

Phil. A respect which would finally rest on the principle that the end sanctifies the means. However, I am not in favour of a compromise on a basis of that sort. Religion may be an excellent means of curbing and controlling the perverse, dull, and malicious creatures of the biped race; in the eyes of the friend of truth every _fraus_, be it ever so _pia_, must be rejected. It would be an odd way to promote virtue through the medium of lies and deception. The flag to which I have sworn is truth. I shall remain faithful to it everywhere, and regardless of success, I shall fight for light and truth. If I see religion hostile, I shall--

Demop. But you will not! Religion is not a deception; it is true, and the most important of all truths. But because, as has already been said, its doctrines are of such a lofty nature that the great masses cannot grasp them immediately; because, I say, its light would blind the ordinary eye, does it appear concealed in the veil of allegory and teach that which is not exactly true in itself, but which is true according to the meaning contained in it: and understood in this way religion is the truth.

Phil. That would be very probable, if it were allowed to be true only in an allegorical sense. But it claims to be exactly true, and true in the proper sense of the word: herein lies the deception, and it is here that the friend of truth must oppose it.