

THE GOSPEL TRIBUNE,

FOR ALLIANCE AND INTERCOMMUNION

THROUGHOUT

Evangelical Christendom.

VOLUME II.]

OCTOBER, 1855.

[NUMBER 6.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, even CHRIST: AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN."

Moral and Religious Miscellany.

EXTRACTS FROM HOWE ON CHRISTIAN UNION, 1678:—No. 1.

COMMUNICATED BY Q. Q. PICKERING.

That it is the work of God's own Spirit to effect such an union, and consequently that when it shall be generally poured forth such an union must be realized; this is typically represented by the precious ointment shed upon Aaron, diffused upon his garments; referring doubtless to the anointing of the Holy Ghost eminently, and in the first place upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and thence diffused to all the members of his Body—the Church. Hence also the unity in what degree soever it doth obtain is called the unity of the Spirit; and Christians also because of its unspeakable importance, and the dangers attending the breach of it are admonished to endeavor to maintain it in the bond of peace. That also which is the subject of such an union is the habitation of the indwelling Spirit, which implies that it hath great influence on this union, that where it dwells among all living Christians there cannot but be some union in the main and principal things, they having all come as lively stones unto the living and chief corner stone, and compacted into an habitation of God through the Spirit, all such are of the Church of God, and therefore should be recognised as such, for we are all one in Christ Jesus: and further, the very cause of this union amongst Christians, so far as it does prevail, is the oneness of the Spirit who dwells everywhere in them all for this very end and purpose, for there is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. The reason why the members of the Body though many are yet but one Body is, because by the one Spirit they are all Baptised into one Body, and have been made to drink into one Spirit: as if it had been said you are so little one upon any other account, that only as one

Spirit hath diffused itself among you and cemented you together will this desirable object be obtained—without this the Body of Christ would be no more one than a rope of sand; there would be no cohesion of parts; for the parts of a man's body, as the parts of the Church, are in a continual flux, there is a continual wear and waste, a constant succession of new parts to make up for those which have passed away, and yet there is but one man still, because he hath still but one soul. So also is the Church one and the same thing because it hath one Spirit; and as it is the office and business of the soul to animate and enliven the body in its several parts, which it can only do by retaining them in union with itself and one another; the case is manifestly so here as the members of the body share its privileges in community, as for instance that of peace and the Communion which it includes. So saith the Apostle, ye are called into one Body; or speaking of the peace of God he says—to which also ye are called in one Body, the Spirit doth not animate, but as it unites this plainly argues it to be the work of the Spirit to effect and maintain this union; you know the rest of the world are divided about blessedness, or wherein the chief good consists; there are no less than two hundred and eighty-eight opinions among the Heathens about it now, how come all sincere Christians to agree in this—to hope for blessedness all in one thing in that state of life and glory that is hereafter to be enjoyed, and that they all, in all times of the world, should have met in the same one hope of their calling; all this must be owing to one cause—must proceed from one principle; they have all one faith are all of one religion; as to its essentials all come under one title, all give up and devote themselves under the bond of God's covenant—are the children of God by faith, and the one God and Father of all; in this all sincere Christians meet, and how come they so to meet? By chance? No, certainly not. But by one designing cause that worked them all one