

uted, and we have now to look to the manner in which these principles have been carried out, for any existing cause of error or deficiency.

Heretofore, it has been hypothetically assumed, that a want of power is actually exhibited, and that this reformation vine, which promised so much, and which has been so long and so diligently cultivated, has, after all, either produced no grapes at all, or brought forth "wild grapes,"—the worthless fruit of an unchanged nature. It may, however, be well for us, before we proceed farther in our search for causes, to inquire more definitely into the state of the fact, and ascertain as far as practicable, whether the alleged failure really exists, and, if so, in what particular respect a deficiency is indicated. These are questions which ought to be considered with candor, for the cause of truth scorns the aid of pretence, and self-deception is the very worst species of imposture.

It would not, I presume, with the reasonable and the just, at all detract from the merit of this effort at reformation, to admit at once, without argument, that it has by no means yet accomplished its design. This design has been to "restore pure primitive apostolical Christianity in letter and spirit; in principle and practice." This is a great work. Who will presume to say it is fully accomplished? We have maintained that it is effected so far as the "*letter*" and the "*principle*" are concerned, but who will affirm that primitive Christianity is fully exhibited in "*spirit*" and in "*practice*?" Christianity is a perfect system. It demands perfection from those who embrace it. To see it in its original beauty and purity is a blessed privilege, and to make an effort to restore it to the world, is praiseworthy, even if absolute conformity to its nature and its demands has not been attained. Failure in this respect, indeed, is common to all religious bodies. Though the views which many of them take of Christianity are sadly defective, still there is not one of them unwilling to confess that their practice falls far short of their profession, and that they, by no means, realize in fact that vision of moral beauty and excellence—that divine renovation of life and character which has been revealed to them. When compared with the adopted standards, all must be pronounced deficient, but if the reformers, as a religious body, be compared with other religious communities, we have reason to believe that they will suffer no discredit. For zeal in behalf of benevolent enterprise; for generous liberality in their donations to institutions of learning; to the support of missions; the revision of the Scriptures and their circulation in all