

into numerous sects. These denominational differences are connected with separate objects, interests and claims. Our energies are mainly devoted to the furtherance of these peculiarities, and in attempting to combine for common religious purposes, the points of collision are often brought prominently forward. Thus the accomplishment of the object is prevented, and divided action results. Disconnected regiments, attacking the enemy at different points, and without concert or mutual understanding, will assuredly bring far less honour to the cause in which they engage, than if they were united in one army. The comparison will not hold good in all respects, yet it may serve to illustrate the subject. Few will doubt or deny, we imagine, the disadvantages arising out of our numerous separations.

Besides this, our adversaries make great use of the fact to which we have adverted. It is in their estimation a convincing proof of the earthly, if not lower origin of Protestantism. They regard the variations of Protestants as decided testimonies against their faith. "The Church," they say, "is one. Its unity is essential. Division is from beneath. Union is divine. A Catholic recognises all other Catholics, in every part of the world; they are brethren of one family. But if a Protestant meets another Protestant, he must inquire to what denomination he belongs, before he will hold fellowship with him, and perhaps will then ascertain that their respective creeds and modes of worship differ so materially from one another, that an impassable gulf separates between them. Can such a system be true? Can it be from heaven?"

We do not admit the force of the objection derived from this acknowledged fact. We are prepared to maintain that the boasted unity of the Romish Church is rather apparent than real. We can show that under

the appearance of oneness there lurks manifold diversity; and that as far as the unity is real, it depends for its very existence on the denial of the right of private judgment—that slavish subjection of the soul to human authority, by which all false systems are characterised. The fellowship of Romanists is a fellowship in bondage. At the same time, we are not unwilling to admit that the argument, though wanting in solidity, is extremely plausible. It is on that account highly important to deprive it of its edge.

This may be done in two ways. We may prove, in the first place, that among all evangelical Protestants there is a substantial union. They agree in reference to those great truths which constitute the essence of the Gospel, and must be received in order to salvation. Modes of expression may vary, while New Testament doctrines are harmoniously held, for uniformity of language is not of that consequence which some imagine, nor is it necessary to adopt all the technicalities of human systems of theology.

All true Christians are one in heart. It was to that union, the Saviour referred in his last prayer; see John xvii. 21. Differences of opinion on points of minor importance, and diversities of worship and administration in regard to those particulars for which there is no express divine warrant or rule, may lawfully exist, in entire accordance with that spiritual union which is peculiar to Christianity, and is in fact its distinguishing glory. All who are vitally united to Christ are one in spirit and purpose.

We may further prove, that notwithstanding their differences, Protestants can and do unite in furtherance of objects which are dear to them all. The oneness may become visible. The truths which bind them together are precisely the truths in support and defence of which the