

of experience, while the other constitutes the tribute paid by admiring and grateful love to proven integrity, and generousness, and wisdom.

"Offences," we are told, "must needs come." Here we meet with no perfect human nature, though we expect to do in heaven—where we hope at once to exhibit it ourselves, and to witness it in each individual of the countless throng gathered around the throne, and raising with united voice the song of grateful praise to Him who loved them, and gave Himself for them, and washed them from their sins in His blood, and made them kings and priests to God and the Lamb. To expect in the church, which is but the aggregate of individual believers, that which is wanting in each, would be at once to doom ourselves to disappointment, and to lay ourselves open to the charge of unreasonableness. The folly and sin which are bound up in the one will break out just as does that which has its place in the other, producing misunderstandings, conflicts of feeling, and oppositions of action. Satan, who appears in his proper character, or "transforms himself into an angel of light," as best suits his purpose, will, if suffered, make use of the better feelings of its (the church's) members—their conscientiousness and zeal for God's cause—to aggravate the mischief, by making them fancy themselves "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints," when the true subject of contention is nothing other or better than their own way. Other things being equal, such as have been longest together—feeling themselves bound to one another by ties numerous and sacred—will ride best through these storms. No mistake is greater, on whichever side it may be made, than to take it for granted that trouble will be got rid of by the disruption of the Pastoral tie. The way to conquer difficulty is to face it. Such as flee from it, it is all but sure to follow, compelling them to meet and grapple with it in some new form, if not the same, and possibly under circumstances more unfavourable. A strong repressing influence is brought into play where parties set themselves honestly to work together "for better for worse," which helps to keep trouble down; while the same determination will, in case of its unhappily arising, afford invaluable aid in the discovery of a safe and honorable path out of it. Through God's overruling wisdom and love, good, lasting good will be brought out of the temporary evil; principles being at the same time so developed, as to lay a basis for a future peace, and efficiency, and growth.—and the character of the truth vindicated and illustrated. Should the disposition to part be cherished, or the idea of parting be entertained as affording a convenient refuge from threatened trial, much less pains will be taken either to keep things right, or to make them so. Parties will, on the contrary, be tempted to treat one another with an unceremoniousness and a harshness by which all Christian principle is outraged—in a style which will make their separation necessary, on the same principle which compels the parting of fighting dogs, to prevent, to wit, their tearing one another to pieces. That the commonwealth receive no damage, was a principle to which the ancient Romans felt themselves bound to sacrifice everything. Rights they had none, sought none, which might interfere with that. Let such as stand to one another in the sacred relation of Pastor and flock, act on the same principle, and agree to maintain God's cause intact, come of themselves what may. If that require their parting, *part they must*; but let them *first*, as wise men do in view of death, set their house in order. To separate with that in confusion, so long as any honourable means within reach of putting things to rights remains untried, seems very much like the disbanding of an army on the eve of battle, and in the presence of the enemy—a course execrated by every honorable mind, everywhere and always. Moreover, if misunderstanding come to be recognized as a valid cause for separation, parties who would wish to have a change may be tempted to get one up for the sake of accomplishing their purpose, or a minister for the sake of justifying in the eyes of others and palliating in his own a removal, to which he has, in spite of the protesting voice of conscience, made up his mind.

In our more general endeavours after usefulness, permanence of relationship to the community will afford similar facilities through the influence which it will give us with them,—which is with difficulty carried intact to a new sphere.

Experience confirms the principles we have thus briefly and imperfectly