

consider in their direct relations to each other. These truths are: 1. That the Christian community should be united by the ties of a common Christianity. That there should be one faith, universally received as evangelical, and one all-pervading family-affection,—a bond of perpetual peace. In other words, that all who profess faith in Christ should be united together as one body, having Him alone as their head, and acknowledging a common standard of doctrine and of duty. 2. That, on the otherhand, each individual member of that body, must for himself, at his own responsibility, and at his own peril, in the exercise of the right of private judgment, determine this faith, ascertain this doctrine, and render this obedience.

We candidly confess, indeed, that if the history of Protestantism were to be taken as an exemplification of the true nature and tendency of these principles, which, as we have stated, are among the original and essential features of this portion of christendom, we should be constrained to admit them as fallacious. For how would it be possible to reconcile with these truths the sectarian antipathies, discords, feuds, and animosities that have prevailed among Protestants;—the divisions, heresies, and endless wars and fightings that have characterized every portion of this wide-spread reformation from Popery?

But if the Protestant world can be convinced that the course which has been pursued results in religious dissensions, there is also another fact of which the same experience may convince them, viz: that all this sectarian animosity and prejudice has failed to prevent entirely a spiritual unity amongst the truly enlightened, liberal, and pious of opposing parties. This fact, fortunately, stands forth in bold relief, and while it demonstrates that unity is not incompatible with liberty of judgment, it proves, still further, that the real tendencies of heart-felt religion are to produce peace and unity, and that whatever creates or perpetuates division, must be opposed to Christianity. When men, who, in the deliberate exercise of judgment, have attached themselves to different religious bodies, are able by the elevating influences of divine truth and love, to rise above the narrow limits of sectarian prejudice, and to embrace each other as children of a common Father, and heirs of a common inheritance, the power of these divine principles is shown to be such, that they require but a fair and open field of action, to gain a complete and glorious triumph.

There is, then, through the influence of divine truth, and in direct opposition to the genius of sectarianism, a union of heart between the pious. Amidst the conflict of parties, the shock of contending creeds,