

is taught, and the seeds of scepticism sown which must be rooted out in after years to plant the incorruptible seed of the Word. These obvious truisms especially demand attention from the rising generation of our very liberal age, who are led to think that the only consistent views of religion are to hold no views at all, that religious consistency is illiberality, and a sacred jealousy for God's truth is bigotry, whose minds are so leavened with the political creed that we can only be orthodox Christians by paying equal reverence to all forms of faith, false or true. How few in any community have any decided religious views or even aim, if they aim at anything at all, higher than mere regularity of life; how few are able to give an answer to every man that asketh their reason for the hope that is in them. Are not people mostly of opinion that all modes of religious belief are equally safe; through the death of Christ God is rendered so merciful there is a general impunity in sin, and all will meet in heaven at last, however far they are on earth from that newness of life, that faith, that repentance unto salvation, that narrow way and straight gate, which the author of Christianity has assured us few shall find. Our Lord as we expressly that they who believe in the truths of the Gospel shall be damned, as that they who believe them shall be saved. Is it not then, of the utmost importance that we should clearly distinguish between the religion of God and the inventions of man.

Religion, divinity, and theology are Latin and Greek terms of heathen origin, although custom and use have fixed their sense to Christian doctrines taken out of the Scriptures. The most ancient heathen writers were called Theologues, the Egyptians and Chaldeans had their theology. Christianity, then, is generally a religion—specially, the religion of Christians.—Religion, correctly speaking, should be considered either as heathen or Christian, natural or supernatural: the one is from the light of nature, the other from divine revelation. The Persians, Greeks, and ancient Britons, with their Druids, Bards and Vates were far more religious than modern Christians. All nations have some religion. Almost all wars have been religious wars. The first man who ever died, died for religion. The followers of false religions

have ever been more zealous than the Christian members of the church of God. Did you see a poor deluded Hindoo lying on a bed of spikes, propitiating his gods, however you might pity the absurdity of his belief, you could not doubt the sincerity of his devotion. Who more strictly religious than those to whom our Lord said, "*the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*" Ignatius Loyola was more religious, sacrificed more, and did more for his church than any hundred Protestants have done since for Christ. Louis XIV. of France, and Henry VIII. of England, were not the best exponents of Christianity, yet both were very religious, the one was so very devout and regular in the forms of worship as to be styled "Most Christian;" the other, "Defender of the Faith." His Protestant daughter, Elizabeth, was very religious and a great admirer of the Bible. "I walk," said she, "many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I pluck up the goodly herbs of sentences by pruning, eat them by reading, digest them by musing, so that having tasted their sweetness, I may less perceive the bitterness of life." But her last moments lead us to fear, notwithstanding her admiration of the Scriptures, that she was ignorant of the most precious and distinguishing truth which could alone speak peace to her troubled conscience—salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ. When dying she cried out "An inch of time—millions of money for an inch of time." She had been used to have a new dress every day, and had ten thousand costly dresses in her wardrobe, yet her soul was naked, she had not the *wedding garment, the fine linen clean and white which is the righteousness of saints.* Valueless then was all her beautiful metaphor and classic learning, while ignorant of that truth which can turn the hut of the beggar into the palace of God—the truth which enabled the poet Cowper's poor village lace girl to

"Rejoice, and read with sparkling eyes,
Her title clear to mansions in the skies,"—

the truth which enabled another Elizabeth, the poor Dairyman's Daughter, upon her dying bed of straw, to exclaim—"Victory, victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ—