



Variety, the Rule of Grace

ANY persons are greatly disquieted in mind because their experience of conviction or comfort has not been like that of others. They fancy that they cannot have come to Christ aright because they have not felt precisely the same joys or expressions as certain saints of whom they have read. Now, should these good people be so troubled? We think not. Uniformity is not God's rule of working either in nature or in grace. No two human faces display exactly the same lineaments; sons of the same mother, born at the same birth, may be as different as Jacob and Esau. Not even in leagues of forest will two leaves be found in all respects alike. Diversity is the rule of nature, and let us rest assured that variety is the rule of grace.

Mr. Beecher has given us this truth in a very beautiful form in the following lines:—"What if God should command the flowers to appear before him, and the sunflower should come bending low with shame because it was not a violet, and the violet should come striving to lift itself up to be like a sunflower, and the lily should seek to gain the bloom of the rose, and the rose the whiteness of the lily; and so, each one disdainful of itself, should seek to grow into the likeness of the other?" God would say, 'Stop foolish flowers! I gave you your own forms and hues, and odours, and I wish you to bring what you have received. O, sunflower, come as a sunflower; and you sweet violet, come as a violet; let the rose bring the rose's bloom, and the lily the lily's whiteness.' Perceiving their folly, and ceasing to long for what they had not, violet and rose, lily and geranium, mignonette and anemone, and all the floral train would come, each in its own loveliness, to send up its fragrance as incense, and all wreath themselves in a garland of beauty about the throne of God."

Reader, the saints are one in Christ Jesus, but they are not one in their peculiarities. Be we who we may, if we rest on the Redeemer our eternal life is sure; and if not, we are dead while we live. *What is Jesus Christ to me?* that is the main question. If he is my all, then all is well; if not, I may be very like a saint, but a saint I am not.