
“...For always in thine eyes, O Liberty! "Abode that high light whereby the world is saved: And though they slay us, we will trust in thee." — John Hay..."

On Picket Duty.

A law against blasphemy is its own violation; for, if there be a God, those who presume to add to his laws are the worst of blasphemers.

Those who would have the usurer rewarded the rendering a service always find it convenient to forget that the usurer's victims would not need his service were it not that the laws made at his bidding prevent them from serving themselves.

"The death of President Garfield has done more to kill the incipient poison that Col. Bob Logan was inoculated in the minds of the American people than the preaching of all the ministers could do," writes a correspondent of the Boston "Herald." Presumably by its establishment of the efficacy of prayer.

Prince Napoleon, the only one of the Bonaparte ever suspected of liberal tendencies, was one day discussing with Proudhon the latter's theories. Astonished at their audacity, the prince exclaimed: "What kind of a society, then, do you dream of, Monsieur Proudhon?" "Prince," answered the brave radical, "to know no slavery, I dream of a society in which I should be gilligocilled as a conservative."

What place so honored as the little city of Bern in Switzerland, bemoaned the decline of socialism in the United States. Its tears were wasted. The People. In this country. There will be one. It is true that the party of the State socialists whom he represents is fast dwindling into insignificance; but true socialism, the socialism that is based on Liberty, the socialism that means a free and independent government, and not the socialism that is but another step in that path of progress whose first steps are those of Jefferson and Franklin, is growing every day. All other socialism is reactionary, and deserves its inevitable death.

The Democratic Statesman, "Greenback organ, which wishes the government to run the railways, manage the telegraph, and transact pretty much all the business of the country, says that "...certainly no private company could conduct the postal service so cheaply and satisfactorily as is now done." Evidently the editor has never seen the report of the special commissioner detailed by the department to examine the postal service of the Pacific coast. There he would find the statement that Wells, Fargo & Co. supply the inhabitants of that locality with mail facilities superior to the government's in promptness, security, and universality, and at rates that would be lower than the government's except for the enormous tax (just equal to the government's rates) imposed upon the business. He would find, too, the further statement that, even with so tremendous an advantage as this to give it, the government cannot successfully compete with this private firm. And yet it is to this branch of the government's work that the St. Louis administration point with pride. We should like few things better than to see some competent business man go thoroughly into the subject, and point out the outrages, absurdities, and inconveniences of the monopsony system. In the whole list of monopolies there is no greater shan..."
Liberty.

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"A free man is one who enjoys the use of his reason and his faculties; who is neither blinded by passion, nor hindered or driven by error, nor deceived by erroneous opinions."—Pascal.

Free Religion: Then, and Now.

Our faith comes in moments; our Vice is habitual.—Emerson.

This editor of the "Free Religious Index," returning to his post after a protracted vacation, has heard of a late criticism of the Free Religious Association, which is said that Association "reserves so few of the speakers whom people were accustomed to delight at its early conventions." He thinks this will "balance" the criticism that was made earlier in its history, "namely, that the same old stagers were brought out on the platform every year." But, fearing lest the last criticism would "set up a standard altogether too severe," he knows of "no society which holds the secret of remedy against the ravages of age, disease, and death among its speakers. Fourteen years have brought their inevitable incitements to the form of the Association." An "especially interesting feature in the Association is that younger men and women, with fresh zeal and ability, are coming forward to take the place of the departed and the disabled.

As for the new, it has a suspicion that the "Index" editor has ventured to peruse its columns, and has therein discovered the critics refer to, we will say a word or two that we think will be the point. True, Liberty did speak of the absence from the Free Religious Association's platform of the illustrious men who gave to "Free Religion," as it was called, its early and only claim to recognition. But not without a due understanding of the fact that, in good part, "age, disease, and death" had been its causes. It was not alone this fact of their non-appearance in Free Religious assemblages at the present time that aroused our attention; it was the far more significant fact that their "successors" are rare and women of the different mold. The doer and the long of it,—the Free Religious Association has run very quickly the "race all organized religions run; it has dropped down from the high region of the minds of the wheelbarrow place of propagandism. Its says to itself today, "Now, we have got our idea; let us get money and younger men and women with fresh zeal and ability to put its through." That is, it has thus early struck its limitation. Just like the old Unitarian movement out of which holds was born, it has lost its "moment of faith," and lives now only to exemplify "vice," which Emerson says is "habitual." Doubtless it will trundle along with its wheelbarrow-load of "good works" for a certain season, but it will not make much note the ask, when here is that Corrins' Church of a Engine, the Roman Catholic, covering the earth with its vast array of god-like machinery, not to mention the "vice" vehicles of the whole Protestant world. But in that world one idea leads into another away was all the contribution to humana elevation it will ever get credit for. For out of it came inspirations, visions, and ideal strength, which, to the soul, is meat and drink. But today what do the younger men and women offer the unheedling world? Now do they propose to arrest attention? Why, they are at the old miserable trick of formulating "Catechisms" for the "Young." Heaven save the mark: if it can; but, if it cannot, we are at the old miserable trick of formulating "Catechisms" for the "Young."

The child shall no more itself be an "ideal voyager," but shall sit down like a good little child in some Free Religious meeting-house, and be fed on what these "younger men and women with zeal" have "formulated." Yes, it is a fact; they are busy enough preparing Free Religious leaves for the little ones, but themselves have not lived the experience of it; either that there may be no mistake, and the little ones be saved from Error's indulgence. Ah! think of it. This is the "especially encouraging feature." From John Wool to this!

From Faith to Vice.

Faith would believe in the child, and inspire it with its own Liberty to range in the upper region of ideas, ever looking with its own eyes into the vastness of its own being.

Vice prepares a dose, and gives it.

That is Free Religion's mission today, as confessed by its "organizers." For our part, we confess at the old stagers on its platform were far more interesting.

It is the difference between spoutiness and humdrum; life, and a slow-bite; joyful health, and the "enthusiasm" of the religious disease; yes, between the world's Faith, and the world's Vice.

Authority.

The most deadly enemy of human progress is authority. It is incarnated in a million forms in every sphere of social growth. It arms itself with position, with titles, with hereditary emblems, with superstitions, lies, tricks, and a host of all sorts. Its source is human ignorance and credulity, and it is fed by the organized frauds who fatten on the spoils.

And authority, in itself, is not necessarily a dangerous principle. The great element of despotsim in it lies in that false education which ignores the natural source of all true authority. The authority into it which is the purpose of Liberty to pour havoc and destruction, always an entrapment outside of the individual, never subject to his unconditional veto. To come to the point at once, the individual, and the individual alone, is the only true and inalienable source of authority, but can never assume to be authority to any one but himself without becoming a despot.

The first and foremost great fraud set up for purposes of plunder and slavery is God. Generally speaking, God is an action all men, but, locally speaking, he is the particular thing for the particular field where the masses are to be gobbled, robbed, and enslaved. Once settled that he is authority,—that his word is from the beginning and infallible,—and the theological putztoms workers easily mould him to suit the various needs.

Nothing, now permanent can ever be accomplished in reform until this central figure, asbected, be- cause the veto power of the individual, is demolished. If any man wants a comonwealth for his entertain- ment and instruction, let him have one. It would be a denial of Liberty to interfere with it. But the moment he attempts to set that God up as unques- tioned authority, he becomes a public enemy and a spiritual pirate.

God himself, being a pure fiction, is of course harmless in himself. But the practical power for despotism lies in the theological putztom workers who lobby for God, lobby for the Bible, lobby for God. These fellows are something tangible. They can kick, bite, snatch, handle a rack, play sleight-of-hand tricks with wafers, and extort at wholesale. They become sacrament- grabbers (spiritual, landlady), pew-rent sharers (spiritual, landlady), and holy men (spiritual, "goumene men"). The success of the great spiritual authority is due largely to the decoration of their names with titles. It is Father A., Rev. Mr. B., Rt. Rev. Mr. C., Bishop D., the Rev. Dr. E., Rev. Mr. F., D.D., etc., etc.

Chiefly from the fact that the central figure, God, overshadows their ecclesiasticat petticoats, but largely from the mysterious trappings and titles with which they enow themselves, these fellows become recognized as God's cabinet. The pope is the Almighty's secretary of state. He is prime minister of the spiritual kingdom. The Catholic clergy may be said to be the religious slaveholders, and the Protestant preacher be the half-conscious, half-awakened, intellectual office-holders become authority, but, nevertheless, a kind of authority that can be reached and made to earn an honest living, if their victims can be induced to abolish the bogus fiction, God, behind them.

Very long men in the business of maintaining alone that authority suppresses progress. We have a mental hierarchy in society scarcely less dangerous than the spiritual, and generally in alliance with it. This clergy has its hierarchy in the colleges, and illuminates its tricks to satiate that professional whitewash known as scholarship. By a skilful use of titles, scholarly uniforming, and learned posing, met-deciety, narrowness, and hypocrisy manage to usurp the places of the world's truly great thinkers and broadly-educated men. The colleges, and the titled namkulls who run them, become authority, and the average man or woman who visits those public ignorance-urneries called libraries must now do to himself the tillage of the title in order to gauge the depth of thought in it by the length of the author's titles and the standing of the college which endowed him with them.

Liberty is the sworn enemy of titles. It demands their immediate and unconditional surrender. Not that we deny the right of an individual (for himself) to carry as many titles as his name as he chooses; but no man who attaches Revs., D.D., LL.D., M.D., or others to his name has the right to ask anybody else to use them in addressing him. When the social heresy and mischief of such priestly and scholarly tricks become evident in the light of Liberty, those mental popes and priests will find it difficult to steal into society without paying Nature's required admission fee of merit.

Even outside of recognized orthodoxy in religion and education there is a number of set quasi lib- erals, who attempt to steal the livery of authority, and if they choose, they may.

Aboct of the "Index" became so puffed up with culture that he finally went up and drifted away. Many of the present participants in the so-called Free Reli- gious movement have culture on the brain, to an ex- tent that renders them powerless and igno- ringly more contemptible than the learned dolts whom Wendell Phillips called to order last summer at Harvard College. The spirit of popery among profes- sional culture writers is the same as that of the clergy. This eternal harping on culture which has been the key note of the "Free Religious Index" since its rise is simply a surreptitious attempt to make culture an authority in the place of the D.D.s, L.L.D.s, and other devices of the orthodox. Abbot's attempt to organ- ize his culture into a "consensus of the competent" was proof plain and palpable that he simply served the papal system of authority in the livery of a liberal.

Liberty insists that the individual is an authority greater than gods, hierarchs, professionals, clergymen, and the all the other pretendors who, under one guise or another, attempt to steal into the human mind and soul through some scheme independent of their own Creation. Wherever a petty God, even out of so great a sham as Abbot's "cul- ture," is an ally of the pope and a follower of his methods. He who set up a "consensus of the com- petent," deifies purity, virtue, yes, Liberty itself, to the exact extent of making an apostate of his kind. Purity, virtue, culture,—all these half lived petty gods of the Free Religious,—what are they more than somebody's undefined ideals, binding no one to the purpose of your own individuels? This humbug- ger of setting up ideals as the battle-ax was defeated by Plato over two thousand years ago, and it is a poor comment on the "culture" of these theoretical purists that they have profited so little by his immortal teaching.

No, there is but one way to Liberty, and all the other shifts of "advanced culture" are sure to lead to despotism in the end. That way is to accord to the individuals' aut discretion; power in all matters
Who Should Hang, Guitée or God? Garfield was so shot that the wound was fatal from the beginning. The skill, the surgical care was unsurpassed. Hence, no earthly, visible power could save him. Christians are taught, the country prays, to an idle word, in a word, to pray “for divine mercy,” that the course of nature may be stayed and a miracle be wrought. Their prayer was not heard. Garfield died. Then, the suspense in humiliation, and observe a day of fasting. They say: “It has pleased Almighty God to remove him from our midst.” Now, what will the case stand? Garfield died because Guitée shot him. And Guitée is to be hanged as the murderer of Garfield. This is one side of the story. The other is that he was “removed by Almighty God.”

If God removed him, why hang Guitée? Was Guitée an instrument in God’s hands? He says that he did the “will of God.” Guitée was as much a sinner as “Thou, God, hast humbled us for our sins, and taken him to thy self.” But it was Guitée’s bullet that sent him thither. And Guitée will be hanged. And God will be praised, because, in his “broken heart,” he doth do all things right.

Or, Christians resign themselves to the will of this God, with broken hearts, and yet they know of no fate too harsh for the wretch whom their God employed. Such is the muddle into which the world is ever getting because of its belief in the existence of personal gods, in whose hands are all the events of life.

Preaching Played Out. Preachers are preachers—that is, they must preach once every Sunday, at least. And what shall it be about? What are they hired for? What is their man and staple topic? “Why, we all know full well that their sermons must be about sin. Sin, in some form or fashion, is our all.” It will be false to their mission. We once heard: preacher declare, with all the earnestness imaginable, “What, my brethren, is the subject of our lives? It is the overflowing sinfulness of sin.” On extraordinary occasions, it is the individual sinner whom they hold over the concus. On extraordinary natures, the nation is brought into their discourse, and receives its due allotment of sins. Take away this sin-business, and the preacher’s business. For what will the minister do, if he are not belted, as the preacher is, in the sin-vest? It was esteemed an occupation worthy of all ambition. Mothers prayed that all their sons might be preachers. Not to go to hear the preacher was the deadliness of sins. It was an offence to God. For was it not sin that the Lord God is? Do not, in an especial and well-worn, infallible manner, know the will of God? Was it not his business to read God’s word, and then “expose” it? If the original sin, can it make it clear, like the noon-day? And the burden of all sins, “Sin, sin, sin,” and the “wrath of God,” from which sinners must flee.

The present time is unlike the past in this respect. It listens to the preacher,—when there is not a greater attraction elsewhere,—but little heeds him, unless he really has somewhat to say; and that somewhat is taken for what it is worth, and not because the preacher says it. And then the rage rises above the preacher, and, when this occurs, the problem is, what may gain any influence? If its words evoke some earthly vital interest. But, for the most part, the preacher is allowed to make the burden of his discourse still of sin against deity, and go by its established outline, its proper mode of procedure, and make the requisite respectable showing. But, as a “man of God,” he is no more known. An ornament now, a figure-head, like Victoria; not a necessity, whose demise is unthinkable. Our space is limited, and one in a free way, voice the real sentiment of the sensible world. But this appears to be the notable fact: The world is weary of being preached at. It desires instruction, knowledge as to this present life. What is logical will still go along as it goes along, only let it have the higher aims of living clearly set forth. What is true and beautiful and just is desired to hear about. But the eternal ding-dong of “sin, sin, sin,” and that by a fellow-sinner, “wears it,” as Goethe wrote, “out and out.”

All of which is summed with the utmost personal good-will for the preacher, for whom we have no prayer for, but who, if one may judge from what he has said, may be speedily delivered into that uncanny dimness good sense which is the salvation of all human souls, that they may have a wholesome wrath for wrong-doing, and rise above the fear of the rich and the mighty who sit in the pews. A Baseless Charge. My Dear Mr. T. — It is entirely immaterial in this discussion whether your position be “odd” or otherwise. The question at issue must be settled, if settled at all, in our own hearts, and no prejudice either for or against capital can affect the argument. Let us banish it with no irrelevant matter.

My question simply this: is a man who has a private enter in equity to compensation for its use; and, if not, why not? This question (I say it with all respect you evade. But, until it is answered, no progress can be made in this inquiry. It is no answer to say, “Let him sell his plough.” He does not sell it; he has a natural right to do it. Another borrows it, as he has a natural right to do. I repeat: Is it just to pay for it? You gain nothing when you say, “Let him sell it;” for, if I followed you there, it would only be to present the same question substantially in another form. You might then suggest another, and another, and another, and another, and another, and another. You refer me to certain “auriculars,”—Brown and Rustin, I do not how to authorities on questions of this nature; and I suppose you are satisfied with Brown’s proposition, as Brown himself does, does not answer my question. Rustin is entirely remote. He concludes that the case if examination is one of sale and purchase. That is not the case I stated at all. If there be an answer to my question, I am sure you are capable of stating it.

Yours cordially, J. N. BACKEB. We have no wish to waste these columns in repetition; but this charge of evasion is a serious one, that can be thoroughly examined only by review. If the charges do not stand the examination, then, that we had in view in beginning the publication of this journal was the annihilation of usury. If, in our first direct conflict with a supporter of usury, we have been guilty of evasion, we are united for our defense. The plough cannot be a Christian object, but one must be answered. But we unhesitatingly plead “Not guilty.” Mr. Babcock argued that the man who makes a plough and lends it is entitled to a portion of the loaf subsequently produced, in addition to the return of the plough; he was answered this by saying, “Let him sell his plough.” No, we did not. On the principle that only labor can be an equitable basis of price, we argued in reply as follows: “The maker of the plough is entitled to pay for his work. Full pay, paid once; no more. That pay, is the plough itself, or its equivalent in other marketable products, said equivalent being measured by the amount of labor employed in its production.” And Mr. Babcock is correct in this. His plough is not in any sense is evasive. Then Mr. Babcock asked this other and distinct question: “If it furnishes his plough only on condition that they be returned to him in as good state as when taken out, how is he to get the money? He replied that we did not know, and that, if he was such a fool as to do so, we did not care. Nothing evasive here, either; on the contrary, utterly frankness. Touched a little, however, by Mr. Babcock’s sympathy; with the precautions we ventured the suggestion that, instead of lending his plough to the farmer, he might sell it to him, and thus get money whereby to buy bread of the baker. This suggestion was generous, it is known, probably it was imperative, but was it evasive? Not in the least.

Finally, thinking that Mr. Babcock might agree, as we do, with Novalis that a man’s belies gains that another mind is convinced thereof, we called his attention to two other minds in harmony with ours on the point now in dispute, A. B. Brown and John Rustin. But not as authorities, in Mr. Babcock’s sense of the word; what Liberty and Rustin think is another length in another column of this issue’s editorial pages. Still, Mr. Brown being Mr. Babcock’s candidate for secretary of state, and party candidates being supposedly representatives in things fundamental, we deemed it not out of place to cite one or two extracts from Mr. Brown that seemed to us, on its face, directly contradictory of Mr. Babcock. To our astonishment Mr. Babcock accepts it as not inconsistent with his position, at the same time declaring it irrelevant. Argument ends here. If we hold up two objects, one of which, to our eyes, is red and the other blue, and Mr. Babcock declares that both are red, it is useless to discuss the matter. One of us is color-blind. The ultimate verity that we sought to destroy, that Rustin, one of mankind who will judge, in quoting from Mr. Rustin, however, we did not ask Mr. Babcock to accept him as authority, but to point out the weakness of an argument drawn from an illustration similar to Mr. Babcock’s. Mr. Babcock replies by denying the similarity, saying that Rustin’s conclusions that he examines is one of sale and purchase.” Let us see. Rustin is examining a story told by Bastiat in illustration and defense of usury. At a certain Bastiat version of it, he abridges it thus, stripping away all the arguables:\n
James makes a plough, lends it to William on 1st of January for a year. William gives him a plough for the loan of it, wears it out, and makes another for James, which he gives him on the same day. On the 31st of December, James again borrows the plough from William, and makes a new one; and the arrangement is repeated continuously. The position of William therefor is, that he makes a plough every 31st of December; lends it to James till the next day, and pays James a plough annually for the privilege of lending it to him on that evening.

Substitute, in the foregoing, “plough” for “plane,” and “shovel” for “plane,” and the story differs in no essential point from Mr. Babcock’s. How monstrously unjust the transaction is can be plainly seen. Rustin next shows how this unjust transaction may be changed into a just one. If James on the 31st of December, while he could only get his gain of a plough by working with it himself, and wear- ing it out himself. When he had worn it out at the end of the year, he would, therefore, have to make another for himself again makes out advantage instead, which he must, therefore, pay James his plough for; and return to James, what James would, if he had not lent his plough, then on the 31st of December, and so on. James must make a new one for himself, as he would have had to do if no William had existed; and if William likes to “row on another plough—this is an outdoor, to say, clearing the story of its nonsense, that James makes a plough annually, and sells it to William for its proper price, which, in kind, is a

It is this latter transaction, wholly different from the former, that Rustin pronounces a “sale,” having "nothing whatever to do with principal or with interest.” And yet, according to Mr. Babcock, “the case he examines [Bastiat’s, of course] is one of sale and purchase.” We understand now how it is that Mr. Babcock can charge us with evasion. He evidently
neither write nor read anything but the plain truths showered upon him daily in his cell by some kind soul who does not disturb the peace of his mind by numbers. He is in constant action with the outer world is cut off, except that he has permission, once in three months, to see one of his friends for five seconds..."

CRUMBS FROM LIBERTY'S TABLE.

An arbitrary increase of wages or an arbitrary decrease of hours of labor, or an enforceable distribution of the product continues, is only a mitigation of the rigors of servitude, not a destruction of the slavery in which the masses are held to those whom the New York Times so aptly describes as "the small class whose occupation is the difficult one of entertaining themselves."—New York Truth.

The old truth that to repress freedom of speech is to repress freedom of action is an old truth, but it is one which needs repetition in every crisis of the world's history. To create secrecy is to protect conspirators; to defend the rights of crime is the protection of honest men.—Paul Mall Gaule.

The spades system will not be destroyed by the methods of dividing the spoils.—Bullfinch.

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