

TEN DISCOURSES ON ORTHODOXY

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Ten Discourses on Orthodoxy by Joseph Henry Allen

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JOSEPH HENRY ALLEN

**TEN DISCOURSES
ON ORTHODOXY**

TEN

DISCOURSES

ON

ORTHODOXY,

BY

JOSEPH HENRY ALLEN,
PASTOR OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, WASHINGTON.

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N O T E .

IN revising these Discourses for the press, I have made very few references to texts and authorities, desiring to occupy the plain and well-known ground of the fundamental questions of theological controversy, and relying more on reason than on erudition to confirm my statements. It would be easy to give an appearance of the latter, far beyond my claims. Orthodoxy I regard, not merely as a false or defective system, but as standing in the way of a more broad and positive conception of Christianity. Its actual existence and power is my reason for treating it as an individual thing, or for treating of it at all. And I have preferred that this volume should be a summary (and even popular) criticism of the present condition of theological speculation, and a preparatory rather than a final statement of the Christian spiritual doctrine.

J. H. A.

WASHINGTON, D. C., April, 1849.



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DISCOURSE I.

ORTHODOX THEORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

THIS I CONFESS UNTO THEE, THAT AFTER THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL HERESY, SO WORSHIP I THE GOD OF MY FATHERS. — ACTS xxiv. 14.

It is my intention, in these Discourses, to examine several of the principal doctrines of Orthodoxy, so called, and to discuss their claim to our belief and respect. I shall have occasion to dissent from many things taught in the popular Christianity of our day, and to protest as strongly as I can against what I think false and hurtful in it; but I shall hope to do it with proper feeling and Christian courtesy. Our religious belief lies at the bottom of all our belief. Let us deal with it frankly and sincerely, — never shrinking from just criticism, nor refusing to give a reason for the faith that is in us.

And while I shall examine with the most perfect freedom into the prevalent theology of the churches about us, I trust I shall say nothing in an irreverent and scornful spirit. Firm believer myself in a Christian faith at heart, a Christian life in truth and love, wherein all believers are reconciled to God through his spirit and