

doubt is said to be negative when there is little or no reason on either side ; as, for example, if we were to ask ourselves whether the number of the fixed stars be odd or even. There is no foundation for either assertion : it is a negative doubt. A doubt is positive when there are serious reasons on both sides, as when there is conflicting evidence in a trial. A speculative doubt is about the existence of an obligation in general ; as, for example, in the American war, the question whether the Southernns had a *bellum justum*, a just cause for war against the Northernns. A practical doubt is of the subjective lawfulness of a particular action : as, for example, if in the same case a citizen had doubted whether in his own particular circumstances he could then and there take up arms in the Southern cause. A doubt of law is of the existence of an obligation ; as in the question, Is it lawful to paint on a Sunday ? A doubt of fact is of the existence of a fact upon which depends the application of a law ; as, for example, Is this day a holiday of obligation ? These definitions are necessary for the examination of the nature and lawfulness of Probabilism in its more elementary form, which is all that we can here attempt.

Jeremy Taylor's view of Probabilism.

Before proposing our own theory, we shall lay before the reader an abridgement of the Protestant author Jeremy Taylor's view of Probabilism. The extracts are taken from the "*Ductor Dubitantium*," Edit, Lond. 1856, vol. 9., p. 150. This book is styled the "Guide of Doubters, the rule of conscience in all her general measures, serving as a great instrument for the determination of cases of conscience." The work is evidently based on some Catholic theologian's treatise on casuistry. The arrangement of the books and chapters is almost identical with that of all the well-known casuists, but it embraces only a few of the principal treatises, and omits the greater part of the practical questions—which, indeed, to a Protestant casuist are not necessary. In his dissertations on the Probable Conscience, he speaks as follows :—

"A probable conscience is an imperfect assent to an uncertain proposition, in which one part is indeed clearly and fully chosen, but with an explicit or implicit notice that the contrary is also fairly eligible. For a doubtful conscience considers the probabilities on either side, and dares not choose, and cannot ; but the probable (conscience) does choose, though it considers that in the thing itself there can be no certainty ; and from them both, (a sure conscience and a doubtful) it is distinguished by the intervening of the will. For in a sure conscience, the will works not at all, because it is wholly conducted by the understanding and its proper motives. In the doubtful, the will cannot interpose, by reason of fear and an uncertain spirit. But in the probable it can intervene, not directly, but collaterally and indirectly, because the motives of the probable conscience are not always sufficient to make the conclusion without something of the will applied to extrinsical motives which reflect also on the understanding.

For it is remarkable that a probable conscience, though it be in speculation uncertain, may be practically certain. For if it were not