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THE CALL OF RELIGION.

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SPECULATIVE unbelief is common enough ; but that is not the difficulty which the gospel has to contend with in winning men to its call, and extending its empire over the heart. There may be skepticism with regard to what is merely external, where there is great activity of religious sentiment. There is a stage, a period of skepticism, in the history of almost every active and enquiring mind. And provided it is earnest, provided it springs from love of the truth, and not from hatred or fear of the truth ; from inquisitiveness of the intellect, and not from perversion of the will, provided also it does not rest satisfied with doubting, but searches and inquires with earnest endeavour to know the truth, and candidly acknowledges the evidence on one side and the limits of the human understanding on the other ; it is not a dangerous but a healthy symptom. It indicates a more sound and hopeful state of mind than its opposite, — a fond and undiscerning acquiescence in the letter, with an utter absence of the spirit.