

SPECULATIVE UNIFORMITY.

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ALL the evils of ecclesiastical division, all that exhibits Christendom to men and angels as a divided and distracted community; maintaining hundreds of hostile and irreconcilable religions under the name of a common Master, all arises from the fact, that men make the essence of Christianity to consist in *speculative* doctrines and not in *moral* ones, and accordingly make the unity of the church to consist in a speculative uniformity which is needless and impossible, and not in the uniform reception of those moral truths which are fully revealed and are not differed about. Each individual Christian or sect sets down a point of meeting, where it is impossible to meet, and makes Christianity consist in meeting there, and feels and acts as if such meeting were essential. There are of course a thousand such points, and hence a real division, and all the jarrings and jealousies and strifes, deadly and interminable, which have so rent and distracted the church, that should be one in the bonds of love and peace. The evil arises not at all from the speculative diversities that do and must prevail, but from men's regarding those diversities as violations of the oneness of Christianity. Neither does the evil consist in what we suppose to be the speculative errors of any system of Christian doctrine, as such; but it arises from the idea that that one system, or any other particular system, is the one indivisible and essential Christianity, and from the dispositions, principles, and measures which necessarily accompany that false idea.