

back than to go forward. Men often go forward, not so much under the influence of principles well defined and firmly embraced, as from the force of pride, and by the help of "the sweet voices" of the majority; but to retrace your steps when justice demands that this should be done, requires the power of genuine humility, and the aid of a faithful conscience. If men were infallible, the moral courage necessary to turn back would never be needed. But I do not need to tell you that the wisest may err. Men of great and varied excellence may fall into erroneous opinions for a time, or cherish false and uncharitable impressions as to certain of their fellow-men. Nor is this all.—If they are persons of influence, they may lead others not only into speculative error, but into very hurtful courses. But cooler reflection and better information may, in time, enable the wise, but mistaken man, to see his errors. Now comes the pinch. Shall he frankly own them, and strive to correct them: or, because he has committed himself to the wrong side, shall he still adhere to it? Alas! what a deal of falsehood, meanness, and all sorts of iniquity does that phrase,—*committed to his party, or to certain opinions*, cover. It is right for a man to adhere staunchly to his party and to his opinions, but he must do this no farther than truth warrants. Properly speaking, a man should be committed to nothing but to truth; to adhere consistently to this is wisdom and goodness: but to adhere to error, because once embraced, is folly and wickedness. Who can, indeed, measure the wickedness of the man who persists in error, that he sees or even suspects, and still leads multitudes on in a wrong course, rather than frankly own that at first he misled them through misapprehensions. It may not be easy for such a man to get others to retrace their steps, but the *more difficult part* is, first of all to turn back himself:—in a word frankly to own that he has been in error.

And yet, when this is done, how grand and beautiful does it appear as a moral act. Is it not grand to hear a man humbly, yet boldly and fearlessly confess his ignorance, errors, uncharitableness, or false conclusions. He that can do this honestly and meekly, is no ordinary man. When ye have witnessed it, does not the remembrance of it stick to you? With what admiration would you regard that youth, who with moistened eye and tremulous limbs, would go up to the companion whom he had misapprehended and