

Ephesus? Are we not ashamed to let the heathen of Japan or Madagascar know of our denominational distinctions? Are we not sensible that they weaken our position before our enemies, just as a similar division in the primitive Church would have been disastrous before its foes? There may be love in disunion, but that is not union.

No denomination has taken the first step to union that has not made its own platform a union one. Uniting those that have sectarian platforms is strengthening sectarianism, rather than promoting true Christian union. The first thing to be done is to seek the purity of the Church. There cannot be union without it. Even our Saviour came to bring "not peace, but a sword," between righteousness and unrighteousness. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Then, with purity, there must be mutual toleration of religious tastes and sentiments. We must gladly receive all to fellowship whom Christ receives, and not judge our brother. The Church is not ours, but Christ's. This principle applies to both doctrine and practice. Calvinism, Arminianism, or any mode of baptism should be no obstacle to Christian fellowship, so long as we do not reckon it an objection to saving religion. The greatest difficulty to be overcome would be in the matter of Church government. Yet how few comparatively of Church members think much of this? They often have more prejudice in regard to the names than the systems. A change of view on the question of baptism often leads to a wholesale exchange of the system of government. Increase of piety in the Church of Christ would have an inconceivable influence in bringing about unanimity in this respect. Love would banish all disposition to arbitrary rule. Christians would all "submit themselves one to another in the fear of God." Our Saviour's disciples strove with one another for the chief power, until, filled with His Spirit, they condescended to serve one another. Freedom of conscience and independence of churches were the natural results of Christian love.

Hence the absolute necessity of living piety among us. No church system worked so poorly without it as ours; it was essential to the very existence of our churches. In its absence despotism of some kind must come in. But, on the other hand, no despotic rule can exist where the spirit of Christianity reigns. Let us then be intent on having among us, above all things, the religion of our Master. Our piety should not be of a misty, indefinite nature, but clear and positive. Our faith, love, and assurance should be strong. We should be able to say, "We know that we have passed from death unto life;" "Now are we the sons of God;" "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain;" "This one thing I do." Such a piety would be seen and felt. It would overcome all enemies in the form of scepticism or indifference. It, and it alone, would enable us to distinguish aright between the joys of religion and those of the world. We would then no longer "call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness; put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Such piety, too, will lead us to live for others as well as for ourselves, and will enable us to practice self-denial rather than allow us to be stumbling-blocks in their paths.

At the present time, especially is this spirit expected of us; God is abundantly blessing other places—Scotland particularly; and He is waiting to bless us. He is casting the sparks at our feet; let us not extinguish them, but fan them to a flame. "The Spirit is willing;" let us watch and pray, lest, through weakness of the flesh, we enter into temptation. May these meetings be the beginning of a blessed work among our churches!

#### THE DISCUSSION ON THE ADDRESS

occupied the most of two whole sessions. It commenced on a motion to adopt the following recommendation of the Business Committee:—

"That the thanks of the Union be, and are hereby tendered to the ex-chairman, the Rev. E. Barker, for his retiring address, in the general spirit of which it fully concurs; but, while conceding the right of freely expressing cherished convictions