

ness and failure,—all this is evidence of the absence of the Spirit of Him who said, “forbid him not.” Distinctive tenets, and matters of secondary importance, and not the love of Jesus in the salvation of souls, forms, too frequently, the main element of aggression against both the world and fellow-christians, and accessions from both are equally counted as gains to the Church of God! The church imbued with this sectional spirit, and aiming to rise upon the ruins of others, can neither grasp, as a conception, nor work out as a fact, her high destiny. It forms a fold, but not of Christ’s sheep, and the battle cry is not—all for Christ, but the *Shibboleth* of Party.

Denominationalism is fruitful, not of that diversity of view which, while agreeing to differ, differs in love, but of that world spirit which renders the church, in which Christ said, that the greatest should be the servant,—the arena for the display of a spirit, and an ambition, becoming the world and the worldling, and not the House of God or the christian. Purity and peace are sacrificed to personal and party ends, not because they are right and true, but because they secure individual interests, or the objects of the party with which, for the moment, we happen to be identified. The altered position of the church, as regards her secular interests, presents objects of ambition, against whose allurements the professed lowly spirit of Christ’s ministers is not always proof. Hence her growing likeness to the world in those ambitious rivalries, which excite wonder, even among the men of the world.

In defence of truth, party is a duty,—“earnestly contending for the faith.” But “the faith” is not always the cause of church contention. Individual and sectional antagonisms too frequently lie at the foundation; and all that is Christlike is recklessly sacrificed at the shrine of aims and purposes, as like Christ, as darkness is like light. Where the spirit and procedure of worldly partizanship and tactics divide a church, or *predominate* in relation to other churches, can religion flourish? Impossible,—for there, there is the presence of that ungodly temper, which, in a common cause, refuses to recognize as a soldier of the Cross, or to fight side by side with one whose armour, tho’ tempered in Heaven, forsooth, differs in pattern slightly from our own. How condemnatory of all this the divine command: “Whereto ye have already attained, walk by the same rule;” and is not the church responsible for maintaining and increasing division and strife, beyond what strict Scriptural principle demands? “Keeping the unity of the Spirit,” and “as much as in you lieth live peaceably with all men,”