

act out the imperatives of the only oracle that speaks in a language he can understand.

It is eminently in the possession of a free individual conscience that the tranquility and harmony of the race as a whole can be maintained. The world was a long time reaching this truth, and still there are many who believe that they have consciences, and that all the rest of the world have none. It is not extravagant to say that in religion, more than in any other institution in society, has hot-headed passion played the tyrant. The history of religion is a history of wars. But the question is settled, and settled forever, that if man is ever to know himself he must exclude superstition and headstrong prejudice from the temple of reason while the spirit within communes with its God. That creed which does not uphold the supremacy of the individual conscience should not be classed with Christian faiths.

And a conscientious rational act of a person should always be respected no matter how wrong it may seem to others. But the act must be conscientious and must be rational. Then, logically, he does no wrong, for he violates no law of his understanding. Let the public denounce him never so bitterly, before God he is justified; else you must accept the absurd alternative that he is censurable for doing what he believes to be right. Many assign little or no value to conscience because there is no uniformity about its decisions. What one does another would undo. Which one is right? It seems strange that these natural and necessary differences of opinion, which everywhere prevail, should be classed in the categories of right and wrong; for it is a happy thing that men do differ. Just as soon as all people come to the same opinion progress will come to a dead halt. The clock of mental energy will then be run down. The history of four thousand years shows little tendency toward a universal agreement of humanity in its opinions.

Homogeneity is the very symbol of inertness, while differences promote activity. The chemist well knows that there can be no activity between the same or similar substances—no new or higher compound formed. Nature is a mixture of actions and reactions centering round and affecting the spontaneous man. The minority or so-called wrong opinions in the world are necessary to the existence, the limitation and the furtherance of the majority or so-called right opinions. Such truths as we now rest in as too insipid for discussion have made their way from small centers of development around which persecution once raged rampart. The inertia of the world's understanding is overcome at an awful price. These settled truths are but part of that whole truth which makes the invisible architecture of civilization as yet half finished and unappreciated and uncomprehended by man.

Right and wrong opinions, so called, together make up the checks and balances of our social and political structure. As new generations come into being and branch out in different manners, degrees and directions, these political relations and social inconveniences must be constantly readjusted and repaired in counteraction of this spontaneous differing, and thus the machinery of human development goes on. And it is only as each individual follows the true dictates of a rational conscience as the Divine Author intended that a proper difference of opinion will exist.

What is a hero? What has he that others have not? The unflinching courage and calmness that reigned over the soul of that martyr simply indicates that on his side was conscience, which in reality had itself made the stand, had sustained him in a halo of serenity against the rage of infuriated mobs. Now, when the martyr has paid for the satisfaction of believing as he thought right by giving up his head, men cheer and laud him to the skies for his marvellous deeds and for the persecution