

as doctrine is concerned, in all its votaries, and the result of substituting the foolishness of man for the wisdom of God is seen in the hundred and more perfect (?) doctrinal systems, all at variance one with another, and not one of them probably that is free from flaw, or that embodies a title of the rich ore to be found in the inexhaustible mine of Divine Truth.

Unhappily we are not fighting with fancies of our own, in lamenting the practical negation of Christian Forbearance. The evil has undoubtedly been mitigated in these our days, but it still lives, and its effects are still as patent to every eye as ever they were.

The cause of Separatism has its most thorough and out-spoken advocates in our Close Baptist brethren. They reason something in this way:—It is the duty of Christians to observe *all* the ordinances of the Lord; therefore we must withdraw ourselves from those who observe not the ordinance of Baptism, *as we understand it*, and hold no communion with them, no, not so much as to eat with them at the table of our common Lord. We allude to this argument, more for the sake of illustration, than with the view of attempting to combat it, and would merely remark that to be a valid one those who use it must in the first place be prepared to prove that a perfect identity of faith and practice is required of believers joining together in Church Fellowship, and in the second place that they themselves are the sole infallible depositories of truth, and that all who differ from them in sentiment must on that very account be walking disorderly, and therefore deserving to be cut off from their fellowship. We believe our friends would not like to assume the responsibility of asserting either the one or the other of these positions, without which, however, their argument on behalf of a love-quenching Separatism has but very little cogency. We would remark also, in passing, that an argument founded on the duty of "observing all the ordinances of the Lord," loses much of its force when it proceeds from those who, more than any other portions of the Christian Church, disregard an ordinance of the Lord so plain, so positive, and so easily understood, as the exhortation to "forbear one another in love."

Take another illustration of the operation of Separatism, of recent date and in our own Province. A hopeful scheme of Union between two important sections of the Presbyterians of Canada was a few months ago frustrated by the persistence of one of them to obtain from the other the recognition of a certain aspect of a doctrine, which, even if true, belongs in our day far more to the region of speculation than to that of practice. The Free Church declared their willingness to consider opinions on the lawfulness of State Endowments *as a matter of forbearance*, but "continued to consider the views which they have always held on the duty of the Civil Magistrate, and the responsibility of nations to God,

to be of such vital importance" &c. as *not* to be matters of forbearance. The Union between themselves and the United Presbyterians which they had expressed their "earnest desire" to see consummated, they thus allowed to be postponed indefinitely; because their brethren could not express themselves in precisely the same language in regard to matters of doubtful speculation, their opinions as to which might not have any practical influence on conduct in a single instance for perhaps a century to come. If it were left to Christians of other denominations, who may be presumed to be impartial, to say whether this theoretical difference on a single topic should have been permitted to be an obstacle to Union between Christian men, we have little doubt as to the character of the verdict they would give. And we trust we shall not be considered as stepping beyond our province, and interfering in matters which concern us not, if we express the hope that the Free Church will even yet allow itself to be influenced by the consideration, that, if there be any *guilt* in schism, as unquestionably there is, it rests with the party which raises the separating barrier.

Sectarianism has had a long lease of existence, and it becomes a question for every Christian man to determine for himself, whether its fruits are of such a nature as to lead him to throw the weight of his influence on the side of its maintenance or its destruction. The only plausible plea for its perpetuation is that which each sect sets up, that it is bound to bear a testimony, and does actually testify for the whole truth of God. But has not the practical result of the carrying out of this doctrine been, that, instead of the people of God lifting up one harmonious voice on the side of truth and of God, we hear a hundred jarring and discordant notes, which distort and almost drown the strains of heavenly music issuing forth from the sanctuary of truth? This surely furnishes no adequate compensation for the confessed evils resulting from the rending asunder of Christ's body, and the division and distraction of Christian efforts for the restoration of a lost world to holiness and happiness. When the Christian Church started on its career, the Apostle, with a view to maintaining its unity and efficient working, exhorted the people of God to forbear one another in love. As time rolled on, the exhortation was forgotten, and the unhappy consequences we now see in the household of faith broken up into antagonistic parties, and the world for the most part still unconverted for the want of their united efforts to enlighten and to save.

We see the evil, but we have the remedy in our own hands, which, through the blessing of God, will be effectual to its removal—the bringing our whole souls once more under the influence of the apostolic exhortation to charity and forbearance. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us." "For we are members, one of another."

E.