

in the eyes of the faithful in those sorrowful days of declension.

God grant that such may be the case with us, my brethren ! If men, if Christians even, lightly esteem the divine unity of the church, or, when forced to avow that it is outwardly gone, seek to substitute for it a miserable daubing with untempered mortar and content themselves with an appearance of unity which does not deceive even those upholding it ; if, in a word, men form alliances between their various sects, proving the very ruin they seek to justify ;—let us turn away from such things, humbling ourselves on account of the ruin of the church (looked at on the side of human responsibility) without conforming to it ; boldly proclaiming that “ there is one body and one Spirit,” “ endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ” (Eph. iv. 3, 4), refusing all fellowship with the moral and religious evil of the day, “ and above all these things putting on love, which is the bond of perfectness ” (Col. iii. 14).

Such is the instruction contained in the book of Judges, which closes with the solemn repetition of that which characterized the evil days. “ In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes ” (ver. 25). God did not change that deplorable state of things ; He simply states the fact ; but He led His own away from the confused light of conscience, which while it judged never guided them ; and brought them back to the pure light of His own infallible word which was able to conduct them, to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (*c f.* Acts xx. 32). “ To the law and to the testimony,” this is our safeguard in a day of ruin ! (Isaiah viii. 20.)