

from denial to doubt. At all events, let us not give it a credit in the one meaning which it deserves only in the other.

It is worth while to look into this a little more in detail. There are from the present point of view four possible attitudes of mind, for two of which it is not easy to find appropriate words. The first is belief, the second is simple absence of belief, the third is doubt, the fourth is scepticism—in the sense, to use an objectionable word, of disbelief or denial, or what is now commonly meant by unbelief. The first and third present no difficulty; belief and doubt are terms that can scarcely be misunderstood. But the second and fourth—the simple absence of belief and the actual presence of disbelief—need some distinct terms; unbelief would etymologically serve for the third, but unfortunately it has already the sense of the fourth. Until some better words are found we can but call the second non-belief, and the fourth disbelief. The four attitudes of mind, then, may be thus expressed. The first, belief; the second, non-belief; the third doubt; the fourth, disbelief; with scepticism as wavering between the third and fourth.

Freethought (together with certain phrases that belong to the same class) presents similar difficulties. Freethinking ought to mean, but does not, thinking that is free. It is intended, perhaps, to have some such meaning when altered by unbelievers, but in common use it is only another name for one who rejects Christianity. There is some uncertainty as to what those who call themselves freethinkers really intend by the term. One might suppose they meant what the word in itself signifies. But when we find freethinkers denying the freedom of the will, what can they mean by freedom of thought? We need not dwell on the cases where freethinking apparently means freedom not to think; or, as the Bishop of Peterborough has put it, where men call themselves freethinkers before they have begun to think. But it is perplexing to find men to whom no such language can be properly applied, alleging, almost in the same breath, that men are the mere "creatures of circumstances," and that they, the unbelievers, are freethinkers. For logically it follows