

grace—it was the support of a good conscience in a righteous cause.—“Not only,” says a writer of that period, as quoted by DeFoe—“not only me, but heart and tongue, would fall any Christian to relate all the violences, murders, plunderings, exortions, and insolences that, from the beginning of his persecution, have been committed in a military way, besides what has been done in the form and course of public pretended justice. If stabbing, wounding, beating, stripping, and imprisoning men's persons—if violent breaking into their houses in the dead of night, beating, wounding, ravishing, and inhumanly abusing wives and daughters—if forcing weak women by torture, such as burning matches and other insufferable torments, to discover, say accuse, their husbands, fathers, and dearest relations—if driving away their cattle, spoiling their goods without respect to guilt or innocence, and this in as cruel a manner as ever Scotland had seen, or could have seen had a foreign enemy been in the bowels of their country;—if all these, and many more such, may express our misery, some guess may be made at the sufferings of this Church from the malice and fury of this wicked prevailing Prelate party.”

And it is worthy of remark, that, notwithstanding all the fury and terror of the persecution, the adherents to the good cause rather increased than diminished. “For,” to quote the words of one of the sufferers—“for albeit they went on for many years imprisoning, banishing, and butchering our dear brethren; yet all the prisons they could fill with us, and all the ships they could freight with us, and all the gibbets they could hang us on, could never either exhaust or lessen our number; but the more we were afflicted the more we grew, and the design to destroy us, through the mercy of our God, proved always ruinous to the destroyers; and this must be acknowledged to the praise of God's clemency, and the condemnation of man's cruelty, that when they tried all ways possible to destroy us, and root us out from the earth—after they hanged, shot, and tortured, and banished for slaves all they could catch of us—they were further from their purpose than when they began.”—*Banner of the Covenant.*

I HOPE TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

You do? Why, then, do you not seek to be a Christian? God has ordained means in order to this end; are you using the means? “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.” “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart.” These are the conditions of grace which God has attached to securing an interest in his love. Are you seeking for God with all your heart? No man ever yet escaped from the thralldom of sin and Satan, who did not earnestly struggle to be free; no man ever entered the strait gate who did not agonize to accomplish that glorious end. What reason have you to expect that there will be an exception in your case? On what ground do you base your hopes that you will be a Christian, if you are not seeking or striving to be one? The bible contains no promises to those who are folding their arms in sin. Carelessness and inattention to the appointed means of salvation, afford no foundation for a hope that you are to become a child of God.

You hope to be a Christian? Why, then, do you not give up your sins, renounce the world as your portion, and cheerfully surrender yourself to Him who is the way, the truth, and the life? He is ready and willing to receive you. He gave his life a ransom for sinners; he purchased the gift of the Spirit, whose efficient agency in renewing and sanctifying the soul is indispensable; he freely gives his Spirit to all who earnestly ask him; he has filled his revealed word with invitations and encouragements to those who desire his grace; he has long been knocking at the door of your heart for admission. But you still refuse his promised grace, grieve his Spirit, shut your heart against his entrance, and continue to pursue the world, and to indulge your sins. How, then, can you hope to be a Christian?

You hope to be a Christian? When? Not now. You are too busy, or have something in view which must first be accomplished, or are so indisposed to give yourself to the work, that this is not felt to be the “convenient season.” After a while, when you have accumulated a fortune, or passed the period when you can partake in the world's pleasures, or when there is a revival of religion, or at furthest, on a dying bed, you hope to be a Christian. “Go thy way for this time,” is the response you give to every appeal which comes home to your heart and conscience. But God's commands and promises are for the present. He gives no encouragement to wait for a future season. You have no assurance that there shall be any season beyond the present. Life is uncertain. Before the anticipated time comes you may be in eternity. The gracious Spirit may become wearied with your delay, and for ever leave you. A death-bed is no place for doing the great neglected work of life. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” “To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.”

You hope to be a Christian? So multitudes of others like yourself, who were living in sin, have hoped; but where are they now? Long ago have they been cut down as cumberers of the ground. Their day of grace and day of life have closed. They lived without Christ, and they died without him; and now are bewailing themselves that they trifled away their precious time on earth, in the delusive hope that some day or other they would be Christians. That day never came to them, and never will come. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended,” and their souls are not saved.

Reader, if you will have a good hope of eternal life, the only resource is, that without further delay you seek with all your heart the blood of

Christ to wash your sins away, the righteousness of Christ to justify you in the sight of God, and the Spirit of Christ to renew and sanctify your nature. Continue to flatter yourself with the vague hope that you will, some time or other, be a Christian, and you will find, when it shall be for ever too late, that you have been indulging a hope which shall go out in eternal despair.—*Presbyterian.*

UNIFORMITY NOT UNITY.

Merely denominational uniformity is not Christian unity. It is a favourite project with many in the present day to single out some sect—usually their own—and then say to themselves, “If we could only get all the world to join us, there would be unity.” And so possessed are they with the notion that the unity of the Church consists in conformity to them, that many of them have determined to know nothing among men, save their Church (meaning their own community) and conformity thereto. Their union is separated from non-ecumenical Christians; and could they but make one font, one surplice, and one service book for all, they are persuaded the Church would be one. In place of unity of spirit, they labour for unity of costume. They cannot understand a united family which does not wear a regimental uniform. We, on the other hand, have seen a uniformity where there was nothing but the form—“The Church of the middle ages was united, just as the sleepers in the vault are united in the tranquillity of death. It was like listening at the door of a sepulchre: Hush! for all is peace within. Enter, and all is uniform—uniformly dead—black frieze and rottenness—a sepulchre of souls. The Church of the early centuries was united, as scorpions are united when one glass receiver holds them, and leaves them room to fret about, and strike their stings into one another. There was uniformity, but it was not unity, for the world did not believe. The world saw it and was hardened; the world saw it and blasphemed. To preserve the unity of the Church, they excommunicated or burned alive those who thought or believed for themselves, till faith had well nigh perished from the earth. The Church became so catholic, that there was no place found for the gospel. The union of coercion, or the union which, as the first term of communion takes away your right of private judgment, is not the union contemplated by Him, the first law of whose kingdom is love, and the first gift of whose Spirit is light.

Again, for the sake of unity it is not needful to surrender an iota of truth, or yield one conscientious conviction, so long as it remains conscientious. It is very common with those who misunderstand the matter, to say, “Come, now, you and I do not think exactly alike; perhaps we are both right, and it is as likely we are both wrong. But it is a point of no moment; what would you say to throw it overboard altogether, and give ourselves no more concern about it?” To which, in many cases, it might be a very just answer: “You may intend this for liberality; but to me it sounds like latitudinarianism. I believe that I found this truth in the Bible; and if so, it is one of the truths of God. I dare not cast it overboard; and I shall be very sorry if having it on board deprive me of your company. If it be so offensive to you that you must needs sail in a separate ship, I hope we shall not hoist hostile flags. But as neither of us holds it vital, might we not agree to differ regarding it; and as we grow in knowledge and in grace, may we not hope that the Lord will reveal even this unto us?” Wherever souls are joined to the Lord Jesus, and his image is visible upon them, there is actual unity of the most important kind. Were this actual unity more frequently made the foundation of a practical unity, there would soon be more doctrinal unity among Christians. But it is an unhallowed mode of procuring practical unity to purchase it at the price of truth. As a compromise of error cannot lead to unity, so “truth in love” will breed no schism.—*Dew of Hermon, by Rev. Mr. Hamilton of London.*

THE INJURIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF INSUFFICIENT MINISTERIAL SUPPORT.

The following is an extract from an address to the Congregations under the care of the New York Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, on the subject of ministerial support. It will suit the latitude of Canada as well as that of New York, and we bespeak for it the earnest consideration of our congregations generally. We rejoice to believe that there has been of late years an improvement in this matter. But still there is room for further improvement, especially when we take into consideration the greatly increased expence of living to which ministers are subject, and, on the other hand, the enhanced price of almost every thing which our farmers have to dispose of. We could name some laborious and devoted ministers who are seriously impeded in their work by the pressure of pecuniary difficulties—difficulties occasioned solely by the scantiness of the support they receive from their people. Let congregations, in entering on a new year, make a determined effort to repair past shortcomings, and to do their duty to those whom they have called to take the oversight of their souls. We have frequently of late recorded gifts from congregations to their ministers, and we rejoice to see, and to record such tokens of christian affection and regard.—They help to cheer a minister, and to strengthen the bond which unites him and his flock together. But we do confess we should rejoice more to hear of congregations augmenting the stated stipends of their ministers. This would, after all, be the best way of testifying their esteem for them personally, and their appreciation of their services:—