

all-sufficient Spirit dwells in the church, and has given encouragement to hope for the fulness of his influence when rightly sought. And cannot that Divine Agent move all the members of the body of Christ harmoniously? He did so in the apostolic church, though it consisted of so many thousands of newly converted persons, collected from all quarters of the globe, and therefore naturally subject to the greatest possible variety of prejudices and interests. We should fix our believing remembrance on this divine provision, made to secure the church's unity, and pursue one object with this encouragement continually nerving our minds.

We must, thirdly, sacrifice all personal and party interests, and be concerned only for the one all comprehensive interest—that of Christ. As Howe suggests: Draw as many lines as you please from the circumference to the centre of the circle, and none of them will cross; but if you take any other point of convergence, and draw lines to it, they will all interfere with the other radii; and just so far as you multiply your points and lines, will you multiply the intersections. Just so is it with the church. As long as in that hallowed circle we have a variety of points of sectarian and individual interests, our lines of pursuit and feeling must be interfering with each other. But let us have the one centre, the interest of Christ alone at heart, and all our lines will advance in perfect harmony, and eventually meet and be lost in one undivided end. We have only therefore to imitate Paul: "for me to live is Christ," or to obey his precept: "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or whether ye drink, do all to the glory of God," and we must effectually conduce to the advancement of Christian union.

We should subserve this end, fourthly, by seeing that the word of Christ dwells in us richly, and in all wisdom. So far as our affections, views and conduct are regulated by its instructions, they will be influenced alike; and every discordance must be the result of our disregarding this harmonizing word. Let us therefore read and study it with untiring assiduity, striving to give up ourselves implicitly and entirely to its controul. Let us make it our only creed and rule

of action, and be ever bringing our tempers, sentiments and practices, and those of our brethren directly to this one sure standard. And when necessitated to correct what we deem their errors, let us do it if possible, by the very words, furnished by the Holy Ghost.

We must also cultivate an intimate acquaintance with the views and characters of those who differ from us. It is not desirable to read controversial writings frequently, as it conduces to a barrenness of soul, and captiousness of temper, which are greatly inimical to our union with the saints: nor should we associate with dogmatic and contentious persons, as this checks the growth of the bland and generous dispositions so favorable to unity. It has indeed been said that the friendly intercourse here recommended, involves a sanctioning of what we deem the errors of our brethren. But the principle of this objection, fairly carried out, would cut us off from all Christians, till we get to heaven; for it were impossible to find any with whom we perfectly accord in every thing.*

Sixthly. We should cherish liberality of sentiment. Undoubtedly, we are not to sacrifice the truth, even on the altar of Christian love—nor would such an offering promote union, but the reverse. It is possible and prevalent, however, to think we secure the truth by those views, which dispose us to regard all our opinions as infallibly certain and equally important; incline us to make as much of our peculiarities, as of those fundamental principles on which salvation rests; and prompt us to require that every thing shall be expressed just in our own favourite or party phraseology. This contractedness is most carefully to be avoided. We should let every doctrine and duty, which we deem scriptural, have an abiding place in our heart and profession; but we should range each in its proper order and subordination. Let us hold fast our peculiarities, but let us not put them on a level with our Lord's atonement, the Holy Spirit's agency, our

* There is a person living near the writer who so far acts upon this principle, that out of twelve churches in the place where he resides, he can hold communion but with one individual, i. e. his wife. They therefore commune together, but never meet for any act of worship with other Christians. I doubt not but his principle honestly applied would forbid his communing with his wife. He little suspects, how much more spiritual pride has to do with his exclusiveness than Christian principle.