

and acted upon, would prove itself to be irreconcilably at variance with the first principles of his religion, those of brotherly love and union. There are and always have been differences of opinion, honest and rational differences, between persons having on other subjects equal pretensions to the credit of intelligence and fairness of mind, differences among those who recognise the same inspired teacher, and have before them the same sacred and undisputed records. And men, if they think and reason at all for themselves, and if they are to have any real belief, cannot help thus speculatively differing; and it is a stigma upon the Son of God to say, that he has forbidden such differences either possibly or virtually, that he has given to every sincere believer the right to suppose that he and his sect have alone the mind of Christ and are true to his religion, and the consequent right to disown, excommunicate, and cast out as evil, all who differ from such sect. They who hold that Christ demands uniformity of speculative opinion, must of course regard their own opinions as the standard of that uniformity, and they must in consistency suppose that they are authorized by God to hold every dissenter from that standard as an infidel, an alien, and an outlaw. And those dissenters, and every petty portion of them, and every individual of them, have the same counter authority with respect to their opponents. And thus Jesus himself is made to forbid, absolutely to forbid, all brotherhood and fellowship amongst his disciples, to cast an unquenchable firebrand in the midst of them, and to justify and sanction a spirit of exterminating and eternal war amongst them. But this cannot be so. This cannot be the divine purpose. Speculative uniformity cannot be the requisite bond of