

**CHARLES ELWOOD:  
OR, THE INFIDEL  
CONVERTED**

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Charles Elwood: Or, the Infidel Converted by O. A. Brownson

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**O. A. BROWNSON**

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By O. A. BROWNSON.



“ — Ein Gott ist, ein heiliger Wille lebt,  
Wie auch der menschliche wankt;  
Hoch über der Zeit und dem Raume schwebt  
Lebendig der höchste Gedanke,  
Und ob Alles in ewigem Wechsel kreist,  
Er beharret im Wechsel ein ruhiger Geist.”

SCHILLER.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN BROTHERS, 121, NEWGATE STREET.

M.DCCC.XLV.



## PREFACE.

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I HAVE not much to say by way of preface to this little volume. It explains itself, and contains in itself the grounds of its own justification or condemnation.

I do not send it forth as a work of art, and I have not studied to conform to the established laws of the species of composition to which it may seem to belong. It has the air of being a work of fiction; but it has been written in an earnest spirit for a serious purpose.

The form in which I have chosen to send out the ideas and discussions embodied in this work, has been adopted to please myself, and because it was the most convenient form I could adopt for presenting my ideas clearly, and in a moderate space. A regular treatise on the subject here discussed, I have not had the patience, if the ability, to prepare, and nobody would read it if I had.

It may be objected that I have introduced too much fiction for a serious work, and too little, if I intended a regular-built novel. All I have to say is, the public must take the work as they find it. In order to have introduced a greater variety of characters and events, I wanted a fertility of imagination to which I lay no claim, and a different purpose in writing from the one I really had. I have introduced as much variety of character and action as my imagination furnished, or my judgment approved. If novel readers are not satisfied with this explanation, why, they must apply to somebody else—I can give them no satisfaction.

The characters introduced are of course fictitious, yet I may say that I have myself had an intellectual experience similar to that which Mr. Elwood records; and what he has said of himself would perhaps apply in some degree to me. I am willing the public should take the book as an account which I have thought proper to give of my own former unbelief and present belief. So far as it can be of any use, I am willing that what is here recorded should have the authority of my own experience.

Those who are acquainted with the philosophical writers of the modern eclectic school of philosophy in France, will perceive that Mr. Morton has anticipated many of their results, and perhaps given them an original application. He seems to be somewhat of a kindred spirit with M. Victor Cousin,



though perhaps more of a theologian, and therefore more disposed to consider philosophy in its connection with religion.

With these remarks I dismiss this little book to its fate. I have taken much pleasure in its composition; I have embodied in it the results of years of inquiry and reflection; and I have thought it not ill adapted to the present state of the public mind in this community. It deals with the weightiest problems of philosophy and theology, and perhaps some minds may find it not altogether worthless.

BOSTON,

February 15, 1840.

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## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE.
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER I.	
A VISITER . . . . .	5
CHAPTER II.	
DIVINE REVELATION . . . . .	9
CHAPTER III.	
MIRACLES . . . . .	15
CHAPTER IV.	
AN INTERVIEW . . . . .	21
CHAPTER V.	
THE INQUIRY MEETING . . . . .	25
CHAPTER VI.	
STRUGGLES . . . . .	30
CHAPTER VII.	
AUTHORITY . . . . .	34
CHAPTER VIII.	
ARGUMENT FROM NATURE . . . . .	39
CHAPTER IX.	
THE SACRIFICE . . . . .	46
CHAPTER X.	
THE DISMISSAL . . . . .	52
CHAPTER XI.	
PRIESTCRAFT . . . . .	61
CHAPTER XII.	
IMMORTALITY . . . . .	65