

the same bench, or fight in the same ranks, as well as men of various or opposite opinions upon any controverted topic of natural philosophy, history or ethics. Every species of intolerance which enjoins suppression and silence, and every species of persecution which enforces such injunctions, is adverse to the progress of truth: forasmuch as it causes that to be fixed by one set of men, at one time, which is much better, and with much more probability of success, left to the independent and progressive inquiry of separate individuals. Truth results from discussion and from controversy; is investigated by the labors and researches of private persons. Whatever, therefore, prohibits these, obstructs that industry and that liberty which it is the common interest of mankind to promote. In religion, as in other subjects, truth, if left to itself, will almost always obtain the ascendancy." But after so much good sense he adds: "Under the idea of religious toleration, I include the toleration of all books of serious argumentation; but I deem it no infringement of religious liberty to restrain the circulation of ridicule, invective and mockery upon religious subjects; because this species of writing applies only to the passions, weakens the judgment, and contaminates the imagination of its readers; has no tendency whatever to assist either the investigation or the impression of truth; on the contrary, whilst it stays not to distinguish between the authority of different religions, it destroys alike the influence of all." *Paley was wrong.* He underrated, or rather misrated altogether, the function of ridicule in argument.

This is somewhat of a formidable list of names to collect together for the mere purpose of condemning their opinions without a word of argument. Plato, typical of everybody down to the seventeenth century (Pagans, Protestants and Catholics), Hobbes, Locke, Warburton, Rousseau (Voltaire may be added), Blackstone, Burke, Paley

—all more or less wrong, and you and I right? Yes, you say, most certainly we are—and from Chelsea we may still hear reverberating, "He will always do it, I suppose."

And we, the infallibles, have our opinions, too, upon the question of free trade *versus* protection, no doubt; although perhaps we are old enough to have changed them at the same time that our leaders did. Prior to 1876 (say) we were all free traders or at least revenue-tariff men; about that time perhaps we became eager protectionists, and so voted in 1878; and we could then have demonstrated to any one not absolutely imbecile that there was no doubt in the world that we were right—could we not distinguish between successful free trade in England, and triumphant protection in the United States? But now, oh! now, we, and thousands such as we, having lost our prophet, clamorously acclaim a new found apostle who promises to lead us out of the Egyptian night in which we have been groping and show us our land flowing with milk and honey. Stop a moment here. Have you ever contemptuously and in real earnest called yourself a fool for having believed otherwise than you now do on this or any other subject? If so, perhaps, you had ground for your charge (although not for your lack of politeness); and possibly you may not have yet much improved in wisdom! (This is a consideration which should give you a little pause before throwing stones at others.) On the other hand, if you have never so characterized yourself, should you not treat with the same leniency and respect those who continue to hold the opinions which you have abandoned. There is a possibility that they have been always right. There is no such possibility for you! Your insight into your own mistakes, as well as into those of others, you reckon as final, and you go upon it as such!—"He will always do it I suppose in one or the other way."