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The latitude and liberty accorded by Freethought Associations is clearly exemplified in the Braithwaite correspondence. In a second letter Mr. Braithwaite confesses himself in these words:—"I believe in the 'religion of Jesus Christ as I interpret it in the New Testament. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, the value 'of prayer, healing by laying on of hands, inspiration, 'and other matters I might mention, which I disbelieved 'when I left the Church, I believe now most firmly.'" And he is entitled to his belief without any question. But he is not entitled to convert his own want of moral courage into a charge of intolerance. "I seldom gave 'a lecture," he says, "knowing my views were 'unpopular. I never once gave any teaching on God, 'immortality, or prayer in the Children's Lyceum, 'neither did any Theistic teacher—supposing there are 'any. I knew well it would displease the Atheistical 'party. . . . How could I teach my views to my 'class if most of the children belonged to Atheistical 'parents. Suppose I had, and one little boy said, "'My father don't believe such,' what would be the 'effect? The question needs no answer. One was 'constrained therefore to sink what he conceived to 'be his best thoughts—and in a Freethought 'Association"! And so it comes to this, that the intolerance was in the little boys who preferred the teaching of their fathers to that of Mr. Braithwaite. "Conscience makes cowards of us all." And a man's "best thoughts" are kept to himself because they are unpopular! Now where does the implied intolerance come in? Parents surely should not be compelled to receive even "best thoughts" for their boys, if they don't like them. The Association exhibited a wide spirit of liberty and toleration in electing a Theist one of its Vice-Presidents if, as Mr. Braithwaite alleges, Theism is unpopular. It is Mr. Braithwaite who makes the distinction, that it was with the little boys, not with the Association, he feared his best thoughts would be unpopular. It may be unfortunate that a boy should believe his father before his teacher, but it is one of those things which no association can provide against.

It is quite possible the Association was deceived. Mr. Stout, evidently from his letter, looked upon Mr. Braithwaite as a Theist and Spiritualist; that is, one who rejects revelation, the divinity of Jesus, &c.; whereas he has been for some time—he was going to resign, he says, two years ago—a Christian of the Plymouth Brethren type. Now it must be admitted that a Christian—a believer in the Resurrection—is somewhat out of his element in a Freethought Association. It is probable that the knowledge of Mr. Braithwaite's belief would not have made much difference in the action of the Association towards him. It is one of the principles of Freethought to receive everyone whose conscience—he himself being the judge—will allow him to associate under its banner. And it is one of the remarkable features of this strange case that the individual conscience allowed itself so

wide a latitude. For the distinction must not be overlooked that while perfect freedom of conscience is extended to others, a man is required not to allow his own to run riot. "In November last (says Mr. Braithwaite) I offered by letter to continue the 'Echo' 'as a monthly, providing it *contained my religious views* 'occasionally' in its editorial columns, and was assisted 'with a monetary subsidy of £6 per month for twelve 'months. This letter remains unanswered." This confession suggests some grave reflections. Is it a part of the Christian conscience to receive a subsidy from Atheists—Mr. Braithwaite insinuates they are all or nearly all Atheists in the Dunedin Association—to run their representative paper? In that same November we find "J.B." telling his Atheistical readers "that 'Freethought was sure to succeed in the long run," and holding up the character of the veteran Freethinker, William Denton, for admiration. We have no hesitation in asking—Was it honest of a Christian to dissemble his views in this way? He was at that time treating for a subsidy! We are content to let this case illustrate the difference between the Christian and the Freethinker, the Christian Theist and the Atheist. And not another word need be said.

What would you give us in place of Christianity? In one of his addresses recently in Dunedin, Mr. Charles Bright answered this question in a single word—*Nothing*. One of the pulpits—which did not take the trouble of giving Mr. Bright's explanation of his meaning, or of ascertaining the attitude of the iconoclast—thought the admission condemnatory of Freethought. The justification of the bold negation depends on the result of the analysis of Christianity. When this has been performed, there will doubtless remain elements which must enter into any system of morals. No ethical synthesis can be perfect without many of the moral attributes which are to be found in all religions, however depraved and barbarous; and the question is quite as forcible—What would you give us in place of Mahommedanism? There is not a single ethical maxim or injunction in Christianity but which may be found in the secular teachings of philosophy—an observation made by Hypatia in Alexandria 1,400 years ago. But Christianity as a system is either true or false. The contention of the Freethinker is that, being false, its destruction would be a solid gain for truth, and consequently make for the elevation of humanity. There are hundreds of Associations at work to-day which, rejecting Christianity, are moving towards an ideal sufficient to satisfy the cravings of finer natures, and by education are moulding others. The good in connection with the Christian system would not therefore cease with the extinction of the system itself, but would rather flow with greater volume and force when released from the cramping effect of dogma, miracle, and priestly contrivance. "Nothing" in place of the system, would allow the good extracted from all systems to combine with greater freedom for social ends.