

let us mind the same thing." Even were they right in the view which they take of the general scope of that passage, it would not serve the purpose for which they adduce it; for, according to the exposition of which they themselves approve, the charge "Nevertheless, where-to we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule," &c., refers to points wherein the different parties are agreed; and cannot be understood therefore as enjoining the maintenance of church communion betwixt those who are not agreed on the terms on which that communion should be maintained. In the case supposed, that is not one of the things whereto they have attained; and is not, therefore, embraced in the exhortation "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

In point of fact, however, it is another matter altogether which the Apostle is urging in the sixteenth verse. He refers not to the degree of correspondence which may be found to exist between the views and actings of one man, or body of men, and those of others, but to the conformity which any may have attained to the perfect standard held forth in God's word. It was this standard which he himself habitually kept in view. He knew that he was not yet perfect, he did not think that he had already attained; but he pressed on toward the mark. He needed still to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Every attainment which the Christian makes is a talent which he is carefully to keep, and diligently to improve, both for his own benefit, and the benefit of the church at large. To him that thus hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; and, as the light of the world, the church and its individual members are to make their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven. In this progress toward perfection, great differences may be found in the degrees of advancement made by different individuals. Notwithstanding this diversity, brotherly love is to be cultivated by all. The strong are to bear with, and to help, the weak; but each is to hold fast that which he hath. No one is, in deference to the darker views of a less enlightened brother, to act inconsistently with the light of Divine truth which has beamed into his own mind. That brother has his own responsibility. To his own Master he standeth or falleth. But whatever mercy

may be extended to him, notwithstanding sins into which in his ignorance he may have fallen, the word of God is express in letting us know that a heavier condemnation is incurred by him who, possessed of more light, chooses to act upon the views of his less instructed brother; it tells us, that the servant who knew his master's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes. The circumstance that individuals who know comparatively little of the gospel, and who hold errors not a few, may be, notwithstanding, in a state of grace and heirs of glory, is no reason why we should regard the truths of which they are ignorant, or to which they are opposed, as of little importance, and to be held in abeyance at our pleasure. The charge is, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Although in this progress we may meet with many brethren who do not follow, or even who are backsliding, it becomes us to remember that the Apostle Paul, who understood well what Christian forbearance means, and who practised that forbearance too, took to himself the exhortation which he addresses to others: "Nevertheless, where-to we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing"

Whatever acceptance these remarks may meet with from the brethren of the Presbyterian Synod, it is hoped that they may enable others to see that the refusal of the Free Synod to go into a union with them did not necessarily indicate, either a disregard of the duty of keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, or an indisposition to exercise that forbearance towards those from whom they differ which the word of God inculcates. The Free Church of Nova Scotia has attained a certain measure of light. As a body, it is agreed in holding, and it is pledged to inculcate, as matters of Divine authority, the doctrines of the Westminster standards. The Presbyterian Synod will not concur with them in this. They are pleased indeed to say that the points of difference are but of minor importance, and that they themselves will not interfere with the liberty of brethren who may choose still to hold by them. But even were the matters of less intrinsic importance than they are, the question which the Free Synod has to consider is,—not what may be thought of their relative importance, but are they a portion of Divine revelation—do they form a part of that coun-