

## Unity in Diversity, and Diversity in Unity.

We are about to contemplate the diversities, or, as they have been since called, *variations* of the Reformation. These diversities are among its most essential characters.

Unity in diversity, and diversity in unity—is a law of Nature, and also of the Church.

Truth may be compared to the light of the Sun. The light comes from heaven colourless, and ever the same; and yet it takes different hues on earth, varying according to the objects on which it falls. Thus different formularies may sometimes express the same christian Truth, viewed under different aspects.

How dull would be this visible creation, if all its boundless variety of shape and colour were to give place to an unbroken uniformity! And may we not add how melancholy would be its aspect, if all created beings did but compose a solitary and vast *Unity*!

The unity which comes from Heaven doubtless has its place,—but the diversity of *human nature* has its proper place also. In religion we must neither leave out God nor man. Without unity your religion cannot be of God,—without diversity, it cannot be the religion of man. And it ought to be of both. Would you banish from creation a law that its Divine Author has imposed upon it, namely,—that of boundless diversity? “Things without life giving sound,” said Paul, “whether pipe or harp, except they give a *distinction* in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?” 1 Cor. xiv. 7. But, if in religion there is a diversity, the result of distinction of individuality, and which, by consequence, must subsist even in heaven,—there is a diversity which is the fruit of man’s rebellion,—and this last is indeed a serious evil.

There are two opposite tendencies which may equally mislead us. The one consists in the exaggeration of *diversity*,—the other, in extending the *unity*. The great doctrines of man’s salvation are as a line of demarcation between these two errors. To require more than the reception of those doctrines, is to disallow the diversity:—to require any thing less, is to infringe the unity.

This latter departure is that of rash and unruly minds, looking beyond, or out of Jesus Christ, in the desire to set up systems and doctrines of men.

- The former appears in various exclusive sects and is more especially seen in that of Rome.

It is the duty of the Church to reject Error from her bosom. If this be neglected, Christianity cannot be upheld; but, pushed to an extreme, it would follow that the Church should take proceedings against the smallest deviations, and intervene in mere disputes about words; faith would be silenced, and christian feeling reduced to slavery. Not such was the condition of the Church in those times of real Catholicity,—the first ages: