

derful adaptedness to all the states and conditions of mankind; as well as their power, I had almost said, *of propagating themselves*, wherever a mind exists receptive of them, and capable of investigating and examining into their claims? What encouragement and what incentives to exertion, then, do these facts hold out to us; and we are led to ask, when such results can take place without any effort on our part, what may we not accomplish by systematic and well-directed labour for the promulgation of the Heavenly Doctrines among men?

Another and the last topic, suggested by your recent communications, which I shall refer to here, is announced by the Rev. Mr. Rendell in his letter as follows. Alluding to our Association and its formation, he observes: "As a young institution, it will, no doubt, be necessary to surround it with much intelligence, tenderness and consideration; to preserve its health, it should be carefully exercised in the atmosphere of *liberty*." These are, indeed, weighty words. May God grant us grace to act upon them in our doings as an Association of the Lord's New Church! The necessity of a regard for the *liberty* of the Church, especially, is a subject the importance of which we can scarcely over-estimate. Perhaps in times past, the Church has not always been sufficiently mindful of its importance, and has had consequently to deplore the evils which a too narrow and sectarian spirit entails. But, doubtly, in the early stages of her progress it was necessary that much care and circumspection should be employed in relation to certain points of Church order and observance, upon which a greater latitude and diversity of opinion and prevail; while, on the other hand, the circumstances and conditions of the present time render the same care and circumspection necessary upon other questions, which formerly, perhaps, were never brought into discussion, the state of the Church not their requiring that they should be taken into consideration.

Hence the subject of "the liberty of the Church" assumes different aspects at different periods of the Church's history, and such a definition of the phrase must be accepted as shall, while making due allowance for the altered circumstances and states of the Church at different times, yet provide for the *largest freedom* consistent with the maintenance of order and peace, at any given period, and prevent *liberty* from degenerating into *license* in matters of moment connected with the Church and her insti-

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