

thousands of ministers; they are also very zealous in missionary labors, and contribute largely for the support of charitable institutions. But it is very few of them who reflect upon first principles; they do not like to trouble themselves on such matters.

I have traveled a great deal, and have come in contact with professors of every creed; but they almost invariably like to assume, without contradiction, that they are right and that their fathers before them were. They do not like the idea to be entertained for a moment that the principles, doctrine, and ordinances they believe in and obey may be wrong, or that there is any possibility of the whole so-called Christian church having departed from the faith and ordinances as laid down in the Gospel by Jesus Christ.

The Methodists, for instance, could not for a moment suppose that John Wesley was not competent to judge all matters pertaining to salvation. Wesleyan ministers will hardly permit his doctrines to be questioned; they must be swallowed without investigation. In fact, I have heard some of them say that he was a man of such erudition, talent, and piety that they would not have his doctrines questioned in their hearing. The Protestant Germans and a great many others are just the same with regard to Luther; yet in some of his ideas and principles the great Reformer was as foolish as any other man. The Scotch are a good deal so with John Knox; they think that he was everything good, praiseworthy, and amiable, and, in fact, that he was the pink of perfection. The Roman Catholics will not for a moment admit that they are not the true church; and they will maintain that they have held the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven from the days of Peter until now, and that they still have

the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and have power to bind on earth and in Heaven, and to loose on earth and in Heaven. You may ask a great many who have seceded from the Church of Rome, and you would find that they have similar ideas about their own infallibility, only they are a little better than those from whom they seceded; they have made some improvements and are a little nearer the celestial kingdom.

Feelings of this kind obtain not only among religionists, but also among philosophers, for some Christian philosophers have brought in philosophy to their aid in order to prove the truth of the Christian religion. Paley and Dick, very prominent Christian philosophers, have examined the works of nature, and have endeavored to prove that the God of nature who controlled all these things must be a Being full of love, intelligence, and power. In their investigations they have examined the anatomical and visceral systems of man, beasts, birds, and insects, and have deduced therefrom many arguments which are interesting and incontrovertible. But when they apply their reasoning to the Christian religion they swallow it at one gulp without investigation. Their arguments go to prove the existence of a Supreme Being, a God; but they do not prove the truth or falsity of the Christian or any other system of religion—they have nothing at all to do with them.

People generally are apt to accept the various religious systems of the day without reasoning or investigation. When I was a little boy I used to ponder over such things; and I do so still. Finding myself an inhabitant of the world, surrounded by ten thousand conflicting opinions on religious subjects, I want to know, "what is truth?" Who has it in