

but so do the encroachments of superstition—so do the covert *oppositions of science falsely so called*—so do the undisguised attacks of a scornful infidelity—so does the most alarming prevalence of heresy or the most headlong temerity of revolutionary principles. Champions of sound faith and social order are raised up: new efforts are made in the holy cause: truth is brought out with new prominence and power. It does not follow, therefore, that our divisions are good things in themselves, because, in one point of view, they are the cause of good. They are bad things in themselves, and they are the cause, with whatever good to set off against it, of evils over which angels might weep. There are few things, I think, plainer in the word of God than the earnest and solemn deprecation of religious separations—and what the inspired Apostle Paul would say if he were now among us, or how he would treat the notions that religious unity *can consist* with the *creation of distinct communions*, or that the creation of distinct communions amounts to nothing more than that variety of ritual forms which is treated of in our own 34th Article of Religion,—is what it would be worth while seriously and soberly to consider. We have a vast deal to be thankful for, in the age in which we live; but in this point I do think we have much to learn. The tone of religion engendered by the multiplication and rivalry of sects, is apt to be little in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel of Christ. To see, in the prosecution of religious objects and undertakings, the same arts put in play, the same tactics employed, the same baits laid for public attention, the same devices contrived for effect—the same trumpeting and placarding, which characterize the proceedings of the world when a political aim is to be carried, or a commercial speculation is to be recommended, or a new establishment in business, solicits the patronage of the community,—to see a special excitement got up and particular enticements announced to draw a crowd, in ushering in the experiment of a new sect to be planted in any place, or seeking to revive an accidentally drooping interest in some religious party, or possibly to provide the means of relief from some pecuniary embarrassment in a congregation—all this, which is very common everywhere, does not seem to carry the stamp of the Gospel of Christ; and all this is the fruit of the competition of parties in