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A LECTURE

ON THE

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PROTESTANT FAITH.

BY

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DWIGHT H. OLMSTEAD.

New York



NEW-YORK, 1874.

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INTRODUCTION.



THE following lecture, in essentially its present form, was delivered very many years ago, before the Young Men's Christian Union of New-York. The writer, although having been often requested to publish it, has until now refrained from doing so, partly in order that it might be subjected to his more mature judgment, and partly that it might await a more hospitable reception than the religious prejudices of the community have heretofore been likely to accord to it. While aware that at this late day, many of its arguments are no longer new, still, he hopes their presentation as here made, may be of service in promoting a higher form of religion than now obtains, and which he is fully persuaded will at no distant day prevail in the world.

NEW-YORK, September, 1874.

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A LECTURE
ON
THE PROTESTANT FAITH.



I.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION HOW OCCASIONED.

THE sixteenth century ushered in a period of great intellectual activity. The revival of literature, art, and science ; the brilliant maritime discoveries ; the prevailing spirit of controversy and enterprise ; but more especially the introduction of printing, whereby knowledge was disseminated, and made common to more than one nation or generation, had all given a new and remarkable impulse to human thought, distinguishing that as the most important epoch in modern history. As men began to think for themselves, their first protestation, as may well be supposed, was against the restraint

of thought and its authoritative dictation. The fears of the Vicar of Croydon were well nigh realized: "We must root out printing, or printing will "root out us."

It must not be forgotten that for centuries the Roman Church had been the prominent, controlling power of Christendom. She did not spring up in a day, but was "the fruit of a long array of most "learned men, distinguished colleges and councils, "sanctioned by noble martyrs and numerous miracles."

So much was she, for these reasons, lifted above the common crowd, it is not surprising if to them her utterances had early the force of law, and that she, in turn, should count herself infallible.

But not content with being the spiritual head, she aspired to temporal dominion. She demanded tribute from all nations, and arrayed armed legions for her own use; she made and unmade kings; she became the umpire of trade; she dictated laws and treaties. At all Christian courts her legates took precedence, soon assuming to represent that divine right—that supreme authority—by whose sanction alone princes were then, as now, supposed to govern.

To this supremacy she set up the claim of prescription. Had she not for a thousand years stood firm on that rock whereon Christ himself had set her, amid changing empires, the rude assaults of barbarism, and the decisions of hostile councils? Had not her edicts become the recognized theology of the greater part of the civilized world? How could she be in error who could point to a history like this?

At length her prestige began to decline; and while that result was in no small degree due to the corruptions of the priesthood, its main cause is to be found in that growing mental enfranchisement ever since peculiarly characteristic of the Protestant nations, imparting to them a superior energy and intelligence, derived, as has been most truly said, "not from the creeds they hold, but from the "private liberty which accompanies these creeds."*

Never before had the traditional pretensions and policy of the Church been so seriously and persistently questioned, nor ever before had so large a proportion of the Christian world presumed to assert any thing contrary to her canons. But now the boldness of a few learned men at first, and

* Westminster Review, Jan. 1858.

afterwards of the people at large, began to shake her authority.

It was not that men had the right to think, but the undeniable, patent fact, that they did think, and could not help thinking and having intelligent opinions of their own, which gave point to the struggle.

Thus arose that great conflict between Authority, so called, and Opinion—between the authority of the Pope and the opinions of the educated classes ; between the authority of councils and the individual judgment. And it need scarcely be said that the contest, although in the most enlightened countries somewhat in favor of the individual, is not concluded even to this day.

II.

THE INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER OF THE REFORMATION.

The Lutheran reformation, which had, in reality, been impending from the time of Wyckliffe, was an intellectual rather than a religious movement. From it nothing has been gained directly for religion ; nothing, except what has resulted from

independence of thought, free speech, and the present heterogeneous character of the Christian world—for even this last is progress.

It was not wholly a failure; since, whatever may have been the theological errors of Luther, (and grave errors they were,) it cannot be denied that in the history of the present wide and fundamental variance between the hereditary assumptions of the Church and common sense, he was among the first who opened the gate of free inquiry, disenthralled men from a blind, unreasonable subservience to priestly rule, and directed them to the partial liberty they have since enjoyed.

III.

FREE INQUIRY AGAINST AUTHORITY.

That this was the occasion and essential feature of the Reformation, an assertion of the right, or rather the recognition of the necessity of private judgment and interpretation, as opposed to the authority and dictation of the Church, it will not be difficult to show from the writings and disputations of Luther himself.

“Retract,” said the Pope’s legate to him at

Augsburg. "Retract! acknowledge thy error, whether thou believest it an error or not! The Pope commands thee to do this." *

"Convince me," replied Luther.

One of the conditions imposed upon Luther was "that he should not circulate any opinions at variance with the authority of the Church."

"Do you not know," said the cardinal to him, "that the Pope is above all councils?"

But "from the Pope ill informed," Luther appeals "to the Pope better informed."

He also afterwards declared, "In what concerns the word of God and the faith, every Christian is as good a judge for himself as the Pope can be for him." †

This conflict between the authority of the Church and private opinion, between the assumption of infallibility and the protest against it, was nowhere more marked than at the Diet at Worms, whereof we have Luther's own account.

Said the Emperor's orator to him, "Martin, you have assumed a tone which becomes not a man of your condition. . . . You have resuscitated dogmas which have been distinctly

* Michelet, *Life of Luther*, p. 50.

† *Ibid.* pp. 94, 95.

“condemned by the Council of Constance, and
“you demand to be convicted thereupon out of
“the Scriptures. But if every one were at liberty
“to bring back into discussion points which for
“ages have been settled by the Church and by
“Councils, nothing would be certain and fixed—
“doctrine or dogma—and there would be no belief
“which men must adhere to under pain of eternal
“damnation. You, for instance, who to-day reject
“the authority of the Council of Constance, to-mor-
“row may, in like manner, proscribe all councils
“together, and next, the Fathers and the Doctors ;
“and there would remain no authority whatever
“but that individual word, which we call to wit-
“ness, and which you also invoke.”*

But Luther “could only repeat what he had al-
“ready declared : that unless they proved to him by
“irresistible arguments that he was in the wrong,
“he would not go back a single inch ; that what the
“councils had laid down was no article of faith ; that
“councils had often erred, had often contradicted
“each other, and that their testimony consequently
“was not convincing.” †

Further, while resisting the authority of the

* Michelet, *Life of Luther*, p. 90.

† *Ibid.* p. 89.

Church, Luther, at the same time, claimed for his own opinions the weight of authority, binding not alone upon himself, but upon all the world beside.

When the Zwinglians inquired of him what would effect a reconciliation between them, he answered, "Let our adversaries believe as we do."

"We cannot," responded the Swiss.

"Well then," replied Luther, "I abandon you to God's judgment." *

Robertson, in his history of Charles the Fifth, makes this deserved remark. "Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Knox, the founders of the reformed church in their respective countries, inflicted so far as they had the power and opportunity, the same punishments which were demanded against their own disciples by the Church of Rome, on such as called in question any article of their creeds."

"God" (said Knox) "raiseth them up to slay those whom the Kirk hateth." †

* Merle d'Aubigné, *Hist. Ref.* vol. IV. p. 99.

† Attributed to John Knox by James Grant, in his novel "Bothwell, or the Days of Mary Queen of Scots."

IV.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Let us now examine the peculiar but pernicious tenet of "justification by faith," which Luther advanced, and which is, to this day, the key-note of Protestant theology. That doctrine was thus declared by the regulations published by Joachim in 1539:

"That we obtain the remission of sins, justification, and final and eternal salvation by the mere grace of God, and only through faith in the redemption of Christ, and by no worthiness, work, or desert of our own."

From time immemorial the Roman Catholic Church had held that the performance of duty lay in some act, rather than in a belief, although she seems never to have precisely determined the quality essential to salvation. She imposed the condition of meritorious deeds, and buried her devotees in the cloister with fasting and penance, or sent them forth to administer to human needs, or perchance to perish in battle before the walls of infidel cities. Indeed, so much of real heroism and warlike renown was associated and intertwined

with this theology of works, that for her to give it up was to surrender and make secular the splendid history of centuries.

Luther, disgusted with the traffic in indulgences, the gross impositions and abandoned habits of the priesthood ; unable to reconcile their practices with their professions, or the canons of the Church with either ; and being, if not more spiritual, at least more honest or more bold than they, undertook to interpret the Bible for himself, according to his unquestionable right so to do. But in that interpretation he perpetuated these two most fatal errors : First, the assumed importance of endeavoring to save the soul, whether by faith or works ; and second, that immunity from moral punishment is secured by some belief.

To these same errors, common to, and the essential features of most if not all prevailing religious systems, let us briefly direct our attention. I shall endeavor to show :

I. *That the avoidance of moral consequences being wholly utilitarian, can be no incentive to the performance of duty ; and that an act performed with any reference to a personal benefit, is just to that extent without merit.*

II. *That belief is not subject to the will, but is involuntary, and is therefore not blameworthy:*

The importance and bearing of the investigation is obvious. For, if a personal wish and effort for salvation be not an act of duty, under a strict definition of that term, and an involuntary belief be not able of itself to effect that salvation, then it follows as a matter of course, that the inquiry common to most Christians as well as heathen, "What shall we do to be saved?" as also their answers, that salvation comes by "belief," can find no place in a correct system of moral science.

V.

WHAT LUTHER AND THE REFORMERS MEANT BY "FAITH."

Before proceeding directly to the consideration of these topics, it is proper to observe that Luther and the reformers meant by the word "faith," ("The just shall live by faith,")* not a trust, a hope, a confidence, a reliance, an assurance, a sentiment, or the like, as suggested by some persons who have anticipated the arguments I shall urge, but simple

* Galatians, iii. 11.

intellectual belief or mental assent, in its plainest acceptation. As this may be deemed a matter of consequence, let us at the outset dispose of it.

The historian, Merle d'Aubigné, informs us that Luther, Melanchthon, Agricola, Brientz, Justus Jonas, and Osiander, "being convinced that their peculiar doctrine on the Eucharist was essential to salvation, they considered all those who rejected it, as without the pale of the faith."

"But that *faith* (which makes us Christians), declares Luther, "consists in the *firm belief* that "Jesus is the Son of God."

He also says, "A man's sins are not pardoned unless he *believes* that they are pardoned when the priest pronounces absolution." And again, "I have affirmed," says Luther, "that no man can be justified before God except by *faith*; so that it is necessary that a man should *believe* with perfect confidence that he has received pardon. "To doubt of this grace is to reject it."*

Merle d'Aubigné tells us that "Luther expressed astonishment that the Swiss divines could look upon him as a Christian brother when they did not *believe* his doctrines to be true."†

* See also Merle d'Aubigné, Hist. Ref. Vol. II. p. 111.

† See Appendix. Note 1.

Zwingle also says : " In every nation whosoever "*believes* with all his heart in the Lord Jesus, is " accepted of God. Here truly is the Church, out " of which no one can be saved."

The 44th and last article of the Athanasian creed, as found in modern English Prayer Books, and which is to this day made a test of church membership, is in these words : " This is the *Catholic Faith*, " which, except a man *believe faithfully*, he cannot " be saved."

Take away the creeds from the churches, and what remains to distinguish them either as religious organizations or from each other? The " essential " creeds are certainly the bond of the " evangelical " churches. Indeed, the difference between the most conservative and progressive sects of the present day—between Episcopalians, Universalists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Unitarians, and all other denominations—is marked solely and entirely by differences of opinion. That is what really keeps them apart, and not any principle, nor their forms of worship. So, however faith in the abstract may be defined, it is a matter of little moment, since the actual fact appears to be, that diversities of opinion, or simple

intellectual beliefs, and not sentimentalities, or emotions, or purposes divide religious bodies.

If the word "faith" had come to have a different signification from what it possessed at the time of the Reformation (which it has not), it would only prove that Luther and Calvin were not the fathers of modern theology.

It might be shown, if necessary, that nothing can be further from our volition than an engendered trust, or confidence, or even feeling, or any of those mental states proposed to be substituted for plain belief. But such a discussion would be foreign to the present purpose.

VI.

THE RELATION BETWEEN MORAL OBLIGATION AND MORAL CONSEQUENCES.

Having thus shown that the Protestant "faith" means practically the Protestant "belief," both as understood by the reformers, and by modern acceptance, I proceed to discuss the first topic, namely: *the unfitness of an appeal to the sentiment of fear in producing religious emotion.*

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" is the

caption of an article in the "Family Christian Almanac," published by the American Tract Society. Here follows the answer. "What must I do? By the grace of God, and according to His truth, I will tell you. You must admit and feel that you are a sinner, guilty, polluted, condemned, lost, and so dead in sins as to be in need of eternal life." "You must believe that He is the Saviour, the only Saviour, able to save to the uttermost; willing to save all that will come to Him; ready and willing to save you, and to save you now;" and much more to the same effect.

Whatever may be the views and refinements of the more educated members of the "orthodox" churches, it is fair to presume that the foregoing quotation fairly expresses the sum total of the formal religion of the majority of them; that with them the object of religion is to save the soul, and to save it by a certain prescribed belief.

A prominent Presbyterian clergyman of Brooklyn, in a published discourse, remarks: "Here is the fatal barrier that lies between their souls and Heaven—unbelief." "Unbelief excludes a sinner from the rest of Heaven. It is

“man’s crowning sin.” “The fatal chasm that separates the soul from its rest, has been not an immoral life, not a severe and angry God, not a violated law, but unbelief—simple unbelief—a heartless, wilful, determined unbelief.”*

The conclusions hereafter arrived at, as to the involuntary character of beliefs and opinions sufficiently refute such theology; but there are other objections to it.

Taking the term “salvation” in the strictly orthodox and popular sense, namely, as the remission of a deserved penalty, as an immunity, temporal or eternal, from bodily or spiritual suffering, what, it may be asked—judged by a moral standard—is the relation between the salvation of the human family hereafter, and their right conduct here? The ideas of right, wrong, duty, moral obligation, have no necessary connection with the notion of rewards and punishments. The sentiment of duty is wholly removed from that of recompense. “Duty is not measured by reward.”† The end of man’s moral nature is virtue, not hap-

* “The Promise Unrealized,” by Rev. J. E. Rockwell, D.D. Published Sept. 1859.

† Cousin, *Hist. Mod. Phil.* Vol. II. p. 285.

piness. The punishment of self-disapproval—of conscience—is undoubtedly consequent on wrong doing, either in its earlier or later stages; but it would be equally wrong doing, whether followed by punishment or not. As virtue is in the abstract independent of its rewards, so is sin of its penalties.

Looking at it in the “orthodox” view, (which is not admitted to be the correct one,) namely, that under the doctrine of free grace the accountability occasioned by sin is but a mere liability to account, the punishment is not certain, even though the law be broken.

What if we err about the fact of our punishment, will that change either the fact itself, or the obligations imposed upon us?

Even were our beliefs voluntary, could it, in a moral aspect, be of any possible avail to us to know the conditions of either our present or future existence? for we live subject to a moral law, whether aware of it or not.

“It seems enough for us,” as Benjamin Franklin said, “that the soul will be treated with justice in “another life respecting its conduct in this.”

Whether mankind are to meet their deserts here

or hereafter, or what may be their just deserts, is one thing; but it is quite another how far the performance of one's duty is to be affected by a solution of the question.

We are enjoined by orthodox theology to attend to the salvation of our souls. But why should we? The sense of duty is an authoritative consciousness, imperatively imposed, a voice as of God within us, carrying its own sanction, and must be obeyed, like any other law, for its own sake, because to each of us it evidently and undeniably commands what is right.

Self-approval and disapproval—which are the monitions of conscience—moral sentinels, so to speak, having the same relation to the spiritual well-being as pain has to the bodily—simply point to the rule of right, and are its accidents, but do not afford the reason of it. An action may seem to tend to desirable results, yet there can be no personal virtue in its performance unless it is performed from a sense of duty alone; and, whoever acts for the sake of recompense, (as he must who makes the recompense a motive,) is just to that extent not virtuous; because the very idea of a virtuous act, as recognized in the mind, is that it is

something to be performed wholly regardless of consequences.

Virtue is disinterested, is superior to self and disregards it. If it does not disregard expediency as an end, then it is not virtue. Nay, it contains the idea of sacrifice.

Again, as before remarked, a just law vindicates itself—bears its own sanction—and the obligation to obey it does not proceed from the personal consequences of its infraction, however lamentable they may be, but from its evident justness and fitness. “Right is not right because God wills it to be right, but from its own reasonableness;” otherwise God would be a tyrant. I ought to do a certain thing, or follow a certain course of action, because it seems to me that I ought; because *I*, (*Ego*, myself) *being the sole ultimate authority*, believe it to be right. Can argument add any strength to that affirmation? Would not the denial of it be to deny what at the same time I myself affirmed? Conscience therefore is not so much an instinct, as a declaration of the person himself in respect to those things which ought to be done or to be left undone; and that affirmation being undeniable by the individual himself, is on that account conclusive on him.

The theology which looks to the mere salvation of the soul, whether from punishment, or from sin itself, can be defended neither on principle, nor—paradoxical as it may seem—on the plea of expediency; certainly not, if he be the happiest who is the most virtuous.

Take a practical illustration: Is a child really better, or more virtuous, because he has refrained from doing an interdicted thing for fear of the punishment which awaited him? and would he grow up under such a course of training a better man? Assuredly not; for his whole aim then, would be simply and entirely to enjoy as much, and suffer as little, as possible. He might, through this continual fear of punishment, form an exterior habit of right conduct, of outward morality, which would pass him reputably through life. But would he be inwardly and really a better man? Assuredly not; and it needs only an adequate temptation to break that habit, and disprove the false philosophy in which he had been reared. We see it every day. But let the child be sound at the core, at the heart, without regard to what is external—to the husks of a base expediency; let him be taught to follow, unfettered by theological sys-

tems, the dictates of his conscience, and obey the divine mandate within him, and then what end shall there be to his noble aspirations! He will be prepared to enter—aye, will actually have already entered on immortal life.

Alas, that so many pure natures should have struggled and sorrowed under so much ignorance and superstition in endeavoring to reconcile their own inward promptings with the so-called inspired, but really most unreasonable faith, said to have been “once delivered to the saints!”

VII.

THE NATURE OF BELIEFS AND OPINIONS.

I now pass to the consideration of the second main proposition, viz. : that *all belief is involuntary*, and is that which, of our own will, we can neither choose, change, nor control. It is therefore not blameworthy.

This position is not new, having received the sanction of some of the best minds in every age.

Concerning the followers of the once famous Duns Scotus, Sir James Mackintosh says : “The

“Scotists affirmed the blamelessness of erroneous
“opinions ; a principle which is the only effectual
“security for conscientious enquiry, for mutual
“kindness and for public quiet.”*

Mackintosh also declares : “It is as absurd
“to entertain an abhorrence of intellectual inferior-
“ity or error, however extensive or mischievous, as
“it would be to cherish a warm indignation against
“earthquakes or hurricanes.” †

Other writers are equally to the point. A very
old one says : “We know that faith comes by per-
“suasion, and is not to be controuled.” ‡

Another, still older, and of high authority in
the Church, says : “Religion by compulsion is no
“longer religion ; it must be by persuasion, and
“not by constraint. Religion is under no control,
“and cannot by power be directed.”§

Citations from more modern philosophers and
thinkers might be added without number. A few
will suffice : “Our will hath no power to determine
“the knowledge of the mind one way or the other.
“No more than in objects of sight it depends on
“the will to see that black which appears to be yel-

* Eth. Phil. Vol. I. p. 46.

† Eth. Phil. Vol. I. p. 150.

‡ Fléchier, Bishop of Nismes, Lett. 10.

§ Lactantius, B. 3.

“low, or in feeling to persuade ourselves that what
“scalds us feels cold.” *

“It does not depend on man to believe or not to
“believe.” †

“It is not in our power to judge as we will.” ‡

“In total and absolute error all consciousness
“perishes.” §

“Thought and belief have not yet become
choice.” ||

“Our opinions on any subject are not voluntary
“acts but involuntary effects.” ¶

“Belief is not an act of volition.” **

“He [man] is impelled by the very constitution
“of his nature, to believe if there is evidence ; and,
“on the other hand, he is utterly unable to believe
“if evidence is wanting.” ††

“Philosophical belief is a spontaneous assent or
“adhesion of the mind.” ‡‡

“Be not deceived ; belief of, or mere assent to

* Locke, “Essay on the Human Understanding,” Vol. II. Chap. 13.

† Locke, Letter on Toleration.

‡ Reid, Essay on the Intellectual Powers, p. 545.

§ Cousin, Hist. Mod. Phil. p. 136.

|| Hickok, Moral Phil. p. 212.

¶ Samuel Bailey, Essays on Opinions and Truth.

** Percy Bysshe Shelley.

†† Upham, Treatise on the Will, p. 92.

‡‡ Sir William Hamilton, Philosophy, p. 158.

“ the truth of propositions upon evidence is not a
 “ virtue, nor unbelief a vice ; faith is not a volun-
 “ tary act, it does not depend upon the will ; every
 “ man must believe or disbelieve, whether he will
 “ or not, according as evidence appears to him. If
 “ therefore men however dignified or distinguished
 “ command us to believe, they are guilty of the
 “ highest folly and absurdity, because it is out of
 “ our power ; but if they command us to believe,
 “ and annex rewards to belief, and severe penalties
 “ to unbelief, then they are most wicked and im-
 “ moral, because they annex rewards and punish-
 “ ments to what is involuntary, and therefore nei-
 “ ther rewardable or punishable.” *

These conclusions appear to be fully warranted for the following reasons :

First : If belief be voluntary, why should there be any doubt, or uncertainty, or degrees of probability in the world ? It is plain that were belief consequent upon the will, there need be no such thing as doubt ; for then one would only *will* to have any belief in order to possess it.

Let one reflect whether he can change or choose his belief at pleasure ; he will find he cannot, and

* Letter of William Pitt.

that it is beyond his power, even with a dishonest or evil purpose, to believe for the time otherwise than he does. It is true that he may and must, from time to time, change his belief as new evidence is presented to him, or as he more carefully considers that already before him ; but for the time being he cannot, if he would, believe otherwise than he does.

Second : Belief is simply the result of thought ; it is a mental state or condition. Its primary signification is to *assent to* *. Hence it depends wholly upon evidence ; and in the very same ratio as the evidence appeals to our consciousness for its reception, so is our belief. Thus we speak of “ full,” “ firm,” and “ strong” belief—belief which we call knowledge—belief which admits of doubt—and various degrees of probability. We may repel the evidence, but over the belief consequent upon that evidence, are powerless.

Third : It will be seen, on reflection, that one cannot rationally retain a belief which his judgment repudiates. Therefore, one cannot rationally admit his present beliefs to be erroneous ; for just as soon as he thinks that they are erroneous, they cease to be his beliefs ; and since he can-

* Webster.

not consciously err in his beliefs, his erroneous beliefs are involuntary.

From which it follows, that what in me is, for the time, error, does not receive that name from any judgment of mine, but from the judgment of others ; and whosoever avers that I err in opinion, assumes all the points in discussion between us ; he substantially denies to me what he claims for himself, namely, authority to pass upon the question.

Whence it also appears that error is ignorance ; an idea well expressed by Cousin : “In total and absolute error all consciousness perishes.”

Fourth : Belief is not volition nor anything like it ; it has no more necessary connection with the will than the idea of number has with the idea of justice.

The expression, “I believe,” is conventional, and is used in the same manner as we say I “feel,” or “hear” or “see” or “am.” That is, the *I*, the *Ego*, the *personality*, takes cognizance of some impression on the mind or sense, observes some phenomenon, or appearance, and passes upon it authoritatively. The will appertains to the personality, but not to the judgment ; and while objects of

thought, or phenomena, may, through the exercise of the will, or regardless of the will, be presented to the judgment, the conclusion of the judgment itself, or, what is the same thing, the authoritative, conclusive, subjective assertion of the *Ego* in respect to such phenomena, is involuntary.

We can direct our attention and investigate ; but the results of that investigation—our conclusions—will stand before us regardless of our wishes or intentions in the matter.

Abercrombie admits that “the state of mind which constitutes belief is, indeed, one over which the will has no direct power. But,” he goes on to say, “belief depends upon evidence ; the result of even the best evidence is entirely dependent on attention ; and attention is a voluntary intellectual state over which we have a direct and absolute control.” *

Dr. Chalmers states the case thus :

“Lord Byron’s assertion that ‘Man is not responsible for his belief,’ seems to have proceeded from the imagination that belief is in no case voluntary. Now, it is very true that we are only responsible for what is voluntary, and it is also

* Moral Feelings, p. 182.

“true that we cannot believe without evidence.
 “But then it is a very possible thing that a doctrine
 } “may possess the most abundant evidence, and yet
 “not be believed, just because we choose to shut
 “our eyes against it ; and our unbelief in this case
 “is owing not to the want of evidence, but to the
 “evidence not being attended to. Grant that be-
 “lief is not a voluntary act—it is quite enough for
 “the refutation of Lord Byron’s principle, if *atten-*
 “*tion* be a voluntary act. One attends to a subject
 “because he chooses ; or he does not attend to it
 “because he so chooses. It is the fact of the at-
 “tention being given or withheld, which forms the
 “thing that is to be morally reckoned with. And
 “if the attention has been withheld when it ought
 “to have been given, for this we are the subjects
 “of a rightful condemnation.”

I admit attention to be a voluntary act ; but,
 while insisting, for reasons hereafter explained, that
 it is not one’s duty even to investigate a subject
 unless he thinks it to be his duty to do so, it is evi-
 dent that Dr. Chalmers has not met the question.
 He would instruct us that because a man has pow-
 er over his will, he can therefore control his senses ;
 because he can thrust his finger into the fire or

withhold it, it is optional with him to be free from pain ; because he has the ability to reason or not, that is, to direct his attention, he need not come to any conclusion ; because he can think when he chooses, he can believe as he chooses. Of course a clear statement of the proposition carries its own refutation.

It is said that because belief depends upon attention to the evidence offered, and attention depends upon the will, I am therefore, in a secondary sense, accountable for the belief, because accountable for my voluntary disposition. Because not strictly correct, the statement is not correct at all. It is plain that while I can fix my attention, and look, I cannot tell beforehand whether the color will be white or black ; and it is equally plain that while the attention is voluntary and controlled by the will, the belief or conclusion following the attention, is not at all voluntary. And if the belief be not voluntary, then Byron's assertion that " Man is " not responsible for his belief" is unquestionably correct ; and it does not suffice for the refutation of that statement to show the act of attention to be voluntary.

For our voluntary dispositions, for the attention,

as the legitimate act of the person, it is said that we are accountable. Be it so ; but the argument can go no further than that.

While the will may, and does, direct the attention, it has no power over the belief, which results independently of the volition, and independently of the attention also. The utmost attention by different persons does not ensure the same belief, and precisely the same evidence is not always regarded by different persons alike ; nor does it invariably lead in different minds to the same conclusion. Nay more, the very same evidence, presented at different times to the same mind does not always lead to the same conclusion ; but in neither case is the conclusion a matter of will.

Had Abercrombie and Chalmers reflected a moment, they must have seen the manifest difference between attention as an act of the will, and belief as the result of that attention ; the one being voluntary, the other involuntary.

A man who shutting his eyes fires into the street and kills another, is not punished for killing the identical person who happens to be hit, but for the antecedent intention and purpose of his mind. True, he is not punished as for murder, if no one

be injured, because human laws take cognizance of overt acts merely, of the intention only when it is accompanied by a result ; but in a moral aspect, the purpose alone is considered, as appears from the circumstance that where the purpose is shown to be wanting, no crime can be imputed.

The voluntary disposition of the person determines the quality of his moral actions, occasions the sense of approval and disapproval, and renders him deserving of praise or blame. This the child, as soon as he is able to reflect, the man, and every body knows.

I therefore conclude that, strictly and hence correctly speaking, all belief—and, of course, all erroneous belief—is in itself wholly involuntary ; and for that reason no one should be censured for his belief or disbelief upon any subject however sacred or profane, whether such belief be thought by others to be erroneous or not, or even pernicious.

This point, if well taken, it cannot be denied, strikes at the very existence of the churches, and is fatal to their present form of organization. For, were they to retain all persons of right intentions and pure dispositions, and reject all others—

taking members for what they are, that is for their characters and motives rather than for their doctrines—or for what they say are their doctrines—would not the complexion of the churches be materially changed?

Right intentions do not, as has been seen, necessarily or often ensure the same beliefs. How those intentions are to be arrived at, (since the creeds do not determine them,) whether by the assertion of the individual himself, (for he may tell an untruth,) or by the judgment of his fellow communicants, (for they may be deceived,) it is difficult to say. I leave the solution of this hard problem to the churches themselves.

The idea that men are accountable for their beliefs and opinions in a secondary, but strictly incorrect and most unphilosophical sense, rather than for conscientious action—making creed rather than character the criterion of morality—although it seems at first a trifling and unimportant distinction, has been and is now a gross theological and metaphysical error—the most gross and vital in its effects of any recorded by history; having needlessly excited the animosity of one class or sect against another—of the civilized against the barbarous—of

the Jew against the Gentile—of the Protestant against the Catholic. It has occasioned terrible devastating wars ; the annulling of private friendships and public comities ; and has inflicted incalculable evils upon the whole human race.

I am aware where I stand. I stand on a platform which holds sectarianism, in its exclusive form, to be both irreligious and unphilosophical, and all wars of sects unholy ; which throws down the barriers between “ evangelical ” and “ unevangelical ” denominations, and renders meaningless those terms as now applied ; and which summons all men—Christians and Pagans—from unseemly contentions to obedience to the high rule of tolerance and charity.

I think I have fully demonstrated the two propositions with which I set out ; namely : that salvation is not a proper incentive to the performance of duty ; and that belief is involuntary.

In no sense did this so-called scheme of redemption—salvation through faith or belief, (“ the just shall live by faith, ”)—as understood by Luther and his followers, contain the solution of any religious question. It did not differ in kind from the theology of the Roman Church. To Luther’s assertion

of the necessity of free thought, and the right of free speech, together with the revival of letters, must be attributed the great uprising of his age ; and it is not too much to say that Protestants, in embracing and giving such prominence to religious tenets—especially the error of adopting creeds as a test of membership in their churches—have failed to comprehend their own history, and totally lost sight of the principle of personal authority and individual judgment, which is the foundation and root of every protestation they have ever uttered.

VIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It must not be supposed that because any particular beliefs are unessential to a religious life, or because beliefs and opinions are involuntary, they are thence unimportant. So far as the performance of one's own duty goes, belief is indeed of no consequence ; because duty does not consist in believing. But doubtless the happiness and well-being of mankind depend very much upon the opinions which they hold ; since men will act more or less in accordance with their opinions and beliefs, whether

well founded or not. For example, public sentiment respecting drunkenness, slavery, and very many questions affecting the social relations, has within a few years undergone a marked change; and thus have arisen in men's minds new ideas of their rights and duties as to those relations; and all honest men will act in accordance with their new beliefs.

The churches have always deemed themselves obliged to conform to the current notions of right and wrong, of virtue and vice, and have disciplined their members accordingly. A church member is now expelled for drunkenness when he would not have been a century ago.

The churches practically cannot live on their faith alone. The faith is not enough. The conduct according to the professed faith is and must be a necessary test in addition to the formal creeds.

I am no iconoclast. I am willing that the churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples of all peoples and climes, should stand just where they are until better ones can be built upon their sites; I admit the fact of numberless religions in the world, and do not forget the multitude of Christian

sects ;* I recognize the sanction of martyrdom for every faith, right or wrong. I recognize alike the great moral points of agreement between Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, and the minor theoretical divergences between them all. In a word, I recognize the voice of conscience, every where and among all men. And while mindful of these things, I insist that others shall not ignore them.

Let the sectarian, whoever he may be, place his own church or his own sect alongside these facts of history, and tell us, if he can, what is the religious element common to all religious organizations ; what is the law of duty that applies to man universally.

That such a law or principle exists—a law which shall solve the riddle of the broad church—precisely define the terms “virtue” and “moral obligation”—assign to moralities their exact place in ethics, and at the same time satisfactorily account for the different religious phases of the world, is, and always has been, the great, central idea of theology. For without such a law there is no one religion for the race.

* See Appendix. Note 2.

The lawgiver and religious instructor, of whatever creed or nation, proceed upon the assumption of one universal moral law. Upon it are founded our ideas of justice, of virtue, and the equal accountability of mankind.

“All nations have in truth only one religion,” says Bucer.

“Such a rule” (says Hickok) “must be apprehended by the subject, and thus promulgated to the conscience, and must be so universal that it may come home in its convictions to the consciences of the race, otherwise there can be no valid ground for a comprehensive science of morals.” *

This law existed in the human mind anterior to the Christian revelation ; nay, it must exist apart from any outward revelation.

Sir James Mackintosh remarks : “If there were no foundation for morality antecedent to revealed religion, we should want that important test of the conformity of a revelation to pure morality by which its claim to a divine origin is to be tried.” †

The law is within the individual as a primary, axiomatic, universal intuition. A law not always

* Moral Philosophy, p. 32.

† Eth. Phil. p. 155.

nor often perhaps, objectively apprehended ; but this is immaterial, since the deductions and analogies of science continually remind us that we live under and are subject to innumerable laws of which we have no conception. Says Cicero : “ The same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common Master and Governor of all.”

What, then, is this rule—this religious law ?

I know of no other than the simple law of nature that *conviction is the criterion of duty*.

St. Paul said : “ To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” *

And Christ : “ If ye were blind ye should have no sin ; but now ye say, we see ; therefore your sin remaineth.” †

The followers of Zwingle said (rather inconsistently with their creed) : “ What is not faith is sin. If therefore we constrain Christians to do what they deem unjust we force them to sin.” ‡

Luther himself declared at the Diet of Worms : “ It is neither just nor innocent to act against a man’s conscience.” §

* Rom. xiv. 14.

† John ix. 41.

‡ Merle d’Aubigné, Hist. Ref. Vol. IV. p. 73.

§ John Scott, Luther and the Lutheran Reformation, Vol. I. p. 133.

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher is reported to have said that, "Sound doctrine is truth, purity, love, good works ; and bad living is heresy in the New Testament. Nay," he adds, "I go further and say, that nowhere in the New Testament can the term heresy be found applied to any error of belief, but only to error of life."

No nobler thought was ever uttered than that attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "To do the right as God gives me to see the right."

From the recognition of this common authoritative consciousness, which declares the performance of duty to consist in no seeking for a personal benefit, and in no belief, but simply in the effort to live conformably to one's beliefs, however for the time they happen to be ; true to one's self, honestly and without hypocrisy, making Christianity, (or by whatever name it may be known,) as Coleridge has it, "not a theory, or a speculation, but a life—not the philosophy of life, but a life and a living process," will arise the New Church, (if a Church be possible,) the coming Reformation.

Has it not already begun ?

I can only advert to it, but it would be easy to demonstrate how the present various religious

movements are vindicating my conclusions, not merely in an occasional manner, but in their whole tendency; how free thought, liberal sentiments, and the multiplying diversities of opinion consequent upon an increasing intelligence, are producing those mental and social conditions which will ere long render it impossible to hold any body of men together by what are called "essential truths." Instead of vainly striving for a unity of belief, it will be seen that civilization advances in the precise ratio of the multiplication of beliefs.* The human intellect will then be truly free.

Bound to no assumed facts or asserted authoritative data, the lover of science will pursue his investigations without fear of discrediting the statements of the Bible; and the theologian will find something better to do than wasting his time in childish disputes respecting the construction, interpretation, and truth of that book.

Such beliefs and opinions as do not affect the well-being of mankind will be deemed of little account, and efforts tending to elevate humanity will

* In this respect I cannot agree with John Stuart Mill, who says, that "As mankind improve, the number of doctrines which are no longer disputed or doubted, will be constantly on the increase." (*Essay on Liberty.*)

soon, in one form or another, take the place of liturgy and creed.

But I charge evangelical clergymen with inconsistency. Without committing myself to the "higher law" doctrine, as they understand it,* I desire to inquire whether the recognition of that doctrine by them, (and it is quite general,) detracts nothing from the force of the Thirty-Nine Articles? Are we to be told, and to believe because so told, that right and wrong are really relative ideas—that conviction of duty is the only guide to its performance, and, in the same breath, that there is some other guide? Shall we accept the higher law of moral obligation, and with it the lower rule of the Church? Shall we declare for free-will, for a conscious moral volition, and be bound down to a belief to which our understanding refuses its assent?

The intelligence of the masses has already risen to the level of these questions, and is demonstrating how a people will be provided with that religion, as well as political life, for which they are fitted.

The clergy, orthodox and heterodox, conceding

* See Appendix. Note 3.

something to the popular sentiment, have pretty much left off talking about the creed, except for church and state purposes, and tell us now that faith is not bare belief ; but hope, trust, enthusiasm, sentiment ; a matter of the heart, love of God, love of mankind ; a living faith ; a state of mind which, according to Aquinas, leads to belief—almost any thing and every thing except belief ; that religion has passed historically from belief into feeling, and from feeling into action—into good works, charitable objects, and the like, wherein all can be agreed.

Do they really think so? Is there a Church which will accept, as its condition of membership, the definition which St. James gives of religion : “ Pure religion and undefiled, before God, even the “ Father, is this : To visit the fatherless and the “ widows in their affliction, so as to keep oneself “ unspotted from the world ” ? *

Can you, O most moral, philanthropic, conscientious man, connect yourself with their body? Try it. Are you excluded by no want of faith, by no heretical doctrine? Their churches and Christian associations, founded in the eternal fitness of things,

* James i. 27. Our common version does not quite hit the meaning of the original. It is here translated as it should be rendered.

are not conventional bodies, with arbitrary rules, but claim to be holy catholic churches, and evangelical associations, with broad aisles and open doors. To the communion of those churches are invited every tongue and tribe upon the habitable globe, and vast expenditures for tracts and missionaries attest how sincere and urgent is the invitation. But the poor heathen scarcely approaches the door of the sanctuary before he discovers some stumbling-block in the shape of a "creed," which he is enjoined to believe, but which he soon learns that Christians themselves do not fully understand, and about the meaning and interpretation of which few of them are agreed.

Is it to be wondered at that the heathen and uncultivated remain unconverted to propositions which even the most enlightened and cultivated fail to comprehend?*

The pagan is told that the Bible is an authority. But how, *as a bare authority*, is it preferable to the Vedas? For the authority is not in the Bible itself, nor in those who wrote it, but in him who reads it and passes upon it. As an authority *per se*, admitting of no question or comment, (and if

* See Appendix. Note 4.

authoritative it cannot be questioned,) it can have no greater force than any other book.

I concede to the Bible all the weight to which it is entitled in the light of my own judgment. No other test is possible by me than that.

Religion, in its noblest, broadest acceptation, recognizes no ultimate authority foreign to the person himself. It defines no peculiar belief or creed which is orthodox to-day and heterodox to-morrow. The aspirations of the Christian Church toward its highest ideals, regardless of creeds, account sufficiently for its past successes. It has an aspect apart from its speculative theology.

With increasing intelligence and a higher moral culture, has come a juster sense of mutual relations and responsibilities ; and the conformity of men to those ideas in any age, measures in history the Christianity as well as civilization of that period.*

Certain Churches have attempted to evade the question of the essential character of beliefs by putting articles of faith to vote, and then promulgating them as a mere statement of the belief of the members, as their "average sentiment," without imposing them upon the individual conscience.

* See Appendix. Note 5.

But it must be perfectly evident that so soon as a Church relinquishes the essential character of its creeds, and simply holds itself out as a body of men professing a common faith, it has lost its claim to be called a Church, in any received acceptance of the term, and admits itself to be without ecclesiastical authority.

The religious spirit of our age, advancing in the direction we have been pursuing, seeks something better than the restoration of a belief—even of one universal belief—or of a spiritual unity. It demands the statement of a rational principle which logically deduces morality from the sense of moral obligation ; to faith adds works ; justifies all truly good men, of whatever creed or race, who have ever lived ; and, throwing open the door for investigation, finds use for the material already acquired in the march of general improvement. Especially does it aim to abate the rancor of sectarianism, by uniting in closer bonds the human family. To this end the material and commercial interests of the world are rapidly converging. To this end science is also tending.

And if it can be affirmed that the performance of duty consists neither in believing nor in disbe-

lieving ; but in being true to one's self, in a continual advancement toward the highest ideal, whether that ideal be in reason, sentiment, revelation, inspiration, the inner light, or in whatever else it consists, or whatever else it be called—so that it meets with a personal approval—then there is *eliminated from theology that which occasions sects*. And in emerging from them, we embrace at once in our communion the whole human brotherhood.

“ An eloquent preacher, Richard Mott, in a discourse of much unction and pathos, is said to have exclaimed aloud to his congregation, that he did not believe there was a Quaker, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist, in Heaven. Having paused to give his audience time to stare and to wonder, he said, that in Heaven, God knew no distinction, but considered all good men as his children, and as brethren of the same family.*

The same question which caused the Lutheran Reformation still remains to be settled: Shall authority, falsely so named, external to the person, and predicated on an assumption, triumph, or shall the person himself triumph over that authority?

* Letter of Thomas Jefferson.

Luther scouted papal authority, but he set himself up in its place and stead as an authority from which there should be no appeal. And wherever to-day in the Christian Church we have not papal Rome, we have Luther, or Calvin, or somebody else.

The "essential truths"—those so-called truths and formulas constituting the essence of the Protestant Church, bereft of which it would cease to exist—are without doubt the same in kind as those constituting the essence of the Roman Catholic Church, whether regarded as authority superior to reason and ignoring it, or as theories essentially unreasonable in themselves.

However much Luther may have scouted the argument of the papal legate, from their common stand-point, it was conclusively against him. "If every one were at liberty to bring back into discussion points which for ages have been settled by the church and by councils, nothing would be certain and fixed, doctrine or dogma, and there would be no belief which men must adhere to under pain of eternal damnation."

Dr. Dix, the Rector of Trinity Church, New-York, in a recent discourse* admitted, with great

* Delivered in the Broadway Tabernacle.

precision and frankness, that between external authority and private judgment, there was no middle ground ; and upon the rock of authority he planted his church. There let it rest. If this age of free thought and general intelligence prefers tradition to reason in matters of religion when the issue is squarely made, we must perforce be content.

There is more to be feared from the influence of those representative liberal men who starting from right premises, and admitting the necessity of private judgment, still find some excuse for erroneous conclusions ; who, while acknowledging the fact that the Church Universal lies beyond the narrow bounds of sectarianism, still cling to old ideas as fixed and unalterable ; as “ points which “ for ages have been settled ;” and insist on their reception, not because they are reasonable, but because they seem necessary (as they undoubtedly are) to the maintenance of an established, visible Church, because the Church cannot exist without them. And, on the other hand, thinking the Church to be a divine authoritative institution, having grown up with the notion that to assail it, however lightly, is nothing less than sacrilege, there comes upon them a mistrust that reason can

afford no solution to the questions which agitate the religious world.

A distinguished Unitarian clergyman, in a sermon which created at the time of its publication a profound sensation says, "There are truths in regard to politics, society, religion, history, Christianity, manners, science, art, which are no longer properly in debate. True they are debated, as Hazlitt debated the Newtonian astronomy; as Godwin debated the existence of society; as Buckle debates the influence of religion on civilization; but they are debated only by eccentric, abnormal, or presumptuous minds—minds out of pitch in the great concert of the race." He calls it a "perilous folly" to allow polity, morals, religion, to be wholly open questions.*

But can the reverend gentleman inform us precisely what truths are really fixed? what questions are not open? He says there are certain ones not even to be discussed. He sets up "truths" for us to take as authoritative.† This is the old question, and the real issue. The general assertion, and assumption without proof, that there

* Sequel to "The Suspense of Faith," by Rev. Dr. Bellows, Sept. 25, 1859.

† See Appendix. Note 6.

are "truths no longer in debate" will not satisfy this generation. Do the ever-varying discoveries in science and psychology, or the indefinitely multiplying ideas and diversities of opinion which distinguish civilized and thinking from barbarous nations, confirm it? Have our Orthodox Churches in their Union Meetings and Evangelical Alliances, yet found a common ground of union? Is the present political, religious, and moral condition of our own favored land, where the people are taught to read and reflect, such that we can infer stability from intellectuality, or hope for any nearer approach to universal agreement? Why, this is just the inevitable conflict of the age; not of the new against the old, but of investigation against assumption; of doubts against established systems; of opinion against usurped authority; of inquiry against dogmatism and superstition. On the one hand are arrayed traditions, mysteries, proscription, slavery; on the other, intelligence, humanity, liberty. To the former belong the cramped and crowded intellect, temporal power and oppression, the divine right of kings; to the latter,

freedom, individuality, and mental enfranchisement.

Again, religion must, so far as it is to be reasonable, necessarily rest on the conclusions of reason.

Cousin rightly declares that whatever is purely sentimental or emotional; which, expunging reason, leaves nothing in its place but "ecstasy" or "abstraction"—which promises me a super-human science on the condition of my first losing consciousness, thought, liberty, memory, all that constitutes me an intelligent and moral being—is without the pale of speculation, and unreasonable; for it uses reason to deny reason.

On the contrary, the reason, so far as it is the expression of man's self-consciousness, is and must be supreme, and its deductions are unanswerable, and without appeal.

The universal conscience is likewise incontrovertible, being nearest in us to what is divine.

"The Word proclaimed by the concordant voice
Of mankind fails not; for in man speaks God." *

I appeal to the natural law, which, fixed and eternal, guides alike the planets, in their immense

* Hesiod, *Work and Days*.

courses, and human wanderings however erratic, in a predetermined orbit.

“Oh, backward looking son of time,
The new is old, the old is new ;
The cycle of a change sublime
Still sweeping through.

* * * *

“Take heart ! the waster builds again
A charmed life old goodness hath ;
The tares may perish ; but the grain ;
Is not for death.”*

* John G. Whittier.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NOTE 1. PAGE 24.

“ Let the Christian reader’s first object always be to find out
“ the literal meaning of the Word of God ; for on this and this
“ alone is the whole foundation of faith and Christian theolo-
“ gy.”—LUTHER, *Exposition of the Book of Deuteronomy*.

NOTE 2. PAGE 48.

“ It is a lamentable fact that throughout the whole world
“ there is no system of religion, the votaries of which are sub-
“ divided into so many sectaries as those who profess an ad-
“ herence to the Christian faith.”—THOMAS DICK, *Influence of
Knowledge on Morals*, p. 115.

The following is a recent enumeration of some of the differ-
ent religious sects in Great Britain and the United States :
African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Epis-
copal Zion Church, Associate Presbyterians, Agapæmonians,
Anglo-Catholics, Albrights, Apostolics, Arminians, Baptized
Believers, Bereans, Believers in Christ, Bible Christians, Bi-
ble Defence Association, Brethren, Campbellites, Church of
God, Church of England and Wales, Christian Connection
Methodists, Calvinistic Methodists (Whitefield’s Connection),
Countess of Huntingdon’s Connection, Calvinists, Calvinistic
Baptists, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Church of Scot-

land, Church of Scotland in England, Cameronians, Covenanters, Congregationalists, Catholic and Apostolic Church, Christians who object to be otherwise designated, Christian Believers, Christian Brethren, Christian Eliasites, Christian Israelites, Christian Teetotallers, Christian Temperance Men, Christian Unionists, Church of Christ, Disciples, Dutch Reformed Church, Dissenters, Derbyites, Disciples in Christ, English Seventh Day Baptists, Eastern Reformed Presbyterian Church, Eastern Orthodox Greek Church, Eclectics, Episcopalians, Evangelical Unionists, Free Gospel Church, Free-Will Baptists, Free Christian Baptists, Free Church (Episcopal), Free Church of England, Free Union Church, Free Church of Scotland, Free Congregations, Free Thinkers, Free Religionists, Friends or Quakers, Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, Free Grace Gospel Christians, Free Christians, General Baptists, General Baptist New Connection, German Evangelical Union of the West, German Reformed Church, German Lutherans, Glassites, Harmonists, Hicksite Friends, Hooker Mennonites, Hallelujah Band, Jumpers, Independents, Irvingites, Jews, Independent Religious Reformers, Independent Unionists, Inghamites, Lutherans, Latter-Day Saints or Mormons, Mennonites, Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South, Methodist Protestants, Modern Methodists, Morrisonians, Millerites or Second Adventists, New Society Baptists, New Jerusalem or Christian Church, Old Baptists, Original Connection of Wesleyans, Original United Seceders, Orthodox, Oneida Community or Perfectionists, Oratorians, Old Catholic, Peculiar People, Plymouth Brethren, Pedo-Baptists, Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, Primitive Methodists, Presbyterians, Pres-

byterian Church in the United States, (Old and New School), Presbyterian Church in the United States South, Puseyites, Positivists, Practical Christian Republic, Progressive Friends, Progressionists, Protestants adhering to the Articles of the Church of England, I. to XVIII. inclusive, but rejecting order and ritual, Providence Quakers, Recreative Religionists, Regular Baptists, River Brethren, Reformed Methodist Evangelical Association, Refuge Methodists, Reform Free Church of Wesleyan Methodists, Reformed Presbyterians or Covenanters, Redemptionists, or Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Roman Catholic, Ranters, Reformers, Revivalists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Six Principle Baptists, Scotch Baptists, Sandemanians, Secession Presbytery, Scotch Presbyterians, Separatists (Protestant), Sabbatarians, Second Advent Brethren, Schwenkfelders, Shakers or the United Society of Believers, Southcottians, Spiritualists or Spiritists, Swedenborgian or New Jerusalem Church, Salem Society, Tunkers, Testimony Congregational Church, Trinitarians, United Christian Church, United Secession Church, Union Baptists, Universalists, Unitarian Baptists, United Brethren or Moravians, United Free Methodists, United Presbyterian Church Unitarians, United Christian Church, United Brethren in Christ, United Original Seceders, Wesleyan Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists New Connection, Welsh Calvinistic Presbyterians, Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, Welsh Free Presbyterians, Wesleyan Reformers, Wesleyan Reform Glory Band, and others.

There are said to be more than a thousand different religious systems among mankind, but, in the words of Locke, "should any one a little catechise the greater part of the partisans of

“most of the sects in the world, he would not find concerning those matters they are so zealous for, that they have any opinions of their own.”—*Essay on the Human Understanding*, p. 464.

NOTE 3. PAGE 53.

“I perfectly agree with my brother Heath in reprobating any distinction between *malum prohibitum* and *malum in se*, and consider it pregnant with mischief.”—ROOKE, J., in *Aubert v. Maze* 2 *Bos. and Pul.* 371, *A.D.* 1801.

“The morality of the position of the learned commentator [Blackstone] has been well questioned. Its soundness as a legal principle, though it once had sway in the courts, has been since repudiated.”—1 *Sharswood's Blac. Com.* p. 58 (*note by Editor*).

NOTE 4. PAGE 55.

“I have never united myself to any Church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confession of Faith.”—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, *Carpenter's Six Months at the White House*, p. 190.

NOTE 5. PAGE 56.

“The measure of what is everywhere called and esteemed virtue and vice, is the approbation or dislike, praise or blame, which by a secret or tacit consent, establishes itself in the several societies, tribes, and clubs of men in the world; whereby several actions come to find credit or disgrace among them according to the judgment, maxims, or fashions of that place.”—LOCKE, *Essay on the Human Understanding*, p. 336, § 10.

NOTE 6. PAGE 61.

Dr. Bellows, in a letter from Chamouni, Savoy, dated September 15, 1867, comments in this fashion upon the manner of worship at the English Chapel in that place: "Any one who watches the girls and boys, the young women and young men, saying the creed of the English Liturgy, with an implicit reverence, into which thought and choice evidently enter very little, sees plainly that the theory is not to encourage any thought or choice about it, but to take the best means for stamping a faith which has been thought out and agreed upon by competent persons, upon those who are probably to have no faith, or only a very foolish and ineffectual one, if they are not thus furnished. There is an immense deal to be said in favor of this side of the question."—*New-York Liberal Christian*, November 2, 1867.

THE END.

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