

in precisely the same light. This diversity of view means intellectual error. The error which lies about us in huge and endless profusion stretches away in Alpine ranges to the ends of the world and the beginning of mankind.

An evil so great and evident has naturally attracted much attention from thoughtful men. Various inquiries have been started in regard to it. Among the most important of these is one relating to the degree of responsibility it involves. Some deny that men are responsible for any of their errors of opinion. They claim that belief is under the control of rigid necessity—that the judgment is determined by a law of circumstances as inexorable as that which constrains a planet; that believers in God and Jupiter, in Christ and Mohammed, in philosophies empiric and transcendental, in moral distinctions and materialism, are all, in respect to believing otherwise, equally powerless and equally blameless. Others reject these notions with abhorrence. In their view all errors involve guilt. No exception is allowed. From religion down to the smallest matters of etiquette, all our mistakes must be regarded as falling within the scope of conscience and moral government. And, again, both these views are extreme in the estimation of others, who maintain that we are responsible for all *religious* errors, or at least all religious errors of the higher degrees of importance, while in inferior matters one may fall into mistake without blame.

Which of these views is the correct one? If neither of them exactly represents the truth, what does represent it? How far are men responsible for errors of opinion?

In attempting to answer this question, I offer a word to prevent misapprehension. My thought is that if men were morally perfect from the outset they would either avoid all erroneous opinions, or would escape all their injurious consequences. If God did not secure their fallible natures from mistake He would prevent them from being injured by it. This much I suppose to be implied in such Scriptures as these: "All things work together for good to them that love God;" "Because thou hast made the Lord thy habitation there shall no evil befall thee, for he shall give his angels charge over thee or keep thee in all thy ways." Many such passages would seem to secure the perfectly righteous from all such mistakes of conduct, and hence of opinion, as would prove injurious to them. They promise nothing more. If God chooses to allow the mistake and prevent its injurious results, He does not break His promise.

With this precautionary statement, I proceed to inquire how far men are responsible for errors of opinion?

A general and useful answer is this: We are blameworthy for our mistakes as far as they are the result of past sin, or of the absence of due present effort to prevent them. Am I asked what I mean by due effort? I answer: "Effort proportioned to the importance of the subjects to be investigated relative to other subjects claiming our atten-