

although constrained to continue in a state of separation, to cultivate and maintain a feeling of christian kindness towards the other.

When the Reply speaks of the importance of unity among Christians it speaks of what every Christian admits, and of what, there is no reason to doubt, every member of the Free Synod of Nova Scotia feels. The authors of that document, therefore, have no right to say, as they do with an evident reference to the Free Church, "We sincerely regret that our efforts *have not been reciprocated by others.*" The circumstance that parties may feel themselves constrained to keep in a state of separation from others, is, in itself, no evidence either that they do not feel the importance of unity among Christians, or that they make no efforts towards its attainment. This unity cannot exist but as the result of an antecedent union with Christ—a oneness of mind with him; and these brethren themselves admit "that abuses may unhappily exist in the church which not only warrant but demand a separation." In connexion with this admission, they illustrate the views which they entertain of the cases in which separation is warrantable, by certain passages of Scripture, which they apply in such a way as shows that they have no very accurate or well matured views on the subject. Their position is that we are "enjoined to receive into our communion as fellow Christians, those who, though they may differ from us regarding minor points of faith or practice, are in other respects unobjectionable;" and the proof which they bring in support of this position is Rom. xiv. 1-3, 5. xv. 7. 1 Cor. viii. ix. Let these brethren, however, look a little more closely into the passages which they have quoted, and they can scarcely fail to see that they do not in the slightest degree bear upon the object which they have in view. It is true, the Apostle, in the cases referred to, recommends mutual forbearance; but it was not upon the ground that the matters involved were "minor points of religion," but because in reality they involved no religious point whatever. The time was when the indiscriminate use of meats, and the neglect of particular days, "minor points" though they may be in the eyes of the brethren, would, by the express appointment of God, have subjected the Israelites to exclusion from religious ordinances. That law, however, was no

longer binding when the Apostle wrote; although the Christian Church did not all at once understand its own liberties.

Even the Apostle Peter thought himself still bound by its authority, when, (Acts, x. 13, 14,) in answer to the call "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat," he said "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." But the voice which three times told him, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common," prepared him for understanding his duty in reference to Cornelius, and was in fact an intimation that the ceremonial law was now abrogated. As it was by degrees, however, that this light broke in upon the church, it might be found that while one man believed that he might eat all things; another, being weak, would eat herbs; one man might esteem one day above another; another might esteem every day alike. It was with respect to cases such as these, in which the divine appointment, which at one time had established a difference, *had been withdrawn*, and in which the church was in a transition state consequent upon this withdrawal, that the Apostle says, "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." Do the brethren really imagine that the Apostle could have used language such as this, had, for instance, the eleventh chapter of Leviticus been still the law of the Church?

The case was similar with respect to things offered in sacrifice to idols. The Apostle Paul, and many christians in his day besides, knew "that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one;" and that he could not therefore be polluted by simply eating of that which others in their ignorance might have offered in sacrifice to those who were no gods. But he knew also that "there is not in every man that knowledge;" and that some might feel as if they themselves would be involved in the sin of idolatry were they to partake of such food. He warns those therefore who were enlightened, and who knew their liberty, to take care lest by an injudicious use of their liberty in particular circumstances they might, by the mere influence of their example, draw into an imitation of their conduct those who were not yet convinced that the thing in itself was lawful; and who would thus stand self-condemned, as doing what they believed to be a