

seeking to get rid of the difficulty occasioned by men questioning opinions long held sacred, by imputing to their questionings unworthy motives or moral obliquity. It is quite true that many of the questionings of our day have their root in sin ; many, in spiritual pride ; many, in presumptuous impatience of authority ; many springing even from the " devilish " delight of wounding sacred feelings. But there are others which spring from a devotion to truth. Some men seem born to doubt : many men can only reach rest through unrest

" You call for faith : I show you doubt, to prove that faith exists. The more of doubt, the stronger faith, I say, if faith o'ercomes doubt."

The moral unbeliever, the man who seeks in unbelief a shelter for selfishness and sin, is not likely to be convinced by any presentation of truth. His heart must first be changed, and no defence of Gospel facts and doctrines, however successful, will accomplish that. To such an one we would say with Browning—

" What think ye of Christ, friend ? When
All's done and said,
Like you this Christianity or not ?
It may be false, but will you wish it true ?
Has it your vote to be so if it can ? "

But the earnest doubter, the man who would believe, but whose faith is face to face with offences, who would be at rest in religion, but cannot find rest, his whole mind unsettled in the conflict between modern science and Christianity—how is the Church going to treat such an one ? Surely she is not, ostrich-like, going to bury her head in the sands of old traditions, and refuse to see the new facts and new thoughts and new theories of modern times, and vainly imagine that thus the citadel of orthodoxy will stand secure ? Shall she not rather stand confident on the Rock on which she was founded—that Rock against which the billows of scepticism and infidelity have beat for eighteen centuries, and beat in vain—confident that though many human growths which have sprung up around that rock and are clinging in their weakness to it may be swept away, the Rock will stand ? Assuredly it becomes the believer to approach all religious questions with reverent awe, but surely not with craven cowardice. The spirit of Christianity is not that of " fear " but of " a sound mind." It is no evidence of truth, no symbol of confidence, but only manifestation of uncertainty and fear, to shun conflict, to evade attack, to refuse investigation, because of difficulty and danger. We dare not as Protestants refuse inquiry. Truth has nothing to fear from the discoveries of all the sciences, and surely it is Truth we wish to know and hold. The Church has frequently been singularly unwise in the attitude she has adopted towards the restlessness of belief caused by modern thought. A man who has real faith never gets frightened when it is questioned, or savage with him who questions, or even with him who rejects. Hurt may