

will not attend to any who have opinions contrary to his own. Mistaking prejudice for strong faith and narrow conservatism for commendable constancy to truth, he will sympathize with those who raise questions of heresy and hold over the heads of the teachers of strange doctrines the awful threat of excommunication or the milder punishment of denominational exclusion. But, so doing, he will but reveal his own narrowness and his hasten his retirement with other relics of unreasoning intolerance to the musty chambers of forgetfulness. Not even error can be bullied out of countenance.

On the other hand one may greedily absorb all that comes to him asking only that it have the appearance and flavor of newness. This is often the error of young men, quite young, who think it affirms exceptional strength of mind when they express doubt concerning the existence of a Divine Being and His revelation to man, just as at tenderer age they thought it added years and stature to smoke a cigarette and show no signs of nausea. Only in the light of this callow sentiment does it seem possible to account for the frequent and glib utterance of extreme philosophical and theological disbeliefs by men who if mature in these things are certainly not in other and less important matters.

A principle as old as the New Testament should become increasingly the student's bulwark, namely the Pauline injunction to "Prove the things that differ." It commends itself to every honest thinker. Following it, one avoids both narrow conservatism and the no less narrow and surely more harmful ultra-liberalism. After having put any matter to the full and careful trial one is as near to the place where he can say "I know" as it is possible for him to reach; and with the spirit of honest doubt in his heart one never dares to pass final judgment upon any question not purely subjective, but ever holds himself ready to revise his decision in the light of newly acquired evidence. Nor should the fear that his faith will fail, deter any from the honest consideration of all questions relating thereto. If the ground of one's faith will not bear scrutinizing one would better abandon it. "God wants us to use our brains. He wants us to test and prove things, but he also wants us to believe and love and build. Do not be afraid to doubt. Through doubt you reach deeper truth if you keep on reaching. As doubt closes one avenue, faith should open a more real. Don't trust the creeds nor the theologians. Make your own creed and theology. Don't, on the other hand, doubt a human claim of scripture and conclude you have doubted scripture itself. To disbelieve theories about Christ is not to disbelieve Christ. No theory, no creed, no theology, is fundamental to truth. Take your credentials direct from God. Investigate for yourself, then be receptive. God will come to the rescue and free you with the truth."

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An Exchange recently suggested that the ATHENÆUM "call the