

not act according to the light thus given to us. Wherever we find this new creature, we are bound to love and to cherish it, though united to forms which are mainly opposed to our own.

Christians are those who have been made partakers of Christ. (Heb. iii. 14.) Now, if it is Christ, whereof they are all thus possessed, how is it that they are less alive to that in which they all participate, than to that in which they differ? Ought they not to say with the Apostle, "I count *all things* but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord?" And, in fact, ought not these differences to urge us onward as a goad to union? When Christians condemn their brethren, who stand in different ecclesiastical circumstances from their own, they often condemn that which they do not actually know or understand; and this is sinful. If they could look into a brother's bosom, to see there the conviction on which he acts, they would not condemn him. There were disputes and controversies even in the Apostolic Church;—one said, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos: but the Apostles regarded this as a sin. "Are ye not carnal?" Surely, it ought to have been, that the spirit of the Apostle John, or, rather, the spirit of Christ, which is "Love," should have put an end to these dissensions between those who were "of Paul" and those who were "of Cephas."

It surprised me much to see in England and elsewhere many Ministers, and faithful Christians, who were indifferent, or even opposed, to the notion of Christian Union; and, during the last summer, I have been visited by many truly pious men, the greater part of whom were not friendly to the Evangelical Alliance. I asked myself the reason of it; and it seemed to me, that with many persons it might be traced to this—that

the want of Christian union was regarded by them altogether as an *error*, and not as A SIN, which it most certainly is. If real Christians acknowledged that in this want of union there is sin, they would speedily cry out with David, "Cleanse me from my sin!"

Doubtless it is an error of understanding, and of Christian judgment, to attach more importance to that which, in matters of secondary consideration, separates us, than to that which unites us in things essential. But there is here *more* than an error,—a want of Christian union cannot exist without, in some measure, a want of Christian love; and this is a sin against the new commandment, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (1 John iii. 15.)

If you appear to deny before the world that inter-communion which you have with all the Brotherhood, the world will rejoice: the Prince of this world will rejoice yet more: while, by this denial, you offend your Lord; you compromise His glory; you sin! you draw off from your brethren, and approximate to strangers. You are at variance with a man who owns the same God, and looks to the same heaven, with you; while you maintain intimate relations with a man, who has the same dress, and the same denomination, with you,—but as to the rest, nothing! That which is every thing before God, you count for nothing. That which is as nothing with God, you account every thing. You strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

But, further, there is here a sin against the Church itself. I do not say only against the Church Universal, but also against the particular church to which we belong. If we encourage or allow in the churches a narrow and sectarian spirit, they soon become mere sects, impoverished, dwindling, and dry, and cease to be living churches of Jesus Christ.