

tribunal, when he could not possibly help it? There is no enormity which the admission of this principle would not palliate and defend. The butchery of the Thugs, the cannibalism of the Feejees, the outrageous excesses of the great Salt Lake, the gigantic swindling of Robson, Redpath and Huntingdon, become not merely venial but innocent. Many holding this principle expect, by the circulation of their peculiar nostrums, to convert our stray Planet into a Paradise. Let this principle obtain universal currency, and it would soon be a Pandemonium. The frame-work of society would be dissolved and men become a mass of Cains and Ishmaels. In the administration of law, the dispensing of justice, and the maintenance of all our civil and social relations, the principle is acted on, that men are accountable beings, and not mere automata.

In a Court of Justice the jury are sworn in, witnesses give evidence, members of the Bar employ arguments and appeals, the presiding judge delivers his charge. If these twelve men be not responsible for their belief and the verdict which embodies it, the oath they take is a solemn mockery, and the subsequent procedure of witnesses, counsel, and judge, a dumb show. But they feel they are responsible, and the public feel so too, and hence they are commended or condemned according to the verdict they bring in. And are we capable of weighing evidence presented to us by fallible mortals, and incapable of weighing evidence presented to us by the infallible God? If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.

3. The principle that man is responsible for his belief accords with the dictates of *Reason and Conscience*.

Reason suggests the absurdity of all religions being alike, and of those who have turned every one to his own way, being all equally sure of reaching the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Men will contend for specific principles—creeds—systems—in Science, Philosophy, Politics—in short, in every department of human effort and interest. Why should a similar definiteness be discarded in the most important of all departments—that of religion? This levelling indifferentism would not be tolerated in those, and why in this? No one dreams of broaching the impossibility of arriving at the truth in fields over which is shed nothing approaching in clearness and fulness to the flood of light that encompasses the field of the word. And yet, as if left to grope in gloom, men will cry "What is Truth?"

After all, the deficiency is not in the light, or the ability to discern it, but in the *Will*. This formed the burden of the complaint brought by Christ against the bigoted Jews. "Why do ye not understand my speech? because ye will not hear (or bear) my words." "A perverted will puts scales on the eyes of the understanding and spreads a veil over the heart in the reading of the Scriptures. The light is there, shining with unclouded lustre, but the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." "Ye *would* not." "Ye *will* not come to me that ye might have life." "This is the condemnation that light hath come into the world, and men *loved darkness rather* than light, because their deeds were evil."

Evidence the most ample and adequate is provided—evidence, a small fraction of which would be enough to produce conviction on any other matter. The capacity of examining that evidence is possessed. Surely, then, it is perfectly reasonable that we should be held accountable for the exercise of our powers in the examination of that evidence. Let the light fall on bandaged eyes, or be looked at through jaundiced eyes, the fault is ours. And hence, when that light shines into the heart, no guilt is felt to be more heinous, or is more fully confessed and deeply lamented, than that of having kept it out so long, or of having regarded it through such a distorted medium. The remaining so long in unbelief, so far from being excused, is sincerely deplored, and the