

and noble outline still meets the eye, but most of its tall cedars have fallen; wild beasts and almost wilder men frequent its idea. Thickets of brushwood have sprung up, affording cover for the robber and the seat of prey. But the lower parts of the mountain are still, as in the days of Israel, remarkable for their rich pastures, luxuriant vines and vineyards. My space is nearly filled, and I think I cannot close this letter in a better way, than by bringing to your recollection, the gracious promise of God to his beloved Israel, given in the beautiful language of the prophet Hosea. "I will be as the father unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall remain; They shall revive as the corn, and grow like the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the name of Lebanon." May you and I, my loving friends though not of the "stock of Israel" experience the blessedness of this promise of our Heavenly Father and be made fruitful in every good work.

THOUGHTS ON UNION.

Among the innumerable consequences of enmity or a spirit of malevolence holds a very conspicuous place. We meet its gridding aspect in all the relationships of life. It enters the domestic circle, and banishes peace of mind, and mutual confidence. It invades international courtesies and treaties, and explodes in recriminations and hostilities. It severs ecclesiastical ties, and produces the unseemly sight of religious war, in which, alas! the gospel, so holy and precious in its design, is converted to the most carnal weapon of offence. To remove the spirit of malevolence, and substitute that of love and good will in its place, is the great object of revealed religion, and consequently of every lover of truth. Union is the spirit of the gospel, and must necessarily be the wish of every humble follower of Jesus.

Our object here is to explain the true and correct idea of union, and incite all to promote it to the utmost of their ability; and at the outset we affirm that every idea of union which excludes love in its widest sense, is unworthy of the name of religion. By any confederacy among men, "all manner of guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings," be tolerated, we hesitate to say, that the greatest violence is done to the first principles of morality and to the law of our social being—"Do as ye would be done by." That there have been associations and alliances, based on the above evil principles, no one can deny, for history is almost entirely occupied in the narration of intrigues and coalitions, for the sole purpose of aggrandisement at the expense of

others. It is easy to see, therefore, that the union of two or more parties in the state, or of two or more kingdoms in the world, or of two or more religious persuasions in the church, will be the subject of anxiety, comment, and jealousy. The past, in a great measure, is reproduced, again and again, and the light it sheds, or the wisdom it teaches, is not very favorable to nominal combinations. It says in the language of warning, Beware of a sudden amalgamation of men and of principles that formerly were governed by the laws of repulsion, not of attraction! Beware of a union that cannot be completed except under a certain name, not under certain convictions! Beware of a union that does not evince congenial views, mutual forbearance and charity, until cemented by the omnipotence of a word! Suspect that alliance that requires many preliminaries, persuasions, protocols, despatches, amendments, and a host of other accessories. Where charity is, it is drawn to its kind by the force of attraction, and requires no legal bond to originate or perpetuate it. In regard to ecclesiastical union, to which we would most especially refer, we maintain that it is an impossibility, in the sense entertained by many good and excellent men in our day; and in support of this view, we adduce the following arguments:

First, the silence of Holy Scripture, as to church polity. Nowhere, except by inference, can the divine right of presbytery be derived from the Bible; we believe the inference to be legitimate; others, by the exercise also of their reason and criticism, come to a different conclusion. We found the use and divine sanction of church establishments on the word of God; others repudiate our inference, and question the correctness of our views: so that where a direct command has not been given, or a clear announcement not made, each is left to the right use of his rational faculties, in his search after what is lawful, useful and expedient.

Secondly. But in this search, talents, opportunities, and other circumstances being exceedingly diversified, the opinions and convictions arrived at must be exceedingly diversified also. All do not possess the same penetration and judgment. In the mental department there are the same inequalities as in the physical. Neither do all possess the same leisure necessary for the investigation of truth.

We might bring forward other considerations which go to establish the truth of our assertion: that according to our present constitution, there must be a variety of opinions, and by consequence an impossibility of an ecclesiastical union which will embrace all denominations; but we think enough has been said in reference to that point. The difficulty, however, remains to be solved, and is presented in the question, Is there to be a union at all? Is religious strife to continue from age to age? We believe that, standing