alone and precisely how such a union is to be brought about, many seemingly get into confusion and break down just where the explanation is most needed. In the light of these facts we are satisfied that the subject needs a rehandling, and we therefore propose in a few brief articles to point out what we believe to be the consistent and Scriptural view of Christian union.

In our estimation there are two extreme and erroneous theories on the subject held and advocated by many. Some regard the plea for *Christian union* as an idle tale. They tell us that no such a thing is taught in the word of God. They contend that all Christians are already united by virtue of their discipleship, or Christianity, and that the whole plea for *Christian union* should consist in telling people what to do to become Christians or disciples of Christ, and by this obedience they become united in the fullest and highest sense set forth in the Scriptures. Others are continually talking about uniting the denominations and sectarian bodies as such, and call that *Christian union*. This is not only the other extreme, but is the most fatal feature of the whole question. We regard both of these extremes not only unscriptural, but calculated to defeat the very end

that these Christian unionists have in view. Let us then endeavor to find the "golden mean" that this important question may be presented and understood in its true light.

1. We submit the proposition that there is such a thing as *Christian union* clearly taught in the Scriptures. Of course union implies division, for we can not form a union unless there is first division in some sense. Hence when we talk about and desire *Christian union* we have reference to those who are truly the children of God through faith and obedience unto the forgiveness of their sins, and who, for various causes, are separated in some sense. When these are united as the Scriptures require, then, and then only, we have *Christian union*. This is one thing, and the union of the denominations is quite a different thing. Now if you will turn to the first chapter of first Corinthians you will find our proposition clearly demonstrated in unmistakable facts. That these brethren at Corinth had been genuinely converted and were hence Christians, no one will deny. They had heard the word, believed in the Son of God, repented of their sins, made the good confession and been baptized into Christ, and then raised up to walk in newness of life. In this way they became Christians, and at this time they were evidently united. But contentions soon arose among these brethren, and they became divided over their preachers. Some were for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Cephas and others for Christ only. Now while they were engaged in these contentions they were still Christians; but they were erring and divided Christians, and hence it became necessary for the Apostle to sharply rebuke their divisions and to teach them *Christian union*. This is the kind of union for which our Savior prayed when he said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This is the only kind of *Christian union* of which the Bible knows any thing. The very idea that Christ was here praying for the union of the denominations as they now exist is absurd, unless it can first be shown that all who belong to these de-

nominations are Christians; and to apply the prayer of Christ to such a union is a plain perversion of his language. If the denominations were united as such it would not be a *Christian union*, neither would

it be a union required by the word of God; and we candidly think that those who spend their time in writing about such unions could use their paper and ink to much better advantage in another direction. Then we conclude that the union of which Paul speaks is not only *Christian union*, but it is Scriptural and necessary, 1. Because our Savior earnestly prayed for the union of all those who should believe on him through the words of the apostles. 2. Because Paul rebuked the division among the Corinthian Christians and taught them that they should be perfectly united in their work. 3. Because envying, strife and division among brethren shows carnality, and those who engage in these things walk as men and not as God. In our next we hope to show how all Christians are to be united and what should be the nature of this union.

The Temperance Cause in Oregon.

In the advocacy and defense of every good cause there are certain fatal mistakes that must be avoided on the one hand and a true and consistent course that must be pursued on the other in order to ultimate success. The temperance work in Oregon as well as elsewhere, is no exception to this rule. We presume there is not a Christian man nor woman in the State who does not desire to see this cause carried forward till a grand victory for temperance, right and freedom from the curse shall have been gained. Temperance is a Bible principle and hence a work that cannot be neglected by Christian people. Let us then briefly see what we should avoid and what we should do to make it a final success; for we must all admit that this is a legitimate subject for investigation and one that demands attention at the hands of thoughtful people.

1. Temperance workers should avoid fanaticism. Because intemperance is a great curse to our country and the use of alcohol is annually sending thousands to a drunkard's grave and making as many widows and orphans is no good reason why we should become

wild, unreasonable and obnoxious over the matter. There are fanatics connected with almost every cause that needs to be advocated, in religion as well as elsewhere; and especially is this true of the cause of temperance. This can not be denied. But we are glad to know that the fanatical element is comparatively few in Oregon, and that our temperance cause is not likely to suffer on this account. But as fanaticism is always regarded by thinking people as a hindrance instead of a benefit, temperance men and women should seek to fully control what little may be manifested among them in their meetings. Zeal and earnestness are not fanaticism, and are necessary to the work.

2. Temperance workers should not lose sight of the main issue. There is nothing in which the enemy of truth and temperance takes greater delight than in raising a false issue and thus drawing his opponent off the main question into a discussion of irrelevant matters. The main issue should be well defined and then kept prominently before the people. Now if we understand this issue as set forth by the temperance people themselves it is this: The suppression and ultimate destruction of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage. No temperance man who fully understands himself and the work which he represents will stop to object to the manufacture and sale of liquor for strictly medical, scientific and mechanical purposes. While physicians may differ as to the medicinal properties of alcohol, some preferring to use it in their practice while others do not; and while the medical profession may agree that it can be dispensed with altogether, yet that it has been used to advantage in many cases and may still be so used will hardly admit of a doubt, and no one feels that any great harm is likely to grow out of such a use of it on the part of judicious medical men. And the same is true of its use for scientific and mechanical purposes. Now we are willing to grant its use for these purposes, and hence the question as to whether or not it should be used as a medicine and its effect upon the human system when so used, should form no part of the real issue. It is not as a medicine, but as a beverage that we propose to destroy the manufacture and sale of alcohol. Neither should the