

unbelievers have been greatly coloured by admiration of the genius and sympathy with the motives of their authors. In some cases, indeed, Christian theologians appear to have more sympathy with scepticism than with Christianity. At what may be distinctively called the Broad Church Congress, lately held in Manchester, there were speakers whose heads were perhaps with Christians, but whose hearts were manifestly on the side of sceptics. One can understand this as a reaction. But it is carried so far as to suggest that it is comparatively unimportant whether a thinker be a Christian or not, provided he is in earnest, and can express his opinions with literary grace. Now this attitude of excessive liberality is as truly unlike the genius of Christianity as is the opposed attitude of rigorous intolerance; and it is perhaps even more injurious both to the Christian and the sceptic. For unjustifiable as rigorous intolerance must always be, it at least recognises the supreme importance of the subject, which the opposed attitude does not. But there ought to be no question either of tolerance or of intolerance. The one thing needful in regard to any opinion is to ascertain whether it is true; and then, with the exactness that only devotion to justice can secure, assign it to its proper place in the great treasure-house of truth. Just as sympathy with him who sins ought never to mean sympathy with sin, so sympathy with him who errs ought never to mean sympathy with error. It is for us who are Christians to study, understand, apply, and live the faith once for all delivered to the saints; but it is not for us as Christians to diminish its mass, or change its form, or lessen its importance, from any motive whatever. Too much kindness for the man who errs is hardly possible, but it is cruelty, not kindness, to teach him to think lightly of error. The world needs to-day what it has always needed—the pure, undiminished, sacred deposit of truth, faith; taught loyally, wisely, proportionately, and with infinite sympathy for him who sins or errs, but not, indeed, for the error or the sin.

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