

b. easily eradicated. The bitterness of party spirit has been too long confounded with the fervour which ever glows in the breast of the true soldier of the Cross to render the separation of the precious from the vile, the true from the counterfeit, otherwise than difficult and laborious in the extreme. Still the attempt should be made, and that not in a lukewarm spirit, or with a faltering faith and a wavering hope, but with firmness, calmness, and decision. The question is not one of expediency, which may be altogether set aside or taken up at a more convenient season, but one of urgent necessity. The sin of disunion and dissension in our churches is great—it cries aloud to God for vengeance. Its murky atmosphere engenders disease, "for this cause many are weak and sickly," and its impenetrable clouds so shut out the light and heat of the Sun of Righteousness, that the fruits of the spirit decay instead of ripening, and the flowers of grace wither in the bud instead of expanding into all the beauty and fragrance with which God has adorned them. None who look dispassionately at the work of God, as it is now carried on by the various denominations of professing Christians, but must acknowledge how much that work is hindered by want of union and co-operation, and how justly the ungodly may reproach us for our petty jealousies and our party feuds, alike disgraceful to ourselves, and dishonouring to the master whom we serve—and if such be the conviction which necessarily forces itself upon the mind when the subject of reflection is the Lord's vineyard, and the various bands of labourers by which it is occupied, then with all earnestness we would appeal to those whom God has appointed as watchmen in Zion, and we would ask of them *not* whether they have cast in their lot with us, and enrolled themselves as members of our Alliance; but what they are doing in their respective spheres and in the occupation of the talents which God has given them to remedy this fearful evil, to uproot this noxious weed, to stem this desolating torrent; or if they cannot stem it, in some measure to divert its power, so that the energy which would otherwise be spent in bringing railing accusations against a fellow disciple, or undermining the walls of a sister church, may be devoted to a nobler and more enduring cause. We would say to them, could we gain attention, the fire of ungodliness is raging around you, and brands need to be snatched from its burning, and quenched in the ocean of God's eternal love. Souls are perishing for lack of knowledge; they need to be brought to Jesus and to be instructed in the mysteries of His great redemption. Satan is "walking about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour;" the alarm needs to be sounded, his snares must be discovered, his hypocrisy unmasked, and his wily craftiness exposed. The world, too, is busy with its fascinations and lusts, the unwary are in need of guidance, and the unsubdued of control, the timid need to be encouraged, and the presumptuous cautioned, the open sinner needs to be rebuked, and the secret believer stimulated to make a public profession of his faith. What time, then, has Zion's watchman for party warfare, what labour can he spend upon "the meat that perisheth," when his whole strength is needed to procure for himself and his people that "Meat which endureth unto everlasting life?"

But some perhaps will be ready to reply—granted that the case is such as you have described it—we stand guilty to the charge of having neglected, in our daily and Sabbath ministrations, to inculcate peace and love so frequently, or so forcibly as we ought, of having occupied ourselves too exclusively with party interests, and of having thought more of the triumph of our party than of the Cross. Still this is no argument for our joining the Alliance. We conscientiously differ from our brethren on the ground of its basis, and the subject of its constitution, and we claim for ourselves a liberty of conscience to judge what is right, and free-

dom of action to carry out our convictions. Far, very far, be it from us to wish to fetter any man's conscience, or to restrain his Christian liberty. Far be it from us to convert the Alliance into the Shibboleth of a party, or to say to any believer, stand by, because the standard we have raised is not one under which he feels disposed to enlist. As far, indeed, as those truths are concerned which are essential, our motto must still be "first pure." God has given us a banner that it may be displayed because of the truth, and we dare not lower it at the bidding of any, even if the doing so should insure a larger accession to our ranks. But must we see, eye to eye, on other points, before we hold communion with each other; if we differ may we not meet and talk over our differences with mutual forbearance and love; if barriers still separate us may we not at least come together for prayer that it may please God in His own good time to remove them, and to hasten that blessed day when "the valleys" which now separate us "shall be exalted," and "the mountains" which now divide us "shall be brought low;" "when the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain?" And if various denominations must still exist, and the walls by which they are kept asunder cannot, for the present at least, be allowed to crumble into decay, may not some place be found whose evergreen foliage shall conceal their deformity, and whose fragrance shall often lead the occupants of each enclosure to forsake their central and isolated position, and wander to the confines of their respective limits? It may be that more frequent intercourse would encourage mutual confidence; that having learnt to talk, we should soon be induced to love, and that the atmosphere which had been cleared of the mists of suspicion and distrust would be the very atmosphere in which we should see less of each other's failings and more of each other's excellencies, and be led to acknowledge each other, not as enemies with whom there can be no peace, but as fellow-helpers in the same glorious work.

God in mercy hasten that day, when the preaching of the Gospel and the care of the flock shall so engross the minds of His ministering servants, that neither time nor inclination shall be left them to spy out the nakedness or expose the barrenness of their neighbour's lands; when the exaltation of Self—that grim idol, before which numbers bow—shall be lost sight of in the earnest desire that Christ may be magnified; and when the strange fire which now burns upon the altar of many a heart shall be replaced by a fire more pure and more holy—a fire which, fed by the oil of Grace and fanned by the breath of the Spirit, shall spread with glowing brightness on every side, and consuming in its progress all that is earthly and sensual and devilish, shall leave only that which is pure and lovely and of good report, to adorn the Church of Christ, and draw down the approbation of a gracious God.—*Evangelical Christendom.*

Moral and Religious Miscellany.

THE SOCIAL PRAYER MEETING.

Many are the scenes of early life which are stamped on our minds so firmly as never to fade. They go with us through life's bright spots on which memory loves to linger in later life, when cares press heavily, and our experience is more full and perhaps more bitter. Such is the writer's remembrance of the little praying circle of his earlier years.

In a quiet New England town, three miles from the village, in a neighborhood of ten or fifteen families, once a week a delegation from nearly every house might be seen gathering first at one, then at another, and so through the circle. Congregationalist, Baptist, and Methodist all met on common ground. Disputed doc-