

**IN AID OF FAITH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649383245

In aid of faith by Lyman Abbott

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**LYMAN ABBOTT**

**IN AID OF FAITH**



# IN AID OF FAITH

BY

LYMAN ABBOTT

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION



NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

1901

3T771  
A3  
1901

COPYRIGHT,

By K. P. DUTTON & CO.  
1896

IN MEMORIAM

RABBI ISADORE ISAACSON

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

82

## DEDICATION.

---

TO THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF WELLESLEY COLLEGE  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE PRESIDENT,  
ALICE E. FREEMAN, PH.D.

THEIR INTEREST IN SOME OF THE THOUGHTS EMBODIED IN THESE  
CHAPTERS, WHEN DELIVERED IN THE FORM OF  
A COURSE OF LECTURES IN THEIR COLLEGE CHAPEL,  
INDUCED ME TO PUBLISH THEM FOR A WIDER,  
THOUGH I CANNOT HOPE, FOR A MORE RESPONSIVE CIRCLE.

943984

## PREFACE.

---

THE title of this book indicates its purpose. It is written in order to give aid to those who desire to hold fast to their faith, but find intellectual and moral difficulties in so doing. There is a considerable class of persons in the community who have no conscious desire for spiritual life, who are very willing to be rid of the sanctions imposed by a belief in God and the future, who have no sense of sin and therefore no desire for pardon, no sense of unworthiness and therefore no desire for a diviner life, to whom the rejection of Christianity, with its hopes and its duties, brings no regret. This book is not addressed to such. It does not aim to make an unwilling convert; it does not seek to convince any one against his will, to wring a verdict by force of logic from a reluctant jury. I have little faith in polemical theology; little faith in the possibility of convincing any one of the truth of Christianity who sees nothing in it to desire; still less faith in any moral advantage in such conviction, even if it can be produced. Self-



satisfied sceptics will not read this volume, or if they attempt to do so, will find little in it.

There is also a considerable class of persons whose faith is not perplexed. The Christian religion presents no difficulties to them; the system of doctrine which they have inherited from their ancestors is adequate and satisfying; they are either ignorant of the course of modern thought, or they hold religious truth in one chamber of the mind and philosophic and scientific truth in another chamber of the mind, and never allow the two to come into collision. This somewhat curious mental state must, I think, be very common in those who hold to Roman Catholic theology. The intelligent Romanist knows that there is a difference between animal and vegetable substances; that the wafer, chemically analyzed before consecration, will present ocular demonstration of its vegetable nature; that if it is submitted to the same chemical analysis after consecration, the same ocular demonstration of its vegetable character will be afforded. Scientifically, he believes that the bread remains bread after consecration as before, yet religiously he believes that it is mysteriously changed and becomes the veritable body of the Saviour. I am not unaware of the answer which Roman Catholic theologians give to this difficulty when presented to them: but to most votaries of the Roman Catholic Church, bowing at the presentation of the host, it simply does not present itself at all. They find no difficulty in holding

scientifically one opinion and religiously another opinion, though the two are in direct conflict. In a somewhat similar manner there are doubtless many Protestants who read the first chapter of Genesis without feeling the least mental disturbance or questioning in consequence of the revelations of modern science. They read on the Sabbath the statement that "God made the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh;" they read in the week the scientific revelations of geology concerning the long, slow processes by which the world was evolved and brought into a habitable condition; and they find no difficulty in receiving and holding both views. They ask for no explanation, because they do not collate and compare their scientific opinion and their religious faith. So I have known Orthodox ministers who held firmly to the dogma of eternal punishment in its most distinct form, who believed—I do not say professed to believe, for I think their intellectual conviction was genuine and assured—that there is no opportunity to exercise a saving faith in Christ beyond this life, and no hope in the life to come for one who has not exercised such a saving faith in this life, and yet who found no moral or intellectual difficulty in speaking words of comfort and hope to heart-broken mothers when a child, grown to maturity, had died suddenly without any evidence whatever of evangelical repentance and faith. Such ministers are not to be charged with dishonesty; they

possess minds capable of holding two inconsistent views, one an intellectual and theoretical opinion, the other a practical and sympathetic sentiment, and they are not disturbed by the inconsistency. If that inconsistency is called to their attention, they invent or discover some sort of reconciliation; but unless it is called to their attention it gives them no concern. This book is not written for this class of persons. I have no desire to disturb a religious faith which is undisturbed. It may rest on false foundations: it may be alloyed with error. If so, there are enough forces at work in the community to shake it from its false foundations and to burn out its alloy—with the possible chance of burning up the gold also. This work of the destruction of falsehood—or false forms of truth, which are themselves the most dangerous kind of falsehood—I leave to others.

But there are also a great many persons in our time whose faith is perplexed. They are spiritually conscious of the life and truth obtained by their fathers from dogmatic systems, which they are no longer able to accept. They cannot believe what the preachers of their childhood taught them from the pulpit, and yet they cannot willingly surrender the life which grew up under that teaching. They cannot believe in the verbal infallibility of the Scriptures, with two versions of these Scriptures, possessing equal authority, before them; and yet they cannot surrender their faith in the Bible. They cannot believe in the scholastic concep-