

# **LAST WORDS ON GREAT ISSUES**

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# LAST WORDS ON GREAT ISSUES

BY

JOHN BEATTIE CROZIER, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF

"CIVILIZATION AND PROGRESS," "HISTORY OF INTELLECTUAL  
DEVELOPMENT," "THE WHEEL OF WEALTH," ETC.

ON

RELIGION AS IT STANDS TO-DAY;  
RELIGIOUS CONVERSION; SPIRITUALISM;  
IMPERIAL POLITICS; FREE TRADE AND PROTECTION;  
SOCIALISM, ETC.

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## PREFACE

I SHOULD scarcely have ventured to republish here, by way of winding up my literary career, those of the following chapters which have already appeared elsewhere, were it not for some considerations which the War has forced into prominence. The most general of these perhaps is, that the War like a sudden upheaval in Geology has, by its clearance of the field of old and outgrown doctrines and theories, quickened the pace, as it were, of every kind of Social, Moral and even Intellectual Evolution; if, indeed, it has not entirely short-circuited most of them. So that doctrines which would have otherwise lingered on for generations, have, to the surprise of their adherents, been swallowed up as if by an earthquake, and buried in graves from which there is no resurrection. If, therefore, I were asked, what parts, then, of all my ponderous tomes, written many of them long before the War, have survived it unscathed, I should answer—these “Last Words.” They are in a way, my last will and testament in a nutshell. Had my line been the Mathematics, the War as such could not have affected them a jot; nor can it touch much of my purely Historical studies on the “Evolution of Civilization,” nor my “History of Intellectual Development.” But as for my Political predictions, my schemes of Social reconstruction, my Political Economy of Free Trade or Protection, or the future of Socialism, the War will either “make me, or undo me quite.” And therefore on these “Last Words” as the tattered remnants of an “Old Guard,” stripped to their barest

bones, I am content, in spite of the War, to stand or fall. Should I stand the ordeal, I trust they will be accounted to me for righteousness; as having followed at least truly Scientific lines. On the other hand, should my predictions fail to meet the wants of the New Times before us, I must then be content either to be put among the ranks of the "kite-flying" prophets who take their chance of a hit or a miss; or must fall back on the younger men of the coming generation, to correct, supplement or altogether to supersede my labours. At any rate, these "Last Words" are the condensed epitome of any legacy, which, as an old soldier in the cause of Scientific Truth, I have to leave to the younger generation, from a lifetime spent in devotion to the problems with which they deal.

A generation ago, the reigning kings in the Intellectual world were John Stuart Mill, Darwin, and Herbert Spencer. Spencer had shortly before superseded Mill, and Buckle, and Comte; and he and Darwin dividing the sovereignty of the Intellectual world, like Caesar and Antony, between them, reigned alone; supreme each in his separate sphere, from London to Paris, and from Paris to Germany, America and Japan; the one as the philosopher of Evolution in general, the other of Biology in particular. I had hoped myself to have followed on the lines of Spencer, my earliest Master; but when as a young man I had settled down to work, I found that I was unwillingly obliged to deny the Materialistic basis of his entire System—except in a single great Principle of his to which I have ever remained his debtor.

In the meantime, curiously enough, Samuel Butler, running on parallel basic lines to my own, was denying Darwin's great doctrine of the Evolution of Species from "Natural Selection" alone. But unfortunately



for both of us, we found ourselves up against a stone wall; not of prejudice, but of *genuine belief* throughout the whole domain of the Scientific World; and our work, in consequence, was ignored, and buried for the time in silence and oblivion. Nor was there any Court to which we could appeal. For, again, curiously enough, the Academical Professors at the Universities ignored us all alike; not only myself and Butler; but even the great Darwin and Spencer himself! What then were we to do? As for the effect of this boycott, I took it as gaily as if it were the stimulus of a stiff and bracing breeze on a stormy beach; but poor Butler took his neglect deeply to heart, and soured by it, withered away under it, dying before his prime. And there both of us remained as "literary outcasts" for more than twenty years; until just before the War, signs of favouring breezes here and there were felt blowing definitely in our favour, and breathing propitiously on our bones long since dead!

And now what do we find to-day? Spencer's Philosophy is said to be dead; great as was its colossal superstructure, and its real power; and yet, in my judgment, there is scarcely a division of it in which he cannot give all of us "points" even yet. Darwin's basis has been superseded in turn by the once despised Butler; and as for the Academical Dons who in the old days listened to the lightest whispers from Germany as if they were oracles, they are now seen flying from them as from a pestilence, and, like St. Peter, denying that they had ever known them! The old Academical Political Economy, too, which entrenched itself on the Free Trade principles of John Stuart Mill and Marshall, has not only been suspended during the War, but in my judgment has gone, never to return—until the conditions, summarized in the article in these "Last Words," are realized.

Another revolution which the War has effected is, that the Religion of Christ, and the doctrines of the Church, which were still sufficient to meet the needs of sorrow-laden souls, are now giving place to a Spiritualism of "spooks" and "mediums," on whose scraggy and beggarly shake-down, not merely the bewildered, the stricken, and the bereaved, are content to lie down in peace calmly awaiting their death—but even the "Intellectuals" as well. Is this not a strange topsy-turveydom? And would it not indeed be a theme for comedy, were it not so pathetic a tragedy? For consider it—That the very Christianity which when it came into the world occupied itself largely in casting out these "spooks" and "mediums," these sorcerers and necromancers—that this Christianity, I say, should in its decadence have so lost itself and its hold on the minds of men, that these "mediums" from their superior pose and elevation, can now actually condescend to patronize it—going even so far as to suggest that if its old and moribund leaves and branches could only be sprinkled by *their* healing waters, it would be revived in all its pristine vigour; and like the old and "wappened widow" in Shakespeare's "Timon," be "spiced to the April day again"! Is this not monstrous in this "so-called" Twentieth Century? No wonder that Father Vaughan, representing the Roman Catholic Church, should in his disgust on seeing Protestants lying down under this degradation, feel in his cheek a blush of shame! To me, as an outsider, there seems, I confess, something in the *continuous tradition* of the old Original Church after all! I have dealt at length here with all this, in my chapter on "Sir Oliver Lodge and Spiritualism."

Intimately associated with all these Religious phenomena is the problem of "Religious Conversion." I have tried to show what its psychology is, and how

it acts; and what its significance is, and what it is not; as well as what part the immense power it has had on the minds of the great Founders of Religions, has played in Civilization, and in the lives and characters of individual men throughout the ages.

In the paper on "Emerson, Cicero, the Stoics and Myself" I still keep to aspects of the Religious Problem as it exists to-day. It is a kind of four-handed game of Thought and Religious Speculation; and in spite of its brevity contains my last words on the central doctrines of the persons concerned. Emerson is a writer not to be thoroughly understood "without prayer and much fasting"; and his every thought is important, inasmuch as he still remains the Founder and Inspirer of the world-wide "Ethical Societies" of to-day.

Leaving these Religious problems, I come to my "last words" on what may be called the "High Politics" of to-day, and after the War: my articles on Canada, and India, and the still unsolved problem of Free Trade or Protection. In the first, a "Warning to Canada," I, as a Canadian myself, have laid down the *principles* which, in my judgment, should regulate the Trade relations of Canada and the United States, after as before the War—principles which must be jealously guarded in all Reciprocal Treaties between the two countries, so long as they are *separate* nations under different flags.

The article on the "Problem of India" written before the War, and prepared by me with much labour and care, lays down, in more or less detail, the principles which, in my judgment, should guide our Administration—however long we should remain there. It brought down on me at the time a three-column Editorial in the leading pro-English paper at Allahabad; as if I had proposed something of the nature