

in order to curtail the liberty which he has left to all his followers.

But there is danger, it is said, if we leave these matters of Christian doctrine open to every one. Very well. Suppose that there is danger. What then? If Christ has left this whole ground open, and not given, either to you, or me, or any body of men, any authority to build up walls around so much of truth as we can comprehend, mingled probably with our own individual errors, and to denounce as unchristian all who will not come within those limits; if Christ has delegated to us no such authority, then we are wanting in reverence to him, we are setting up our own individual or associated opinions over his Word, and substituting our limited and imperfect notions in the place of the glorious liberty of the children of God. While other denominations fall back on human instrumentalities, and submit to them, we, in the larger liberty that we claim, feel ourselves upheld and carried on by the ever-living power of Christ and His Word, the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit of God, and His almighty and perpetual care.

But there are those to whom even this seems a poor sort of liberty. "Why," they ask, "shall we submit to any authority but that of the human soul?" But the soul left to itself, with no authoritative instruction from abroad, would indeed be helpless and enslaved, though the whole universe should lie open before it. Its own powers and capabilities, its destiny, and the highest laws of its being, and the loftiest and most inspiring truths must be revealed to it, before it can enter on the enjoyment of the highest liberty for which it has been created.

There are strange ideas abroad respecting liberty of thought, as if it consisted in being set free from every species of restraint. The bird that obeys no law must flutter helplessly on the ground, the slave of its own extravagant ideas of liberty. But when it learns to obey the laws of ærostatic motion, and in obedience to them spreads