

Demop. How often must I repeat that religion is not a lie, but the truth itself in a mythical, allegorical dress? But with respect to your plan of each man establishing his own religion, I had still something to say to you, that a particularism like this is totally and absolutely opposed to the nature of mankind, and therefore would abolish all social order. Man is an _animal metaphysicum_--in other words, he has surpassingly great metaphysical requirements; accordingly he conceives life above all in its metaphysical sense, and from that standpoint wishes to grasp everything. Accordingly, odd as it may sound with regard to the uncertainty of all dogmas, accord in the fundamental elements of metaphysics is the principal thing, in so much as it is only among people who hold the same views on this question that a genuine and lasting fellowship is possible. As a result of this, nations resemble and differ from each other more in religion than in government, or even language. Consequently, the fabric of society, the State, will only be perfectly firm when it has for a basis a system of metaphysics universally acknowledged. Such a system, naturally, can only be a popular metaphysical one--that is, a religion. It then becomes identified with the government, with all the general expressions of the national life, as well as with all sacred acts of private life. This was the case in ancient India, among the Persians, Egyptians, Jews, also the Greeks and Romans, and it is still the case among the Brahman, Buddhist, and Mohammedan nations. There, are three doctrines of faith in China, it is true, and the one that has spread the most, namely, Buddhism, is exactly the doctrine that is least protected by the State; yet there is a saying in China that is universally appreciated and daily applied,

the three doctrines are only one--in other words, they agree in the main thing. The Emperor confesses all three at the same time, and agrees with them all. Europe is the confederacy of _Christian_ States; Christianity is the basis of each of its members and the common bond of all; hence Turkey, although it is in Europe, is really not to be reckoned in it. Similarly the European princes are such "by the grace of God," and the Pope is the delegate of God; accordingly, as his throne was the highest, he wished all other thrones to be looked upon only as held in fee from him. Similarly Archbishops and Bishops, as such, had temporal authority, just as they have still in England a seat and voice in the Upper House; Protestant rulers are, as such, heads of their churches; in England a few years ago this was a girl of eighteen. By the revolt from the Pope, the Reformation shattered the European structure, and, in particular, dissolved the true unity of Germany by abolishing its common faith; this unity, which had as a matter of fact come to grief, had accordingly to be replaced later by artificial and purely political bonds. So you see how essentially connected is unity of faith with common order and every state. It is everywhere the support of the laws and the constitution--that is to say, the foundation of the social structure, which would stand with difficulty if faith did not lend power to the authority of the government and the importance of the ruler.