

“Free Indulgence of Their Corrupt Propensities and Desires – Elisha Bates Scorns the Late Elias Hicks (1831)”

Excerpt transcribed by Mitchell Santine Gould, LeavesOfGrass.Org. **Emphasis** mine.

[“From Bates' *Miscellaneous Repository*”] “Summary of Elias Hicks's Doctrines,” *The Friend*, January 1831, 245.

... When posterity shall calmly look back to the records of the present day, it will no doubt be regarded with astonishment, that among a people professing the polished manners of refined society, and the mild and dignified character of the Christian religion—so large a number of persons should be led to deny the first principles of the gospel of Christ, and trample under foot the rules of common decency.

The question will be asked *then*, as it probably is *now*, by some who have never seen him, What were the peculiarities, or characteristics of E. Hicks as a preacher, in addition to those of his doctrines? His dress was plain; his countenance was grave, and his voice and manner of speaking were rather prepossessing. And though his discourse lacked connection, and his conclusions frequently bore little or no relation to the premises from which they were professedly drawn, yet he possessed a facility of mixing his peculiar doctrines with sentiments generally acknowledged to be correct. He was easy in his utterance, and remarkably dogmatical in the positions he laid down. On many of the most important articles of Christian doctrine, he frequently used the common language of Christians, by which those not prepared to go the whole length of his sentiments were lulled into security, by the persuasion that he was not unsound in the faith, while

he took occasion to so lower down the terms which he used, and so to introduce the doctrines of infidelity, as **to gain admiration of the licentious**, and of open unbelievers.

It will not seem strange that the doctrines of Elias Hicks, should be congenial to the feelings of those who are disposed to the free indulgence of their corrupt propensities and desires, when he so often uttered sentiments congenial to the feelings of such. But it will be astonishing that among a people, not only accustomed to the refinements of civilized life, in the beginning of the 19th century, and ranking a high profession of the religion of Jesus Christ, such sentiments as were avowed by E. Hicks, and such practices as are chargeable on his followers, should ever have received the least degree of countenance...