

practically abjure their faith, and deserve to be classed with unbelievers, and the only safe course is to abandon their communion, to come out from among them and be separate.

This is unwise and unjust. Saints may come short of the ideal standard, and of being in all respects "a peculiar people, zealous of good works." We are all far from being what we should be, and what we shall be "when that which is perfect is come." Our theology, our preaching, our piety, our practical activity, our views of science, of government, of Inspiration, and of many other subjects may be greatly at fault, but still it is quite within the limits of truth to say that the Church universal in all her Protestant branches is much better than the world that "lieth in the evil one."

We do not deny that there is unbelief in the Church, often showing itself in cunning unmanly ways that are paralysing her spiritual vigor and efforts. But unbelief in the world is of a grosser type. It is noisy, boastful, undignified. Its agents are usually coarse lovers of notoriety. Like the hypocrites of Christ's day, when they have any special performance to go through, they "sound a trumpet before them," and their numbers and influence are often unwisely estimated by the fuss they make. They claim to be leaders of advanced thought, while they are only reproducers of exploded errors.

I cannot but regard current unbelief as chiefly, while not exclusively, the unbelief of the past in slightly altered forms. This is the case as it shows itself in the departments of Apologetics, Dogmatics, philosophical speculation, and practical conduct. Physicists have in some measure opened fresh fields of controversy, but for the rest a dreary monotony is observable. The spirit of unbelief has survived the wreck of the old forms it once animated, and hence there is not very much that is out-and-out original, at least in principle, in the scepticism of our day. Its advocates have drawn upon all the centuries from the days of the apostles to the present moment. Celsus, Porphyry, Lucian, and later, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Hume, and others furnished the data which they have wrought into new combinations.

Many imagine themselves clever inventors of startling objections to sacred truth because they are ignorant of what their predecessors of a similar spirit did centuries ago. They forget or never learned that the ruler of the darkness of this world frequently returns by crooked ways and under new names, sometimes transformed into an angel of light, to do his old work of deceiving men and persuading them to accept his lies instead of the truth of God.

Deism, for example, as it flourished in England during the last half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century has passed away, but its spirit of antagonism to the fundamental truths of Christianity is still potent. We have latent or disguised Deism, not pronounced and outspoken