

robbery, or murder. But a relation of religious experience is as much a duty, and enforced with as momentous sanctions, as faith in Jesus Christ, or love to God, or humanity to man. Is it right to make these great Bible principles conditions of membership in the Church? Then it is equally right and scriptural to systematize Christian conversation and make it a condition of Church membership. An objector denounces our rule of Discipline which makes attendance on Class-meeting a condition of membership, but seems quite willing to expel from the Church any who persistently refused to attend the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Why this partiality? A relation of religious experience is as much an institution of the Bible as the ordinance of the sacrament. The former is attended with a gracious promise and with sanctions the most momentous; the latter is not. The former is a moral institution; for if a man love God supremely he will love to talk about him; the latter is but a positive institution, given, perhaps, as a test of obedience, and certainly as a symbol of a sublime remedial truth. Both have their place and importance in the divine economy. But how an enlightened mind could be willing to make the one a condition of membership and not the other, it is difficult to see. It must be by some hair-splitting process, that may be attended with imminent peril when dealing with Bible truths."

2. The second reason, or rather plea, upon which the abolition of the rule is urged, may be applied with equal propriety and force, against every Christian duty which is opposed to the propensities of man's fallen nature. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and hence the duty of submission to the Divine authority, and a cheerful obedience to the law of God, are opposed to the tastes of mankind. Why should this be maintained as a condition of salvation? or why should faith, prayer, and good works, be required of the members of a christian church, since all these duties are liable to the same objection, as opposed to the natural tastes of mankind, and therefore an obstacle to their union with the church. Why not then cease to teach and enforce any truth or duty that comes in contact with the tastes of men, and thus form a church in which membership may be enjoyed without "the offence of the cross," and the "wrestling against flesh and blood?" The great advantage offered as resulting from the removal of the obstacle to membership which the maintenance of the class-meeting rule enforces, is the speedy accession to the church of those which, it is alleged, are now excluded. This specious promise is at best a very questionable benefit either to the church or the persons concerned, and is well met by the same writer quoted above:—

"That a change of our rules on Class-meetings would add to the