

THE DISCONSOLATE.

Evening dews are gently falling,
Evening glories gild the west,
Birds, with folded wings are calling
Home the wanderers to their rest,

Lengthening now across the meadows,
Where the flocks no longer stray,
Softly steal the evening shadows,
O'er the steps of parting day.

Silence reigns o'er moor and mountain,
Silence through the verdant vale;
Save where some melodious fountain
Tells its never-ending tale—

Tells of stars, that, nightly shining,
Lend their brightness to its breast—
Tells, and tells without repining,
How its waters know no rest.

Is there then no voice of sorrow?
Not one murmur in the blast?
No foreboding for the morrow?
No lamenting o'er the past?

Child of tears, it is thy wailing,
Thine alone that meets mine ear;
Whence thy grief, when all prevailing
Love and peace are mingling here?

Whence thy grief? It is thy blessing,—
Thine alone, with conscious eye,
To look around thee, still confessing,
God is here, in earth, and sky.

Child of tears! thou art not slighted,
In the record of his Love;
Though perchance a while benighted,
Seest thou not the star above?

Know'st thou not the gracious message,
Sent to all the sons of care?
Heed not then the darkest presage,—
God is present every where.

For the Pearl.

UNION.

OR THE DIVIDED CHURCH MADE ONE.

This popular work by the distinguished author of 'Mammon,' appears to have excited intense interest, and obtained a high degree of celebrity in Great Britain. We fear, however, that the feeling of partiality in its favour will prove evanescent, and that the churches of the Mother Country will remain as divided as ever, notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of Mr. Harris. Be this as it may, this excellent writer has done his duty—faithfully has he warned the professed followers of Christ of the evils of division and uncharitableness, and affectionately has he exhorted them to put on bowels of mercies and to be tender hearted towards each other. As it comports with the avowed objects of *The Pearl* to promote union and good will amongst all the friends of the Redeemer, we shall embrace the present opportunity of laying before our readers a few eloquent extracts, from the noble work, the title of which heads the present article.

SOURCES OF DISUNION IN CHURCHES.

Our author in his fifth chapter notices the primary or auxiliary means by which the divisions of the Church have been perpetrated since the Reformation. Mr. Harris considers them to have been the predominance of secular influence over spiritual affairs; unscriptural tests and terms of communion; an exaggerated detestation of some heresy or corruption already acknowledged; an obstinate attachment to things as they are; the prevalence of ecclesiastical assumption; the prejudices of illiberal education; reproachful names and epithets; the exceptionable mode of conducting controversies; and the conduct of the religious public in confining their reading and intercourse almost exclusively to their own party. More particularly, our author enumerates three sources of disunion in churches; namely, a spirit of self-importance among their members,—a spirit of imposition on the part of their officers,—and their departure from scripture purity, or primitive simplicity. Let every denomination lay to heart what ensues:—

Among the many important reflections suggested by this chapter, the following seem almost forced on our attention:—1. That the additions which man has made, from time to time, to the ordinances of God, have been the most fruitful sources of agitation and quarrel. 2. That even these have not led to actual separation, until they have been authoritatively enforced, and made indispensable. 3. That neither the one, nor the other, could have taken place, if the authority of the Bible had been regarded and revered as paramount. 4. That the supreme authority of the Bible waned in the church just in proportion as unsanctified wealth, and rank, and influence, were allowed to gain the ascendant; till the church had become a worldly corporation, and the Bible was silenced and virtually expelled. 5. That the admission of irreligious men to place or power in a Christian church, is the admission of so many agents of schism; and hence it is, partly, that in the consummation of that kingdom, which is never to be rent or removed, all such are excluded. 6. And that the Chris-

tian love, which the Gospel breathes and enjoins, and which is to be found in the faithful alone, is the only balm to heal the wounds with which the church is bleeding at the hands of schism.'

TESTS OF A SCHISMATICAL SPIRIT.

The sixth chapter of 'Union' is beyond all praise; as describing the tests of a schismatical spirit. Happy, thrice happy will be the lot of those, who after reading this section, are ready to judge themselves rather than others; who feel disposed, far less to behold the mote that is in the eye of a brother, than to consider with contrition, and cast out with repentance, the beam that may exist in their own. Mr. Harris justly remarks, that, were Christians in general to become adequately affected with the enormity of the evils of schism, they would not merely suffer but invite the word of exhortation, and lay themselves open to its searching influence. He hypothetically delineates the Great Shepherd about to make on his throne of judgment, an investigation into the spiritual state of the various communions of Christendom:—

'Then as each church in succession came up for inspection; as its history was slowly, patiently, and impartially brought to light; as its state, at present, passed under the eye of flaming fire; and as the heart of each of its members was laid open and bare,—what strange and unexpected disclosures would take place! How many of our present subjects of congratulation and joy would prove to be reasons for humiliation and grief! how many, who have hitherto enjoyed the title of champions of the truth, would depart, branded as agents of strife, and ringleaders of faction! In many instances, the accuser would be seen taking the place of the accused; and the supposed and compassionate victim of schism be denounced as its author. Terms of communion not prescribed by the word of God, tests of discipleship devised by man,—symbols of party, and badges of distinction,—many of those things which the churches generally make their boast and their glory,—would be denounced as the creatures of faction, and the causes of strife, where otherwise charity would have reigned in peace.' p. 156.

THE REAL AUTHOR OF SCHISM.

With regard to the guilt and evils of schism, our essayist, in his seventh chapter, surveys the account given of them in the New Testament, together with the fearful effects which disunion produces, at the present time, upon individuals and churches, as well as upon the world at large. Having stated that schism is "an exclusive, factious, and uncharitable state of mind, wherever found," he begins by taking a rapid glance at the closing scenes of the Jewish economy, when the zealous spirit of party turned neighbouring temples into rival fortresses; so that Mounts Moriah and Gerizim stood perpetually frowning at each other. He notices, moreover, the remarkable fact, that in six of the epistles it is affirmed, that 'love is the fulfilling of the law;' so that a spirit of contention is in effect that evil principle which does its utmost to nullify, or at least neutralize the Gospel. Afterwards, we are directed to the real author of schism, as being Satan himself, the prime 'disturber of the universe.'

'Entering the sacred inclosure,—the paradise of the new creation,—he early sowed the seeds of dissension, and effected another fall of man. Aware that the conversion of the world is suspended on the unity of the church, he leaves no means untried, and no agency unemployed, which is likely, by embroiling the church, to frustrate its design, and to prolong his possession of the world. While, by the same means, the church has often been rendered an easy conquest to the world; and short of this, has furnished it with sport, and even awakened emotions mingled with pity and contempt.' p. 176.

EXCUSES FOR DISUNION EXAMINED.

While our author declares that 'obedience to the will of Christ may render separation from a church an imperative obligation,' he examines at great length, the various pleas and disguises of schism. He opens up, with much quiet irony, the grand mistake of those who sometimes, without being quite aware of it, maintain in effect that schism may, after all, not be so very bad a thing; since it leads to a division of labour, and perhaps wholesome rivalry. Another excuse for disunion is the assertion often made, that unanimity of sentiment is essential to union, since without it the apparent concord would be real hypocrisy. 'The union itself, we are told, in order to be permanent, must be founded on the supreme and sole authority of the inspired word, as well as the inalienable right of private judgment. With respect to such as would enquire whether any degree of truth is to be sacrificed in upholding union, Mr. Harris replies:—

'We have to remind the objector, that there is a wide difference between denouncing schism and asking for the sacrifice of truth. If we could present him with no alternative between schism and uniformity,—if we were to propose perfect unanimity of opinion instead of unanimity of affection, he would then have ground for repeating and urging his objection. But let him observe first, a truth which we have often repeated already—that we do not ask him to sacrifice his opinions, but only his unchristian bigotry. We do not ask the Independent to become an Episcopalian, nor the Episcopalian to become an Independent. We do not ask the Calvinist to change sides with the Arminian,

nor the Baptist with the Pædo-baptist: but only to exchange the visible expressions of that love, which they ought mutually to cherish, as heirs together of the grace of life. We have to remind him, secondly, that by maintaining his present position, he most likely is sacrificing the truth, in more senses than one; while by maintaining the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, he would be vindicating and magnifying the truth. At present, he is saying in effect, 'The grand doctrines of salvation are nothing as a basis of Christian union, unless their reception be accompanied by certain shades of opinion which I myself have adopted; the fact that God hath received him into his favour, is no argument why I should receive him into communion, although inspired authority has affirmed that it is, unless he will consent to adopt every tittle of my creed:—and thus the truth, as it is in Jesus, is reduced to a level with the truth as it is in a party. Whereas, by making those doctrines the ground of Christian union, he would be exalting them before the eyes of the world, and proclaiming, that so great and glorious are they in his estimation, that every thing else appears comparatively little. At present he is sacrificing truth, also, by indulging his attachment to particular shades of opinion, at the expense of all that large portion of the Bible, which inculcates love to the brethren. He is putting contempt on the truth, by putting contempt on the brotherhood. He is disparaging so large and vital a portion of the Bible, that if he persists in sacrificing it, even though he retain every other part, he is endangering his salvation. 'I,' said Baxter,—and the sentiment was worthy the inspired pen of the seraphic John,—'I can as willingly be a martyr for love as for any article of my creed.' But in his infatuated zeal for a punctilio or a party, the objector appears utterly to forget that there is such an article as love in his creed, or such a doctrine as love in the Bible. He defends some little angle or ornament in the temple of truth, at the expense of one of the pillars. He contends for the letter, or rather, perhaps, for a letter of the truth, in a way which tramples on the spirit which pervades the whole. Whereas, thirdly, we have to remind him that by cultivating catholic fellowship, he would be not merely not sacrificing the truth, not merely maintaining it, but most likely promoting his own peculiar view of it. He might still inculcate those views from the pulpit and the press, and recommend them by the amiable influence of his example; for controversy itself may be so conducted as to win esteem, instead of alienating it. Love is a key, which would afford him the readiest and the surest access to the hearts and consciences of others. If his peculiar views are scriptural, as they came down at first from the calm region of heaven, so their self-recommending excellence is more likely to be seen and appreciated in the serene atmosphere of peace than in any other. And as the whole system of revealed truth originated in the love which compassionated our fatal ignorance, is he not likely to be more successful in propagating it, the more he inculcates it in the spirit in which it was first conceived?' pp. 208—210.

EVILS OF DIVISION.

Our author's last chapter, the eleventh, enumerates many motives and arguments for laying the subject, as he has now done, before the religious public. His appeal is made to the faithful of Christ Jesus of every community. He reminds us, that while science can boast of her catholicity, the followers of the Prince of Peace ought no longer, were it only for very shame, to disturb the political quiet of the country by their broils. He dwells upon the evident fitness of unity, and its consequent agreeableness to the blessed Trinity in Unity; reminding his readers that the Church owes her existence to their infinite love. The last extract we can find room for is the following:—

'And are our divisions thus casting their shadows forwards into eternity? Are they not only impairing our usefulness and happiness now, but even threatening to dim the lustre of the crown which shall be assigned to us then? And for what? Who is to be the gainer? What is the compensation? When is it to accrue? Assemble the church and inquire. Surely, if an advantage is ever to result, it must by this time have appeared. Fifteen hundred years have been allowed to try the merits of division. Summon the various parties and learn what these merits are. Alas! some of them are embroiled too deeply to obey the call. And of those that do, some refuse to approach, lest they should be contaminated by the touch of another denomination; while the rest, estranged from each other, exhibit signs of mutual jealousy and distrust. And is this the religion of love, in praise of whose fraternal and sympathetic spirit, inspiration prepared its loftiest strains? How has its gracious spirit evaporated! and whither has it fled? Is this the church which was to advance like a bannered host, carrying with her the sympathies of the groaning creation, gathering up trophies at every step, and returning at length from the circuit and conquest of the world, laden with many crowns for Him, who had caused her to triumph in every place? Is this the body which was to be made one, by the inhabiting and all pervading Spirit; and of whose unity the most intimate and compacted objects in creation were considered the most appropriate emblems? Alas! that body is so dislocated, dismembered, and mangled, that it has become another vision of dry bones; and another resurrection, which shall bring bone