

**CHARITY AND THE
CLERGY:
BEING A REVIEW**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649425471

Charity and the Clergy: Being a Review by William Henry Ruffner

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

WILLIAM HENRY RUFFNER

**CHARITY AND THE
CLERGY:
BEING A REVIEW**

CHARITY AND THE CLERGY:

BEING

A Review,

BY

A PROTESTANT CLERGYMAN,

OF THE

“NEW THEMES” CONTROVERSY;

TOGETHER WITH

SUNDRY SERIOUS REFLECTIONS UPON THE RELIGIOUS PRESS,
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES, ECCLESIASTICAL AMBITION,
GROWTH OF MODERATISM, PROSTITUTION OF
THE PULPIT, AND GENERAL DECAY
OF CHRISTIANITY.

*Robert Troup Paine
to Harvard College*

,c PHILADELPHIA:

LIPPINCOTT, GRAMBO & CO.

1853.

P R E F A C E.

THE writer of these pages is not aware that he holds any doctrine which deserves to be called infidel or heretical; but as candid criticism is not tolerated in our orthodox religious periodicals (with which alone he could affiliate), he feels driven to this mode of addressing the public. He comments freely, and at times severely, upon the religious press itself; also upon theological education, the state of religion in the churches, and various clerical and ecclesiastical practices—all of which are regarded as needing reform.

Few seem to perceive what appears fearfully evident to the writer, that our existent Christianity is almost universally corrupt, and is becoming more so continually; that unless its present tendencies be speedily reversed, a state of worse than medieval darkness will soon settle upon Christendom; not

a state of intellectual decrepitude and enslavement, but one of intellectual triumph and haughty independence; not a state in which the Church, like a besotted despot, will drag men in chain-gangs behind her bloody car, but one in which man will rise in proud supremacy, and either trample the Church under foot, or else spare her in Gibonite degradation, to become a "hewer of wood and drawer of water" about the gorgeous Temple of Mammon! Or, to say the very least, the Church and the world will move on in harmony, neither disposed to assert its own peculiarities.

It is not maintained that the work, "New Themes," &c., suggests the only remedy needed in this emergency; others are hinted at; but it is maintained that perhaps the most crying demand of the times is for just such a reform as the author of "New Themes" and "Politics for American Christians" indicates. It will be shown, likewise, that the real sentiments of that author have either been strangely misunderstood, or been wickedly misrepresented in many influential quarters.

A REVIEW.

NEW THEMES FOR THE PROTESTANT CLERGY, ETC. By
STEPHEN COLWELL. Second Edition, Revised. Phila-
delphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co. 1852.

A REVIEW, BY A LAYMAN, OF A WORK ENTITLED
"NEW THEMES, ETC." Philadelphia: Lippincott,
Grambo & Co. 1852.

POLITICS FOR AMERICAN CHRISTIANS. POLITICS OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT. SOME NOTICES OF A REVIEW
OF "NEW THEMES, ETC." Philadelphia: Lippincott,
Grambo & Co. 1852.

SELF-COMPLACENCY.

REFORMERS have usually met with a surly
reception at the seats of power. The com-
fortable classes fear change, lest their comforts
depart. Dives, Diotrophes and Demetrius,
Caiaphas, Laud, and Leo X., represent classes

always existing, and always arraying themselves against the Pauls, and Wickliffes, and Miltons, and Luthers, and Galileos, and Knoxes; against the Puritans, and Protestants, and Waldenses, and other truth-finders and truth-tellers, whom after ages enshrine in the Temples of Love, Fame, and Gratitude.

But many oppose Reformers from motives much more innocent. They honestly love the present, and cannot see the truth of the Reformers' criticisms or proposed amendments. The world is only aggregate man, and what man is there that knoweth himself? The heart is deceitful above all things; who can know it? The world flatters and cheats itself. The chief characteristic of every age is self-complacency. "Surely we are the people!" No doubt, Tubal-Cain teaching his apprentices to work in brass and iron, often reflected on the perfection of art in his age, and the "old fogyism" of the days of his grandfather Adam. Self-glorification, too, is a form of human weakness which

has characterized every generation, every country, every party, every sect. And more than this, men are prone to identify themselves with certain ideas and institutions so entirely, to cluster around them such tender associations and sweet recollections, that an intimation of imperfection in those ideas or institutions is instinctively resented, like an insult to a mother. And this is specially true with regard to a man's religion. He very properly feels the most jealous guardianship over this sacred and eternal interest, and very naturally identifies his interpretation of religion with religion itself. In the eyes of the Pharisees of old, an attack upon their traditional interpretation of Moses and the Prophets was impugning the authority of the sacred writers themselves; or an attack upon the lives of them, the acknowledged illustrators of divine truth, was denying the divine origin and the sanctifying power of that truth. Hence, in the eye of Judaism, Jesus and his Apostles were infidels. And

so has it ever been in the history of Christianity; Christians have been prone to stake Christianity upon their understanding and exemplification of it. If they understood the Bible to teach that the sun revolves around the earth, the poor Galileo who asserted the contrary was a vile heretic, if not a downright infidel. So of the doctrine of antipodes, of an old pre-adamite earth, of pre-existent death, and such like conflictings with traditional interpretations; to assert them was to raise from a thousand quarters the cry of *infidelity, infidelity*. But when the people had time to reflect and examine, they saw that the innovators were only infidel to their beloved grandmothers' *explanation* of the Bible.

“NEW THEMES” NOT INFIDEL.

Knowing these characteristics of our species, whether out of the Church or in it, the author of “New Themes” should not be sur-