

with and underlying differences, and wholly distinct from uniformity, which could only be gained by the surrender or suppression of these differences. That was a very superficial view, and represented Christian unity, not as a living and spiritual thing, but as a mere dead, outward form of doctrine or polity. It was also a very dangerous view, for it tended to the establishment of ecclesiastical despotism. Christian unity did not require them to undervalue any particular truth, or surrender any denominational principle, or even an individual conviction, if well founded. It merely required that their minds and hearts should be open also to what was common, catholic, and universal, and that they should not allow their denominational differences and individual peculiarities to prevent them from praising and admiring the operations of the spirit of grace through the most dissimilar channels. There might be Christian oneness where there were also differences which no man could rationally account of slight moment. The differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics were of the most serious kind, religiously, morally, and socially; yet obviously the feelings to which St. Bernard gave expression in the hymn, "Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts," and those which Charles Wesley poured forth in the hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul," had their touch in the same holy Spirit, and their object in the same divine Saviour. There was a great distance, and there were many differences, between the Roman Catholic Church and the Free Church of Scotland; but Fenelon and M'Cheyne were one in their spiritual experience; they were ecclesiastically far apart, but would anyone dare to say that they were not one in the Lord Jesus? As a matter of fact, it was not the differences of principle or of opinion between the various denominations which marred their Christian unity, but the evil and angry passions which gathered

round these differences. It was not when one body of men held honestly and firmly the Voluntary principle, and another body the Establishment principle, that Christian unity was broken; but when those who held the one principle insinuated that those who held the other were, in virtue of doing so, ungodly men; when, instead of freely acknowledging what was good in each other, each exaggerated what was good in itself, and depreciated what was good in the other, or even rejoiced in its neighbor's humiliation; and when those who represented them contended by speech or writing in a manner from which a courteous and honest man of the world would recoil, then certainly Christian unity was broken visibly and terribly, for then the Christian spirit itself was altogether absent or grievously feeble. While unity in the Christian faith had naturally led to a doctrinal unity, they must not confound the two things. A man might err very widely in creed and yet have a sincere believing soul. Wherever there was mental activity or intellectual or spiritual life, research was ever advancing; and the first results of advancing research, either into the meaning of God's Book of Nature, or of God's Book of Revelation, were always discordant and unsatisfactory. There were conflicting opinions entertained on many questions regarding heat, light, and electricity; there were rival schools in geology and natural history; there was hardly a subject in mental, moral, or political science about which there was not the greatest possible diversity of opinion. In all these cases, however, the continuance of free research would bring order out of chaos, and harmony out of confusion. But would the perfect order and harmony of nature, he asked, be discovered until science had fully comprehended nature, and there was no room left for further research? It was not otherwise with regard to revelation. They could only have absolute harmony