

has only to consider the natural diversities in men and women in regard to the prominence or predominance of this or of that intellectual power or tendency,—in regard to their respective temperaments,—in regard to their up-bringing, and the influence upon them of education and early circumstances in guiding the formation of opinion, and finally, in regard to their present surroundings—the people and things amid whom they dwell—in order to arrive at the conclusion that sameness of opinion, or of perception relating to truth, is one of the most unlikely things imaginable. It is wonderful that there is so much existing harmony; and it is by no means to be deplored that there are so many diversities. Unity is not affected by these.

(2.) Uniformity of action is not essential to unity, either in forms of worship, or in ritual, or in the government and administration of the churches. In the same nation and neighbourhood there may be such variety of capacity, of taste, of culture, and of felt want, that one mode of action may admirably suit one class, while ill adapted to another. In forms of worship this is especially manifest, so that variety and diversity seem essential to the supply of the conscious wants of men and women of different characteristics. It must be acknowledged, moreover, that variety is in itself pleasing. We never attach the idea of the beautiful to stereotyped uniformity. We admire the natural woodland with its endless variety of forms, all beautiful in their diversity, much more than the clipped and uniform trees in the palace gardens of Versailles.

(3.) There is no breach of unity in Christians who think alike on important doctrinal and practical points, banding themselves together in congregations or churches for mutual edification and Christian work. This is not schism, but it is the exercise of a God-given freedom; it comes of the very essence of church life. It is quite plain that they can work best together who are in substantial agreement as to forms of worship and of action, and have similarity though not uniformity of opinion, and of perception of truth. In their differences from others outside, they may have very important principles to maintain, which though not essential to personal salvation, are essentially connected with the progress and purity of Christ's Kingdom. These they are bound to maintain, and to band themselves together in order to do so. And herein lies the vindication of the Congregational churches as distinct organizations, in view of the claims of unity. But these spiritually banded communities need not, ought not, to exclude from their communion the Lord's own people who may desire fellowship with them, though unable to see in all things as they do. These are not to trouble the Church with their special ideas, but to walk with its members, and work with them "in all holy conversation and godliness," "keeping the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace."

None of these things necessarily affect unity. There is unity in the landscape which consists of woodland and field, of hill and dale, of brook and lake. The diversity affects not the unity. There is unity in the family, notwithstanding its members, having been accustomed to think for themselves, entertain somewhat diverse views on many points, and manifest considerable variety in their tastes and pursuits. Academical institutions, if well organized and worked, will exhibit unity, although great diversity will be found in the temper, talents, manners and general characteristics of both teachers and pupils. Notwithstanding this feature, the institutions place a specific impress indicative of unity in action and influence, on all those who pass through them. So the Protestant Churches may be a true unity in homage and allegiance to Christ, in fealty to a pure gospel, in mutual recognition as children of the same Father, believers in the same Saviour, animated by the same Divine Spirit, the Comforter, and heirs of the same inheritance, while exhibiting variety in their modes of worship, in the forms and even principles of their Church government, and in their views of certain portions of Scripture teaching. The great and absorbing *oneness* in Christ existing among His true disciples and servants, relegates to the region of non-essentials, the point of their diversities.

What then is Unity? The reply is, Oneness in Christ. All are in it who hold