

are opposed to the bill. This tirade finishes with the following curious admission: "The Christians and Jews of the Stock Exchange no doubt worship at heart the same God, and alike regard the test as a protection of the strong box." It seems that if the test were nothing more than a protection to property, it would be a sufficient reason to preserve it.

The motives for the extraordinary changes in the political views of Mr. Gladstone, "the chief Christian statesman" of the *Bystander*, have been exemplified too recently by the indiscreet publication of his correspondence with Bishop Wilberforce, to leave much force in an appeal to the moral weight of his expressed opinions. Who "the truest followers of Jesus" are, we are left to guess—haply Mr. John Bright and Lord Coleridge. The former of these religious guides told us a few years ago that "be it in town or be it in the country, you will find the church is never a centre of political light, but of political darkness." And the latter owed some of his preferment to his joining Mr. Gladstone in despoiling the Irish branch of the Church of which he is a member. This great jurist, "whose religious character and zeal in the church's cause, (*i.e.* the cause of the centre of political darkness, according to Mr. Bright) are above question," is incidentally commended for putting "a rational construction on the *dictum* that Christianity is a part of the law of the land." We are then told in what sense the *Bystander* thinks it was commonly understood, until we were suddenly enlightened by a ruling of the Lord Chief Justice. He (*Bystander*) says "that *dictum* would be a restraint not only on the utterances of the free thinker, but on all theological discussion; for the Christianity which is a part of the law, must be the Christianity by law established, and thus no one could be permitted to question any one of the myriad propositions of theology embraced in the Articles, Homilies and Prayer Book of the Church of England. But the Lord Chief Justice has ruled that fair argument, though it may be directed against Christianity, is free, and that nothing is prohibited except those outrages upon the religious feelings of the community, which are breaches, not of orthodoxy, but of public decency."

The legal discoveries of the Lord Chief Justice and the *Bystander* are worthy of serious consideration; but they are not precisely what they are represented to be in the article before us. The *dictum* was not commonly understood as is above set forth. It was the Divinity of Christ that was protected by the *dictum*, not "all the myriad of propositions," etc. This was a tangible rule, before the admission of Jews to Parliament. Since, it is logically untenable. The ruling of Lord Coleridge is in the last degree arbitrary and illogical. It lays down as a rule what has no metes or boundaries, and is really no more than a tub to the whale of popular prejudice, as Lord Coleridge very well knows. If reviling Christ, denouncing his miracles as impostures, and denying his Divinity, be not "a breach of orthodoxy," it is dishonest in an educated man to say he pretends to think it is "a breach of decency." If Christ was not God, it is a perfectly fair proposition to maintain that he was an impostor.

It is rather hard on so pure-blooded a liberal as Mr. Morley, to have a friendly hand declare that the oath has been utterly tainted and discredited by the lips which have taken it, in avowed mockery, or in veiled hypocrisy. We should be glad to know what Mr. Morley thinks of the *dictum* of the Lord Chief Justice in the case of the "Free-thinker," and of the *Bystander's* estimate of that valuable addition to the doctrine of the common law.

It is unnecessary to pursue further the consideration of the *Bystander's* crudities and appeals to small jealousies and popular passions, which its editor assumes for a purpose as unscrupulously as he has misrepresented the argument in favour of the legal test. There is, however, one misstatement so gross as to deserve special mention. He declares, without qualification of any kind, that Cardinal Newman was *in favour* of the Affirmation Bill. Here is what the Cardinal says, on the occasion referred to by the *Bystander*, writing to Mr. F. W. Chesson, on the 8th May last:

"BIRMINGHAM, May 8, 1883.

"Dear Sir,—I do not know how to answer your question without using more words than I like to trouble you with. I feel myself to be so little of a judge on political or even social questions, and religious ques-