

FAITH. Some Puritan writers profess to discover in the text itself such reasons.—But these reasons are more fanciful than solid, and we pass them over. The reasons to which we would refer, rise out of our condition as a religious body; they are suggested by our position and standing as the Presbyterian Synod of the Lower Provinces. To some of these we now address ourselves briefly.

1. *Our Unity.* This is one special reason:—We all know how the proverb runs,—"Union is strength." We all know what the psalmist says of this Unity:—"Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." We all know also, what the apostle Paul writes respecting it:—I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. For there is one body and one spirit even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: One Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. And does not a greater than the psalmist and a greater than Paul pray, and pray almost in his last prayer, more earnestly, and more emphatically than ever,—Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. We see then what importance the sacred writers, and even Christ himself, attach to this unity; how necessary it is for defending, maintaining, vindicating and propagating the Faith.

Without self-landation, may we not as a religious body, be permitted to lay claim to this unity? Looking around us in the world, do we not see, even at this present moment, some portions of the church, woefully shattered and broken up, just for want of this unity! Do we not see party arrayed against party, in reference to doctrine, to discipline, to worship, and especially to rites and ceremonies? Are not the children of God made to mourn and lament when they witness such things within the sanctuary? exposing the church and even christianity itself, to the sneers and opprobrium of the world? (Of them, might not an apostle write, as he wrote while upon earth:—"It hath been declared unto me of them of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you?")

Blessed be God, no such thing exists among us as a denomination. Blessed be God, there are no such contentions, no such divisions. We are one in faith, one in doctrine, one in discipline, one in gov-

ernment, one in worship, one in council, and shall we not add one in love and brotherly affection? Long, long may it be so; long, long may the God of heaven, in his grace and mercy keep it so. But is not this a very powerful reason why we should "earnestly contend for the faith?" If we are so united—if we are firm and strong within—strong in faith and in the power of our God—then surely, surely this is a mighty reason, why we should, not only ward off the strokes of our enemies, but, to use the words of the psalmist, "gird us with strength unto the battle, and beat them small as the dust before the wind."

2. *Our Influence.* We do not mean to say that our influence is greater than some others around us: nor do we mean to speak of it in an exulting and triumphant tone. On the contrary, we would speak of it with all humility and lowliness of mind; but at the same time, with all gratitude to the Lord that he has put such an instrument into our hands, wherewith to ply the souls of our fellow men, and bring them to the Saviour. All that we mean is just what we say, this influence is not small; and this is a reason why we should use it in the interest of the gospel; why contend for the faith.

There are several lights in which this influence may be presented. First of all, *the number of souls that come directly under it.* According to our last statistics, there are no fewer than 70,425 adherents, including children. Every Sabbath this large number, to a less or greater degree, comes under this influence. We preach to them we lecture to them, we pray with and for them, we exhort and warn and instruct and entreat and rebuke them. We plead with them, setting before them, the glories of heaven and terrors of hell,—urging them to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold upon Christ as the only Saviour. In addition to these we have all the other appliances of our ecclesiastical machinery—such as Sabbath schools, prayer meetings and Bible classes. This moral and spiritual influence comes down upon these 70,000 directly, less or more, every Sabbath, and frequently on the common days of the week. Now, will any one say, this is not a mighty, a powerful agency put into our hands by the God of heaven. And, collecting all their things together, are not we ourselves prepared to admit, it is such a potent weapon, and to confess, it is, of itself, a strong reason, why we as a body, should "earnestly contend for the faith?"

There is another view however which may be taken of this influence. It operates not only *directly*, but also *indirectly*. It operates, not only inside of our church, but also outside. When we place a light