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Pending further arrangements, W. Pratt, Esq., the President of
the Christchurch Freethought Association, has kindly undertaken
to take charge of and distribute THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW in
Christchurch.

Those willing to undertake the agency for places not named are
requested to communicate at once with the publisher.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JULIA.—Lines received.

M.—Your paper on Spiritualism in our next.

W.S.—We fear we have not space, and that a long poem would
not be read, however excellent.

A.C.K.—Contributions received with thanks, but, though the
sentiment is excellent, they are hardly suitable for our columns.

WELLINGTON FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.—Just received on
going to press monthly report, which is unfortunately excluded
from our present issue.

C.J.R., Canterbury.—We regret being compelled at the last
moment, owing to great press of matter, to hold over "Signs of
the Times." It will appear in our next.

DELTA.—No census return has ever given the real number of Free-
thinkers. It is estimated there are eight millions in the United
States. The nominal Christians are a hundred to one of those who
pay any regard to the "verities."

S.C.—The late Robert Chambers had for many years the credit of
being the author of 'Vestiges of Creation,' but the authorship is still
involved in mystery. The author of 'Supernatural Religion' is known
to be Professor F. W. Newman, brother of Cardinal Newman.

ARTURUS.—As a "Christian Freethinker," you ask for liberty to
think for yourself. This is turning the tables on us in an ingenious
manner. As Freethinkers without any qualifying term, we have
had to demand for ourselves the "liberty of prophesying"; and we
have not been accustomed to find Christians humbly requesting the
same indulgence from Freethinkers. When the time comes that all
intelligent men will be avowed Freethinkers, we have no doubt the
boundaries of freedom will have been enlarged. You cannot do
better than persuade your Christian friends to practise the prin-
ciples of freedom, which will be the best shield and protection for
themselves when they have become the minority.

The Freethought Review.

WANGANUI, N.Z., DECEMBER 1, 1883.

CLERICALISM AND SCHOOLS.

THOMAS PAINE thought one good schoolmaster worth
considerably more than one hundred priests, and the
civilised world since has been fast approaching the
opinion of "the rebellious staymaker of Thetbury." And it must have been somewhat the same enlightened
and liberal spirit which actuated our legislators in New
Zealand when they instituted our present school system
of free, compulsory, and secular education. It is one of
the most statesmanlike acts which the politicians of this
colony can lay claim to, and one which shows that
they were determined to keep abreast of our Aus-
tralian neighbours, and of the foremost and most
progressive nations of Europe. "The faith once
"delivered to the saints," and other old-world rubbish,
has thereby become relegated to the limbo of forgetful-
ness, so far as the authority of Parliament is concerned,
and the world will be a better and happier place for the
change. As might naturally be expected, the ecclesias-
tical mind of New Zealand has been sorely exercised in
consequence, and the Education Act of 1877 has been
greatly reproached by them. So frequent and uproarious
have been the complaints of these clerical gentlemen
that Parliament recently permitted several representa-
tives of the churches to state their grievances before a
committee. The result of this enquiry has been printed
by the Government, and nothing could be more effectual
than a perusal of this report to show how completely
these clergymen failed to prove that they suffer any
injustice at the hands of the State in the present mode
adopted to educate the children of the State. There was
an utter nonconformity of opinion, of course, among
these gentlemen, and the bewildering character of the
claims put forward by Bishop Hadfield, Bishop Red-
wood, and the Rev. Mr. Bavin would be alone sufficient
to dismay the most generous and intrepid politician in
this colony, and that is saying a great deal. What an
ecclesiastical trio to legislate for! Why the occupant
of a seat on the Ministerial benches, who might consider
himself capable so to amend the Education Act as
to satisfy all parties, would at once be considered a
political Jonah, and his colleagues would throw him
overboard for a great deal longer than three days.
Although, at first sight, it may appear both liberal and
wise that the Government should have allowed the
representative expression of opinion in the manner
named, it cannot be urged that these clergymen could
claim it as a right by virtue of their office. Fortunately,
we have no State church; and unfortunately, too,
although we are a heavily-taxed people, the national
exchequer does not receive a single penny upon the
enormous property held by the churches in this colony.
The inverse of the proposition—"no taxation without
"representation"—should be made to apply to clergy-
men and their churches as well as to others. The sole
reason urged why those clergymen should have been
heard before a Parliamentary Committee against the
Education Act, that they are recognised in the clerical
office under the "Registration of Marriages Act," does
indeed seem a pitiful one, and is the last vestige, and
that but a partial one, of the past adulterous connexion
between Church and State. What right have these
ecclesiastics, then, other than as citizens, to oppose
the school system of the colony? In the case of Bishop
Redwood, we have the authority of Mr. J. Sheehan,
M.H.R., that the communicants of his church would be
willing to send their children to the State schools if the
priests would allow them. The Right Rev. Bishop is,
of course, a true disciple of one who did more
than any other of the Roman Catholic Church
to dispel the dark ignorance of the middle ages, and
therefore speaks with some little authority. But,
unfortunately, faithful followers of Ignatius Loyola,
to use the words of Thomas Carlyle, "think they
"can best serve God by taking the devil into partner-