

# THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SCIENCE. RELIGION. PHILOSOPHY.

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Mrs. Moore's paper on "Spiritualism Considered as a Religion," gives a very fair idea of a belief which has grown far more rapidly than Christianity grew in the first two or three centuries, and is formed under conditions which are in many respects analogous. In each case the decay of the old faith prepared the soil in which the new faith grew. In each case the desire to support the doctrine of immortality by some more direct evidence than that derived from a gradually developing tradition, furnished a strong motive to accept any testimony that tended to confirm it. The writer of an extremely able article on "The Belief in the Immortality of the Soul," in the October number of the Westminster Review, remarks: "Of all the attempts made hitherto to secure a basis for the belief in a future life, the best, in our opinion, is that of modern Spiritists. Unsuccessful as we deem it to have been, it deserves at least the credit of a failure in the right direction, a consistent and a necessary experiment." Their theory is, that the disembodied human being is an organism, so related to this world as to be capable under certain conditions of communicating with its inhabitants. This brings the question within the range of positive science. Spiritists have opened the door to scientific enquiry as to matters of fact. "The next question, however," continues the writer, "is whether they have succeeded in adducing any evidence as to the existence of spirits, and to this the reply, in our opinion, must be an unmitigated negative."

Whatever may be the final conclusion arrived at on the question of Spiritualism—how much is fraud, how much is honest self-delusion, how much is erroneous inference, and how much is due to that religious training which makes credulity a virtue—one thing is clear, which is, that its growth cannot be favorable to orthodoxy. Spiritualism is either true or false. If true, it must directly displace Christianity. If false, it is a strong logical argument against Christianity put in a most practical form, for it is obvious that if millions of intelligent persons have in our own day been the victims of a delusion, there is no reason whatever for assuming that the Christian belief is not the result of a similar delusion. Hence the list of eminent men—such as Mr. Wallace gives in his book on "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism"—who consider the evidence for Spiritualism convincing, may prove to be "shocking examples" of human credulity, showing how little weight should be attached to authority where the supernatural is concerned.

The late Judge Maning had during his life and while still in health imbibed the philosophy of the age, his "faith" growing weak as his reasoning progressed. He fell ill of a disease beyond the power of the physician's art, and endured the summation of human suffering—a slow cancer eating his life away. In this state he wrote the following letter to Bishop Abraham:—"I am scarcely able to write, but make the endeavor

"to thank you most heartily for the kind letter which I have but this moment received. After many a hard struggle against the ideas of the modern so-called philosophers, I have only just now begun to think I have faith in Christ as being both Man and God, and your letter came to help and encourage me. Do pray to God to help my unbelief. My mind is not strong enough nor my body either to write more, only, dear Bishop, pray for me that my faith be helped and strengthened to the last. I am in so much pain I must end here. I will not trouble you to come to see me. I am well read and well taught, and have thought much on the proofs and evidences of our religion, and if I have therefore not faith enough to save me, it is the more fault of mine. I nevertheless hope and trust in God and Christ for mercy on a truly repentant sinner. Pray that my faith be made clear, dear Bishop; your letter shows you to be a faithful shepherd. Excuse incoherence. I am very weak." A newspaper, in publishing this melancholy letter, observes: "If there is anything real and genuine in the Christian religion it will assuredly show itself when death is in full view and certain prospect. The following letter, written by the late Judge Maning, should be sufficient to prove that religion with him was no mere empty profession or insane fancy." The letter proves exactly the reverse. Poor Maning, in the depth of his suffering, says he has "thought much on the proofs and evidences of our religion," and doubts whether he has sufficient faith to save him. The strong man reduced to the extreme point of physical weakness through pain, the once vigorous mind left just conscious of its own "incoherence,"—is a state wherein Christianity is welcome to find testimony to the truth of its creed!

If Christianity is to live it must have better reasons than death-bed confessions. The Freethinker may well rest content with the thought that when the mind is vigorous it grasps the conclusions of science, rejecting myth; and he can afford to concede any advantage to be found in the partial or entire eclipse of reason in the valley of the shadow of death. The strong mind in the healthy body comes to see that the "evidences" are baseless. If perchance this mind weakened by disease should sink into second childishness, fearing the hobgoblins which as a child were conjured to terrify,—what is there in that either to arrest the decay of a faith or weaken the moral self-reliance of the Freethinker?

The Bishop of Melbourne has provided from his armoury an old weapon refurbished in defence of Christianity. In a speech lately delivered he jauntily referred to the association between Indian mythology and Christianity, and strongly advised his hearers when they were met with analogies of the kind to reply—"impossible." So confidently did Bishop Moorhouse rely on this vigorous style of dialectics that he repeated the advice several times. The Pope was accustomed

to defend his temporal power by a *non possumus*—an ever ready and effective reply to the long-drawn-out reasons and vanities of the ordinary diplomatist. It may be that the Australian Bishop has taken a leaf from the Pope's book. No one will venture to deny that the Sacred College has an intimate knowledge of human nature, or that when it shifts its ground it has sufficient cause in facts collected by the most perfect of organisations and from the widest field. It is not surprising therefore that a Protestant Bishop should be found profiting by the lessons set him at Rome. The money-making Melbournite has little time to discuss such intricate matters as comparative mythology or religion. A spiritual leader of such consummate tact as Bishop Moorhouse would grasp the position in a moment, and provide a patent argument to save time and trouble, and yet withal be unanswerable. Has he not succeeded? Could any argument be more conclusive and satisfactory to the church-goer not wishing to be bothered than "impossible"!

If we could insure that the whole population of New Zealand were supplied with religious papers like, for instance, the 'Christian Record,' a large accession to the ranks of the Freethought party might be expected to follow. For in the art of exhibiting the sectarian virtues of falsehood, personality and rancour the Christian press is certainly not unfaithful to its trust. We have seen a paragraph quoted from the 'Christian Record,' in reply to one in the 'Presbyterian' on the 'Echo,' and of bitterness and malevolence of spirit it would be nearly impossible to have anything more characteristic. We shall not sully our columns by quoting the vicious but silly effusion. It is just sufficient to note the fact that when an illustration of the "virtues" we have named is required, one has only to take up a religious newspaper and he is sure not to have far to read before finding it. The degradation of the religious press is becoming proverbial. Only the other day the 'Australasian' exposed a very flagrant instance of piracy on the part of a Melbourne religious paper, in which an article from the 'Saturday Review' had been appropriated in a way intended to prevent the fraud from being discovered. By their fruits they are known, and it is not illogical to infer that a creed under which such traits of character are developed is a moral failure.

Our Sydney contemporary 'The Liberal,' in noticing our remarks on Masonry, has not a good word to say for the Craft, which it denounces on the ground of superstitious reverence for an exploded theology, and exclusiveness with regard to women. It refers to the fact that English Masonry repudiated the Grand Orient of France because it struck from its ritual all reference to a god—an argument rather in favor of the contention of Liberal Masons that the order is progressive. 'A system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols,' has within it the principle of development uncontrolled by the forms and dress in which it appears to the world. The step taken by the Grand Orient is proof that the central truth may be preserved while the allegory undergoes modification; and the time may not be far distant when opinion may have rendered necessary changes even in the most orthodox of the constitutions. At any rate, we know that Freethought has many warm friends in the Craft, who would be prepared to accept changes which would indicate that virtue required no religious sanctions to give

it force. The exclusion of women is a relic of ancient and mediæval times no doubt, and we would desire to see a tendency to recognise that no civilisation founded on a pure morality can be attained unless women are unreservedly admitted to the position of co-workers with men. But Rome was not built in a day, and it is sufficient to find that in the march of events we are nearing the goal.

It will be seen from our Progress column that the Dunedin Association has taken the initiative towards the establishment of a General Council representing the different Freethought Associations throughout the colony. We trust there will be a general response, and that we shall soon have the pleasure of reporting the first meeting of our own Federal Council. The Freethought movement has lately been making steady progress, of which the formation of fresh Associations will always be the surest sign. In most of the populous centres our flag has been raised, and it is to be hoped that other communities will follow the example. When every town in the colony has its Association, the time will have gone by for concealing one's opinions. The right of association and meeting is one of the most valuable privileges free men can possess. Let this right be freely exercised wherever there are a few who are bold to think for themselves on all questions, and the Freethought movement will quickly grow into a great power in this colony. An annual meeting of the Council composed of the delegates of the different societies will give unity of purpose, inspire respect commensurate with its influence, and give a fresh impetus to the cause.

It is frequently asserted by the clergy that morals and religion are not taught in the public schools, and that this is sufficient reason for a change of system. Our answer is that there is no reason why morals should not be taught in the public schools, and that religion is not necessary. The second part of this reply at least may not be accepted, and the war will have to rage. But that morality—the highest morality—can and ought to be taught is, we think, evident. Every school teacher ought to be a moral instructor, and he who lacks the qualification is without the first essential of his profession. Let us give an illustration of what we mean by moral instruction. The second master of the Wanganui Collegiate School—a trust school not under the Act—in taking farewell of the boys as editor of a periodical in connexion with the school, gave them some parting advice. He observed: "The fashion of a school is set by the upper forms, the eleven, and the fifteen. If they are hard-working, honorable, manly, and obedient to authority, so will the rest of the boys; but if they waste their time, act dishonorably, talk coarsely or impurely, or ridicule sacred things, their example will sow seeds in some hearts which will bring a crop of ruin in after life." Further: "Remember that no word, expression, or deed, however small, dies, someone notices it, and its effect will last for ever. You are a part of the rising generation from whom will spring a great New Zealand nation. To you will fall no small share of making that nation moral and noble, or corrupt and base. I ask you earnestly to grant my last request: *Try and live up to what you know to be right.* [The italics are his.] Never let the honor of your school be tarnished by your means."

There is here in this excellent address just such instruction and advice as constitute the very essence of morals, and if a teacher enforced such a lesson continually in governing his school, he would be instilling into the minds of the young habits of thought and action that would influence them throughout the whole of their after life. Every schoolmaster is a moral teacher more or less, and when the full importance of one of the noblest professions is in this one respect realised, the once-despised and now inadequately-recognised school teacher will occupy a higher place in the estimation of society. To instruct others thoroughly a man must convey the impression that he himself lives up to the standard he has erected for his school. In the instance we have given of moral instruction, precept and example went hand in hand, producing sympathy and enthusiasm and right conduct. Religion was not wanted. The master probably saw that it would only weaken the moral lesson.

## Health Notes.

Dr. Reklam, in a recent number of the 'Gesundheit', says that the headache, restlessness, &c., which are sometimes caused by keeping flowers in bedrooms, do not result from any special properties of the flowers themselves, but from the continued strain brought to bear upon the olfactory nerves.

Walking, of itself, says Dr. Sargent, of Harvard College, is of no value as an exercise, but a spirited walk is one of the finest of all exercises. If a man enters heartily into this exercise he will be benefited by it. Horseback riding is an excellent exercise for circulation as very little of the nervous energy is expended. For a person who uses the mind excessively, however, this form of exercise is not good, as it produces nervousness. Swimming is, without exception one of the finest of all physical exercises. It develops especially the lower portion of the chest, the legs and arms. Running, at a regular and fixed pace; boxing, to teach one to keep the temper under adverse circumstances; rowing and canoeing, to strengthen the upper part of the thorax and chest are useful. The benefit to be derived from regular practice in a gymnasium, by which the mind and nerve centres are so trained that they have a certain amount of control over the body, so that while the muscles may give out, this mental power, when once obtained by physical training, will never be lost, is of the greatest account.

A Medical Commission, which was appointed not long ago in Germany to study certain questions relating to the construction of school buildings, has made an interesting report which certainly must be regarded as marking a step in advance in that branch of science. In the matter of ventilation we find that the members of the Commission agree with all the other experts who have investigated the subject, in increasing the quantity of fresh air, which is to be regarded as essential to health. It is but a short time since a thousand feet of air per hour for each pupil was regarded as an extremely liberal theoretical allowance for healthy children, and in practice, in this country, at least a room in which a hundred and fifty or two hundred feet per hour is actually supplied to each person is regarded as admirably ventilated. Now, however, those who have long submitted to be accused of foolish extravagance in insisting that this is an inadequate allowance, may cite the authority of the German doctors, who set 2120 cubic feet per hour for each pupil as the minimum quantity of fresh air to be supplied. In the best arranged shafts of metal, fitted with gas flames, stoves or other artificial means for promoting the draught, the upward current will occasionally reach a velocity of a thousand feet per minute in cold weather, although the average is rarely more than 500 feet, and generally much less; so that a room containing 60 pupils should have an outlet shaft of 4 square feet or more in sectional area, to be even capable of such ventilation as is pronounced essential. In regard to lighting the new Commission totally denies the famous theory of unilateral illumination, following in this respect the French authorities who began to call it in question a year or so ago. In the language of the report, it is practically impossible, even with lofty and narrow rooms, to obtain sufficient light by this method. In cases where openings can only be made in one wall, the report requires that the width of the tiers between the windows shall not exceed three-fourths that of the windows themselves, and that the width of the room shall not be more than 5 feet greater than the height of the windows, which would restrict it in such cases to about 18 feet as a maximum. Lighting from two sides being then required under all ordinary circumstances, it is advised that the windows should be in the opposite walls, on the right and left of the pupils as seated. Light from the rear is admissible, but is not recommended, and windows facing the pupils are prohibited. Walls of neighboring buildings painted white and reflecting the sunshine into the schoolroom are very injurious, and the owners should be persuaded or obliged to paint them of a dark color. The inside face of the walls of the school-room itself is to be painted pale blue or bluish white, and the ceiling pure white. Artificial light should be used without hesitation on dark and short days. It is more dangerous to work by insufficient daylight than by gaslight. Argand burners are preferable as giving a steadier light, and ground glass globes are objectionable on account of the large proportion of light which they absorb.—*American Architect.*

## GOD.

Most schools of thought agree that the existence of God is not demonstrable: many of our deepest thinkers reject altogether the Orthodox and the semi-Orthodox idea of God. Men and women who have mental and moral courage enough to face this gravest of all questions, find themselves compelled to renounce, one by one, all the notions of a Deity which they ever held. They see that the attributes ascribed to him by Christian and devout Theist are but magnified human attributes, the gigantic mist and shadow formed by the human figure. They are forced to allow that will, personality, intelligence, and consciousness are nothing but human imperfections and limitations, which, projected into boundless space and dignified by the title of infinite, are bound up together into one ideal, heroic figure, and baptized with the name of God.—*Amie Besant's "True Basis of Morality."*

Progress.

A friend writes from Woodville, Hawke's Bay: It has been decided to take steps for the formation of a Freethought Association here, and a meeting for that purpose has been called for Friday, the 25th instant. As there are many Freethinkers here, the movement will doubtless prove a success.

We have been asked to suggest the best way of going about the establishment of a Freethought Association. We shall give one method, and invite our friends to give a better. Where there are say six known Freethinkers, let them have a private meeting convened by word of mouth, when matters could be talked over, and arrangements made for calling by advertisement a meeting of all who desired to join the Association. At this meeting a provisional committee should be appointed to draw up rules and submit them at a future meeting. The permanent committee could be appointed when the membership rose to a certain number. That is all. The rest will follow as a matter of course.

CHRISTCHURCH FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The President and Corresponding Secretary forwards us a brief epitome of the last month's proceedings of the above Association:—

Christchurch, January 17th, 1884.  
SIR,—On Sunday, the 23rd December, Mr T. C. Farnie, M.A., from Dunedin, kindly gave us a very interesting address upon the "Life and Labors of Martin Luther." There was a large attendance, although the weather was unfavorable. The same morning there was a distribution of a number of pretty prize books and toys to the children attending the Lyceum, 61 being present.

On Sunday, the 6th January, a Mr S. Parker, one of our members, gave an original address upon "Jesus of Nazareth." The subject was well handled, and elicited considerable applause at its conclusion. This gentleman has frequently given original papers upon various subjects, showing marked care and ability in their preparation.

Our Hall has been recently decorated with heralbic shields and banners, bearing the names of Galileo, Spinoza, Bruno, Voltaire, Paine, Lyell, Darwin, Deuton, Huxley, Ingersoll, Herbert Spencer, and Tyndall, and the effect is considered very good and appropriate. It is also intended to add the names of some of the eminent women who have distinguished themselves in literature and Freethought.

Our financial position at the close of 1882 rendered it necessary to devise means for increasing our income, and as it was considered inadvisable to raise the subscription of members, it has been decided to try the plan adopted by the Dunedin Association, viz., to reduce members' subscription to 5s per annum, payable in one sum at the beginning of the year, thus lessening the work of the Secretary, and to charge all adult males 6d admission to the Sunday evening meetings. Hitherto non-members only have been charged admission fees, females being free under the past and present arrangement.

"Ivo" has arrived in Christchurch, and purposes lecturing in our Hall next Sunday, and also on Wednesday, the 23rd inst., pending further arrangements.

We have decided to hold our annual picnic on Sunday, the 10th February.

In my last report there was an unfortunate omission of the first part of a paragraph, which made the part printed very weak and inconsequential. It referred to my having named five children in the Hall, and went on to say that "this with four secular funerals," etc., etc., gave sufficient reason for the remarks which followed.

I send herewith the names and addresses of ten more annual subscribers to your excellently conducted REVIEW, which I hope soon to increase to fifty.

Yours truly,  
WILLIAM PRATT,  
President and Corresponding Secretary C.F.A.

[We regret the omission, which was accidental. Ed.]

AUCKLAND RATIONALISTIC ASSOCIATION.

Mr. W. H. Webbe (the Hon. Secretary) has kindly furnished us with the following particulars regarding the above Association:—

Auckland, January 18th, 1884.

SIR,—Last Sunday evening, the 13th instant, we held our "first public meeting." It was a greater success than was anticipated. The "Star" report being a very fair one I enclose same, and should be glad if you could find space for its insertion:—"The inaugural meeting of the Auckland Rationalistic Association was successfully held on Sunday evening in the Lorne street Hall, which was crowded to the doors; indeed, so great was the throng that extra forms had to be placed along the passages. Mr. A. Campbell, the President, occupied the chair, and delivered the inaugural address. In the course of his remarks he said that their Association traced its origin to Roman Catholicism, inasmuch as it belonged to one of the latest

developments of that eruption of manly and courageous free-thinking which brought about and consummated the Protestant Reformation. The local causes of the extension of Freethought in New Zealand were situated at Dunedin, where through the energy and outspoken bravery of Mr. Robert Stout and a few other gentlemen, a powerful Association had been formed, through whose agency similar Associations had been established in Christchurch, Wellington, and Wanganui. Here the work of organisation had been actively initiated by Mr. W. H. Webbe, a gentleman, who had but recently arrived from England, where he was a member of the National Secular Society. The utmost success had attended his exertions, and, although only a month had elapsed since the first circular was issued, that crowded meeting gave promise of a prosperous career. Their arrangements were not yet quite settled. Committees had been appointed to undertake the formation of a literary and debating class for young men to meet on Sunday mornings, and of a Sunday school for children to be held in the afternoon, while the evening meetings would, for the present, consist of readings, debates, literary papers, and lectures and musical selections. Professor Caillan and Mr. W. H. Webbe were engaged in the formation of a strong orchestra and choir, and they confidently expected to carry the undertaking to a triumphant success. He thought they could not do better than endow their Association with the secular advantages which all the Churches afforded their members, and this could best be done by mutual help and good organisation. Their objects were to inculcate the study of nature and of science, rather than of theology, and to practise and thus preach by their example, as well as by precept, the lessons of true morality. It should be one of their primary duties to pay 20s in the £, to discharge faithfully their duties as men and citizens, and to extend to others the freedom they claimed for themselves. He hoped they would be able to assist in filling up the so-called "bottomless pit" with the devils, ogres, and superstitious fancies of theology, and in planting over it the tree of knowledge. After a laudatory reference to the liberal tone and spirit of the press of the city, the Chairman concluded by reading the rules and regulations of the Association, which were also those, as he explained, of the National Secular Association of London.—Mr. W. H. Webbe advocated aggressive Freethought, accused the Churches of a woful lack of that charity and tolerance which they professed, and then entered upon a trenchant criticism of the Bible.—Mr. Geo. Clements, after commending to general attention THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW, and reading an extract from it, went on to point out that the so-called "wide spreading of infidelity" which the clergy were so continually bewailing was nothing more or less than the diffusion of intelligence.—Mr. William Cooper counselled moderation and forbearance, deprecated any intolerance of tone or spirit towards the orthodox or their pastors, besides striking a parallel between the foundation of Christianity and the formation of that Association in the fact that both were inaugurated by thirteen men. In their case, however, he thought they could claim the distinction that they had not a Judas amongst them.—Alternating with the speeches various musical selections and recitations were rendered, viz., a pianoforte duet from "The Poet and Peasant" by Miss K. Campbell and Mr. W. H. Webbe; as a pianoforte solo, fantasia on airs from "La Traviata"; reading, "The Bad Boy Tries to Convert the Infidel Boy," Mr. Gerald Dillon; as a duet for piano and violin, Boccherini's pretty little Minuet, the Misses Caillan; recitation, "Shamus O'Brien," Mr. J. J. Kennedy. The musical selections were good, Mr. Dillon's reading was highly amusing, and Mr. Kennedy's was a first-class elocutionary treat, demonstrating the gentleman's histrionic power.—Mr. Cooper, in a eulogistic speech, moved a vote of thanks to Messrs Kennedy and Dillon, and it was passed with acclamation."—"Star."

We have engaged the Lorne Street Hall for two months, and in all probability the time will be extended to twelve months. We already number over one hundred members.

The Christians have been sleeping, our Association has awakened them. Last night they convened a meeting to organise a Society to hunt up evidences to bolster up their worn-out creed.

In my February letter I will report you account of month's work.

Yours faithfully,  
W. H. WEBBE,  
Hon. Secretary pro tem.

We congratulate our Auckland friends on the auspicious commencement of their Association.

A GENERAL COUNCIL OF FREETHOUGHT.

Dunedin Freethought Association,  
Lyceum, 10th January, 1884.

SIR,—A paragraph in THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW for January has directed the attention of this Association to the desirability of federating the various Freethought Associations throughout New Zealand. In pursuance of the suggestion therein contained, the committee of the D.F.A. at its last meeting passed the following resolutions:—

1. That the various Freethought Associations of New Zealand be invited to send delegates to a Conference, to be held in Dunedin at the Lyceum Hall, beginning on Monday, the 10th March, with a view to forming a General Council of Freethought for New Zealand.
2. That Robert Stout, Esq., President of the D.F.A., and T. Cheyne Farnie, Esq., M.A., be appointed delegates to represent the D.F.A. at such meeting.
3. That Mr Farnie be empowered to communicate with the other New Zealand Freethought Associations with a view to bring about such meeting of delegates.

The necessity of co-operation in organising and strengthening the Freethought party in this colony is so apparent that I feel sure that your Association will readily recognise the advantages likely to accrue from the union we propose. The recent prosecutions of Freethinkers in England make it only too obvious that the active

spirit of bigotry and intolerance is not yet dead, and serve to show what the dominant party in religion will still do when the opportunity presents itself. Circumstances may any day arise even in our own colony calling for united action on our part; and it behoves us therefore to have in readiness an organisation as vigorous and complete as that shown by the churches in their Synods and Assemblies, so that we may at all times be enabled to present a firm and united front to every assault upon individual liberty. It may also be noted that in the proposed Criminal Code there appears such an offence as Blasphemous Libel, and it may be doubted whether at the present time the English Blasphemy Laws are not in force in New Zealand. It is for reasons such as these, then, that I have to ask that your Association will consider the necessity of a Conference such as we propose, and will agree to co-operate with us by sending two delegates thereto, so that the proposed scheme may be carried into effect.

The other Freethought Associations in New Zealand are being communicated with to the same purport. Requesting that you will kindly inform me at an early date of the decision of your Association on this subject,

I remain, your obedient servant,

T. CHEYNE FARNIE.

The Hon. Sec. Wanganui Freethought Association.

## WELLINGTON FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary has furnished us with the following report for the month of January;—

Wellington, January 22nd, 1884.

SIR,—Since my last report three scientific lectures on "Fire, Water, and Earth" have been delivered in our Hall.

On January 7th "Ivo" delivered a lecture under the auspices of the Association in the Theatre Royal, entitled, "Satanic Science." There was a fair attendance.

On the 14th instant "Ivo" was to have recited several selections from English and American poets, but on account of the heavy rain and a severe gale, the audience was small, and the programme was not given.

On the 20th inst. we celebrate Thomas Paine's birthday with a "tea fight," conversation, and a dance.

Yours truly,

ALFRED JARDINE,  
Hon. Sec.

## NELSON FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary sends us a review of the doings of the above Association for the month of January:—

Nelson, January 22nd, 1884.

SIR,—Since my last to you I am pleased to say that at our general meeting held on the 6th of January the progress of the Association was found to be highly satisfactory. After paying all liabilities, and having "Ivo" with us for five weeks, we had a very favorable credit balance. On "Ivo" leaving us we rather dreaded a falling off in the interest taken by our members. Such I am happy to say has not been the case; and moreover, a good Samaritan has sprung up among us in the person of Professor O. E. Hugo, who kindly gave us his first lecture on "Immortality" on the 20th inst., which was listened to with deep attention for upwards of an hour. Although he apologised for not having had time to sufficiently study his subject, it very soon became evident he had gone very deeply and carefully into it. At the end of his lecture he spoke in very flattering terms of the Nelson Freethought Association, stating his gratification at finding so much progress had been made in so small a city, and the earnestness displayed by its members generally. He also went very deeply and impressively into the subject of members being firmly united, not allowing any little disagreements between each other to interfere with the great object in view, stating that in all Societies and Associations, at their beginning, disagreement between members was sure to crop up, which he had unfortunately seen in many places. He promised us another lecture on Sunday next on "Utilitarianism" from a Continental point of view.

A detachment of the Salvation Army has arrived, and held their first meeting exactly opposite my residence. From one or two circumstances that have occurred since I have been in Nelson, I am disposed to think the spot was specially chosen. I have had "War Cries" in several instances placed under my door. My only feeling towards them is that they may do good.

It is on the tapis that Mr. Hugo may on Sunday afternoon next give a lecture, subject, "The Salvation Army."

I am pleased to see that your suggestion in the January number of *Federation* has been taken up, and I sincerely hope it will be a success.

I am, &c.,

EDWARD PLAYER,  
Hon. Sec. N.F.A.

## WANGANUI FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary has kindly forwarded us the following particulars:—

Wanganui, January 24th, 1884.

SIR,—On the 6th instant, the Wanganui Freethought Association held its first half-yearly meeting in the Academy of Music. The gathering was a large one, and it was shown that on June 3rd, 1883, the Association began with only six members, whilst now the actual membership, active and passive, amounted to 85, most of them being financial to date, which is considered an unmistakable proof of the

vitality of the Association. The papers and addresses contributed by members and friends of the Association during the past half-year were very favorably commented on, the universal opinion being that the Association had within its ranks some very able exponents of Freethought. The financial statement showed a small deficiency, which was at once subscribed in the room, so that the new year might be entered upon untrammelled in a pecuniary point of view.

A library has been formed consisting of some fifteen volumes of Freethought literature, some having been presented to the Association some time since by an unknown friend in the Wairarapa, the others by members. The importance of a library to other organisations of a similar character is looked upon as very great, and I am pleased to see a beginning to this essential part of Freethought propaganda.

I understand the leaders of a section of the Salvation Army have arrived in Wanganui. The result of their campaign will no doubt be looked upon with considerable interest.

I hear that "Captain" Ted Wright seemed surprised at the existence of a Freethought organisation in Wanganui, and expressed the opinion that "It is time we came."

Yours faithfully,

J. J. BUCKRELL,  
Secretary, W.F.A.

## Science Notes.

A German inventor has recently applied the principle of hydraulic reaction to the propulsion of a boat so successfully as to awaken considerable interest. The principle is very simple, consisting of steam pumps, and tubes through which the water is admitted at one end of the ship and forced out at the other. The German navy officers are especially interested, and by experiment are testing the value of the invention. It is rather remarkable that about thirty years ago similar experiments were tried in the British navy with unsatisfactory results.

During the last cholera epidemic in Egypt the German Government sent commissions to enquire into the causes and prevention of this frightful plague. One of these Dr. Koch, the celebrated biologist, who was the first to discover the "bacillus" or germ of consumption, has satisfied himself that cholera is due to a similar living microscopic organism. The Doctor has now gone to British India to continue his researches in that country. This and other discoveries of late years bear out in a remarkable way the truth of Professor Tyndall's germ theory.

At a meeting of the Academy of Sciences on October 1st, M. Faye argued that the progressive cooling of the earth's crust goes on at a more rapid rate under water than on dry land, and therefore that the solidified crust is much thicker under the ocean than on the continents. Hence he maintains that the liquid mass in the interior of the globe is subjected to far greater pressure under the seas than under the main land, and as this excess of pressure is diffused in every direction, the less dense continental crust must yield to the pressure thus exerted, while the submarine crust, becoming denser and denser, is slowly subsiding.

The question has been raised recently as to whether the earthquake waves, or as (by a misnomer) they are more frequently called tidal waves, are not caused by the depression and upheaval of the dry land. There is no record in the late disaster in Sunda Strait of vessels having met these waves out at sea, though there are heartrending accounts of the terrible destruction witnessed upon reaching the shore; as in some places the disaster was caused by a wave estimated to be fully 100 feet in height, it seems unreasonable to suppose that this could have travelled any distance without being observed by passing ships.

Mr. Jabez Hogg has been carrying out some most interesting experiments on the rapid generation of animalculæ. He took a few grains of dust from a garden wall, placed them in a shallow glass cell, and added a little filtered water. Presently under a powerful microscope were displayed signs of active life; in ten or fifteen minutes two or three perfectly formed rotifers were seen darting about with expanding rotating discs actively feeding. At the end of 30 days fully twenty were observed, apparently in a healthy condition. The water was then allowed to evaporate, when the microscope revealed nothing but fine dust, with no sign of living animalculæ. The cell was then wrapped up in tissue paper, and for 30 days excluded from the light. On water being added again the same

results were observed, and this continued though the treatment was repeated frequently. Mr Hogg seems to think that these tiny creatures died and actually rose again; but it is more probable that, like certain other organisms, their bodies contained ova, which were liberated by the death of the parent, and generated when the conditions were favorable.

## SECESSION OF A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DUNEDIN FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The following is the letter written by Mr. Joseph Braithwaite on the occasion of his retiring from the Dunedin Freethought Association. We also publish Mr. Stout's reply:—

To the Committee of the Dunedin Freethought Association—

Gentlemen,—Please accept my resignation as Vice-President of the Dunedin Freethought Association, which the members kindly elected me to for two years past. It being fair that those I have worked with for a number of years should know my reasons, I give them. I think the Association in a constructive religious sense a failure, the logical result where members' views are so diverse. The compromise on fundamental questions is so complete that practically nothing positive, however true, can be successfully taught. For instance, many members believe in a higher power than themselves—in an infinite, intelligent Spirit which may be fittingly termed the old name, God—and in a future state; but through the disbelief again of others, whose convictions deserve equal consideration, and for harmony's sake, they have to be almost completely ignored, or I should say avoided, especially in the Children's Lyceum. However right this may be as a matter of expediency, it can be carried too far. Truth can be rendered ineffective and inoperative by this process. I think it wrong to deprive children of any teaching whatever on questions that have been a factor for good in the main. Members are not to blame; the fault lies in the basis of the Association. I see clearly that no association can accomplish anything beneficial unless its members are animated by one common aim and aspiration. The world is only moved thus. What would the reformers of the past have accomplished had they been restrained by the views of others? Nothing. To those who believe they possess the truth and feel the necessity of imparting it to others, life is too short for compromise. But to accomplish this one must belong to an organisation in thorough sympathy with one's views. True, cruelty, persecution, and self-inflicted penances of the direst kind have been committed by those who believed in God and immortality, and in (the case of many Christians) opposition to the teachings of Jesus, but what of the good done? Surely this should count. Besides, this persecution was the result of their ignorantly thinking they were pleasing God thus. The intention underlying their actions was good, though the effects were such that every man in these days must condemn. To my mind this yearning to please a Higher Power, this desire—whether in a religious or scientific sense—to set ourselves in right relations with that power is a necessary and beneficent part of man's nature, or it would never have existed, and can when directed by intelligence, be productive of incalculable good. And it does not necessarily follow, as some think, that those who believe thus will therefore neglect the duties of this life. History teaches that the noblest specimens of humanity have held these beliefs; that they have been the motive power underlying their best actions. My opinion is the more one does his duty here the more he fits himself for the great hereafter. No other incentive can possibly equal this for uplifting the race. We want something to rouse the masses; this will do it—negation never. It might did the world consist of philosophers only. No doubt error has twined itself around the beliefs I have mentioned, but that is due to the imperfections of humanity. Besides, what we call truth and error and good and evil are only relatively so to our senses. It seems to me that in sifting the one from the other and making for that which is best, this evolves himself higher—experience is the step-ladder of progression.

I see no necessary antagonism between science and religion, but believe they will, in the rapidity with which everything moves on now-a-days, be reconciled ere long. Such confusion of thought is caused by many, both inside and outside the Church, interpreting the Bible in too liberal a sense, and gauging the idealisms of thousands of years ago by our more exact meaning of modern words. Another common error consists in picking out certain passages to suit one's idiosyncracies, making them do duty for the whole. Canon Farrar shows the folly of all this in his "Eternal Hope," and criticises adversely the ultra-orthodox conceptions of "eternal punishment" and "hell," but present instead much higher and more natural conceptions. I learn also that every religious system has after all played a salutary part relatively to the age and race it operated upon, and that from our advanced standpoint of to-day it is unwise to condemn them wholesale. Hence I look upon Christianity as superior to those that went before, and that even now it reaches the moral sense of the great majority in a way no other existing organisation does. Even the Salvation Army, with all its faults, is doing a good work. To my view the value of the Church consists in the steadfastness with which she has ever proclaimed a belief in God and immortality. Without these existence is a mockery and morals a farce. I do not doubt that when the Church finds that what I conceive to be the essentials of religion—as related to the present age—have lost their influence, like the belief in a "material hell fire"—almost has, that she will either let them go or modify them in accordance with the spirit of the age, and be all the stronger for it. She has done so in the past, and shows signs of doing so again. She always espouses a new fact

or a new version of the old truth where they can be made most effective for good—that is, when their truth or utility have been thoroughly demonstrated, and the bulk of mankind are *ready to receive them*, which is an important point. Had she the will she could not do this before without uprooting her whole system, and doing society more harm than good. Another thing, it is not the Church alone, as some think, that opposes the truth. Scientists have done so, and with less reason. They at least are expected to lay aside all preconceptions, and follow the truth wherever it leads them. That such has not been done I need only refer to Galileo, Harvey, and Jenner, whose discoveries were opposed by all their scientific contemporaries, to whom they appeared absurd and incredible. And we have striking examples even to our day. Says Alfred Russell Wallace, himself a scientific man, when Franklyn brought the subject of lightning conductors before the Royal Society he was laughed at as a dreamer, and his paper was not admitted to the "Philosophical Transactions." When Young put forth his proofs of the undulating theory of light, he was hooted at by the popular scientific writers of the day. The "Edinburgh Review" asked the public to put Thomas Gray into a straight-jacket for maintaining the practicability of railroads. Sir Humphrey Davy laughed at the idea of London ever being lighted with gas. When Stevenson proposed to use locomotives on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, learned men gave evidence that it was impossible they could go even twelve miles an hour. Another great scientific authority declared it to be equally impossible for ocean steamers ever to cross the Atlantic. The French Academy of Science ridiculed the great astronomer Arago, when he wanted even to discuss the subject of the electric telegraph. Medical men ridiculed the stethoscope when it was first discovered. Painless operations during the mesmeric coma were pronounced impossible, and therefore impostures. I could supply other illustrations, but these serve to show that it is not always the Church that opposes the truth. At the same time I do not disparage the claims of science, a cause for which I have the highest respect. The fact is the Church could not exist a day in any age unless her teaching was positive; it must be based upon what are generally admitted as facts for the time being. She must therefore be cautious before accepting what are termed new truths, many of which are not so. This renders her less liable to error than if she were less conservative; besides, her attitude makes the truth shine all the clearer in the end. Hence, if I may say so, the Church relative to the capacity—broadly speaking—of those existing in each century advocates what may be termed the truth, and has done a work which I doubt any other organisation could have done as well. I am fortified in this by Mr. O. Frothingham, one of America's most cultured Freethinkers, who has retired from the materialistic propaganda after years of active, conscientious work. Besides, Evolution, as I understand it, the sacred literature of all races and nations, recent research—especially in psychological science—seems to me to confirm the view I have imperfectly sketched. Moreover, the aspirations, thoughts, tastes, and desires of those who believe in an intelligent governing power in the Universe (which I will not attempt to define), who believe also in the exalting influences of sincere prayer "uttered or unexpressed," and in man's responsibility in free will, too, in the sense that the more one intelligently acquaints himself with the laws of Nature, which are also the laws of God, and conforms thereto, the freer, the wiser, the better he becomes, are so entirely dissimilar to the aspirations, etc., of those who believe none of those doctrines, that I think the two parties would work more effectively apart. I perceive also the wisdom of Huxley's contention that he would sooner familiarise his children with the tenets of the Bible, even though they imbibed some error, than bring them up in negation or deprive them of all knowledge of a book that certainly reflects, whatever its faults may be, the religious development of an important section of the human race, and that has played a most important part since among civilised nations covering a considerable portion of the world's history. I am not disposed to ignore the claims of tradition altogether—they have their value. Nor do I see the utility of rushing into extreme scepticism because one leaves the Church. Religion—that is, a belief in God, immortality, and the influences therewith—is natural to man whatever his intellect may say. That is so because it is based upon his higher necessities, which, like everything else in Nature, must have some corresponding reality. My opinion is you might as well try to drive back the waves from the sea-shore as to eradicate religion altogether. Creeds and religious systems may change—religion never. Tear down the churches to-day, to-morrow they would be up again. I am satisfied the Association will never make headway among the people until it can present them a motive power for good higher than the one they have got already, and to do this it must have a religious basis, or it will never reach their higher aspirations. I have adopted these views after years of (I hope) serious study and reflection and a degree of anxiety known only to my most intimate friends. Hence it will be seen that I cannot co-operate any longer with the Association, nor with the Children's Lyceum, which I specially regret. Nevertheless, I shall ever be found standing up for civil and religious liberty and the completest toleration one to another.

I am, gentlemen, yours faithfully,  
JOSEPH BRAITHWAITE.

## MR. STOUT'S REPLY.

My dear Braithwaite,—Last evening your letter to the committee of the Dunedin Freethought Association was read at our usual weekly meeting, and the committee unanimously adopted your resignation of the office of one of the Vice-Presidents with regret. Before I sat down to pen an answer I saw that you had published your letter in the morning papers. I do not quarrel with you for doing this. Indeed, there were two reasons why I was glad you had adopted this rather unusual course, and these are: First, its publication shows that our much-abused Freethought Association has obtained a substantial position in the community. Would the

daily papers have published the reasons of a member for resigning the office of a deacon of a Presbyterian Church or a lieutenant of the Salvation Army? I doubt it. If, however, the daily papers are to publish all the letters that resigning office-bearers of churches, associations, or lodges send, I am afraid "leaders" and "locals" may not be much in request. My second reason is that I am in hopes (to use theological language) that your letter and this reply may be "over-ruled" for the spread of truth. Who knows but that they may help some of our fellow-colonists, who do not know what a Freethought Association is, to appreciate the position of Freethinkers? And a knowledge of one another's views is one step towards complete toleration.

I am glad that you have placed in the forefront of your letter the diversity of the views of the members of our Association. We have, as you know, Theists, Agnostics, Unitarians, Atheists, Pantheists, Spiritualists in our ranks, and that you, a Theist and Spiritualist, have been twice elected one of our Vice-Presidents, shows that those who were not Spiritualists could unite with those who were. In fact, we have shown to the churches a *modus vivendi* that may have a beneficial effect when creed subscription is again discussed. And I also appreciate your statement that in a "constructive religious sense" the Association is a failure. If it had been a success our very *raison d'être* would have been destroyed. We never united to form a new theology, or a new religion. Our aim was, and is, something different. We believe that truth is the most important thing in this world, and that none of the race can be benefited by falsehood. We have also recognised that the deeper questions of this life will never be solved by all men alike; and we have united to discuss them freed from creeds, and to teach our children their duties to themselves and their fellows. This, we think, we can do without appealing to a Deity, or invoking the terrors of future punishment or the pleasures of future glory.

On this, as you will remember, we took our stand when we issued the "Lyceum Guide." The preface quotes a pregnant passage from Spencer's data of Ethics, showing that morality requires no sanction from Divine injunctions. If good acts conduce to human well-being, and bad acts to human ill-being, there is a sanction for morality higher than Mosaic commandments or the terrors of Hell. You say that morals are "a farce" unless based on Theism and a future life. Is this meant to be what logicians call a universal? I take it that you mean that no men can be moral who are not Theists and believers in a future state of existence. If you do, then one exception is sufficient to disprove your proposition, and I need not say that there are hundreds, perhaps millions, of Agnostics who are moral men. You complain of the children at the Lyceum not being taught the dogmas of a Personal Deity and a future state of existence. Here again let me say that I believe the majority of the teachers are Theists, and as conductor I never dictated or supervised the class teaching you and the other leaders gave. But, believing as I do that morality is independent of all dogmas—standing on an assured human foundation—I do not teach the children any dogmas. They, however, had as text-books "Codd's Childhood of Religion" and "Codd's Childhood of the World." From these they could learn all about the different religions of the world. When they get to years of discretion they can then choose the religion or non-religion they like best.

And now as to two or three other positions in your letter:—

First—The good the churches have done.

Second—The attitude of reformers towards the race.

Third—The conflict between science and religion.

Fourth—The naturalness of religious belief.

I select these four points, omitting many more which might be noticed, because of the length to which my reply would have to extend.

First: I am not aware that any member of the Freethought Association disputes that churches have done good—nay, are doing some good. Nor does any sane person wish to ignore tradition. Whether he so desired or not, it would not avail him. The past exists. It is one thing to admit the good of the past and to be guided by it now. Our attitude is this—

We had not walked

But for tradition; we walk evermore

To higher path, by brightening Reason's lamp.

For example, the admitting that the Mohammedans did good would not make one become a follower of the Prophet, nor would the recognition of the great services rendered to humanity by the Roman Church make one join her communion. The question we have to ask is, Where is the true? and follow whithersoever we think it is. The truth needs no condiment, and I reprobate to the utmost the canting phrase so often used by church people, "Oh, we need religion for the masses." If religion is true, it is required for all, and if it is not, it is needed for none. Recognising the good the churches have done is no argument for becoming a churchman now.

The second point is the attitude of reformers. I am not aware if the Dunedin Freethought Association have ever assumed the role of reformers. You know how careful we were not to attempt proselytising. We charged for admission to our lectures, and we even recognised that to be a Freethinker something other than an appeal to one's emotion had to be made. I understand your position to be that churches change as rapidly as is necessary, and that until the masses are educated it is unwise to alter the creeds. Of course this means that the churches are always ruled by the ignorant. But you go further, and say that reformers only succeed who preach some positive and not a negative creed. This is partly true and partly erroneous. Every religious reformer that I know has thrown overboard some of the positive beliefs of the church he attempted to reform. Jesus Christ did not preach all the Jewish creed. He thought morality was safe without a belief in all the varied beliefs of the Jews of his day. Martin Luther also was negative as well as positive. And so with the English and Scotch reformers. And if I mention Barclay, Theodore Parker, and others, it will be seen that these reformers thought the world could get along with less faith

than the churches they left required. The whole history of the evolution of religion shows a throwing off of beliefs. The creeds have been pared down, and, as I understand you, you wish them still further lessened. Hell fire is to go.

Then, the conflict between science and religion. You say some scientists have opposed new discoveries and new inventions. I admit it. But I am not aware of any scientific society having burned anyone for a discovery, nor putting a fellow-scientist in prison for an invention. Because some scientists have denounced new discoveries it does not prove that the attitude of scientists and theologians is the same to new truths. We need not go to the past. Let us take the attitude of Christians of the present day, and in our own town. The most vital Christian organisation, the Y. M. C. A. refused to admit the Rev. A. R. Pritchett as a member because he was an evolutionist, and they selected the Rev. A. C. Gillies as the champion of the popular creed. I am not aware that the Otago Institute ever declined a member because his views on biology did not accord with Darwin's or Huxley's. And the reason of the different attitude is not difficult to understand. To the Christian, Divine revelation has closed. The question then is whenever any new scientific theory is promulgated, what saith the Church? or what saith the Scripture? The scientific men have no closed record and no authoritative guide by which to test a discovery or an invention.

Then you say certain beliefs are natural to men. As I understand, you include belief in Deity and in a future life, and rewards and punishments in that life. I do not understand "natural," unless you mean the majority have such beliefs. I need not point out to you that if Evolution be true, that a majority believe anything is no proof of its truth. In fact, it is just as likely to be false. And at one time there were many beliefs "natural to man that are now not natural." Need I instance witchcraft?

But my letter is already too long. Were it not so, I might point out that you have entirely misapprehended what relativity of knowledge means. As I gather from your letter, you have not changed the views that to my knowledge you have held for years. You are still a Theist and a Spiritualist, and still reject the dogmas of the Trinity and some of the other popular doctrines of the Christian Church. Perhaps with your views and beliefs it may be wise for you to join with other advanced Unitarians in founding a Unitarian Church here. There are I know many in the churches here who hold your views, and possibly, in founding a church, it is necessary that all should have one creed and be animated with one desire. Our Association does not require such unanimity, and I am glad to say that we were never so vital. We are opening a weekly debating class, and our reading room and library thrice a week. Our children's Lyceum library can now number many hundreds of volumes, and the attendance on Sundays was never so great. Knowing your interest in everything that tends to freedom of thought, I mention these details.

And now, my dear Braithwaite, let me personally thank you for the help you have given us in the past. Though you have ceased to be one of our Vice-Presidents, I have no doubt but that with more study you will yet see that every reform of religion, from Jesus's day to the present, has come from those without and not from those within the Church, and that should you join a church and hope to make its members Theists and Spiritualists you will have a more up-hill task than you have had in your efforts to get our Association to accept such a creed.

I am, &c.,

ROBERT STOUT.

Dunedin, January 16th, 1884.

## MR. BRAITHWAITE'S SECESSION.

In reference to the foregoing correspondence, Mr. Wm. Pratt, President of the Christchurch Freethought Association, has forwarded us the following letter on the subject, which we have much pleasure in publishing:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SIR,—Mr. Braithwaite has thought it necessary to signalise his retirement from the Freethought party in Dunedin by occupying a column of each of the Otago daily papers with his reasons, and the "Morning Herald" considered it of sufficient importance as to warrant a sub-leader. In acting upon his convictions he has simply exercised the right of private judgment which the Freethought Association with which he has long been connected regards as one of its fundamental principles; but the most singular and contradictory feature of his withdrawal is the statement that he considers "the mere right to think for one's self" is not only of no positive value, but absolutely powerless for good, as offering no principle of union for combined effort, and cites for admiration and example the grand results which have followed the *positive* teaching of the Church. Whether true or false appears to him of secondary consequence; assume the truth, and make belief in the assumptions imperative, and non-belief a crime visited with the severest penalties, as the Church did for centuries when she possessed the power, appears to Mr. Braithwaite to be the *sine qua non* of a religion for ensuring human happiness here and hereafter.

Holding these views, one is led to enquire how, or why, he ever left the Church, or fell into the delusion that he was a Freethinker, when merely "the right to think for one's self" appears to him such a poor and powerless factor for human improvement, as compared with an authoritative and dogmatic theology—for stopping short with a belief in God and a future life—or swallowing the whole formula of the fall of man, vicarious atonement, redemption, heaven and hell, are merely questions of degree; besides, the latter constitutes the *positive* teaching of the Church, which he claims to have produced such grand results.

If the noblest specimens of humanity have held these beliefs, and thereby enjoyed worldly honor and profit, in addition to the comforting assurances of future bliss, always provided they were

able to allay the distracting doubts inseparable from such beliefs, History also records that many noble men and women have discarded them, and in so acting lost everything but honor, preferring to encounter inconceivable pains, tortures, and cruel deaths rather than subscribe to what they conscientiously considered to be false and deluding superstitions. Mr. Braithwaite gravely informs us that "unessentials of religion as hell-fire, the Church will modify or let go." We are led to ask how a *positive* truth can be modified or let go, and which lies at the very foundation of theological teaching, without the whole structure tumbling down. But it is not true that the Church regards a belief in hell-fire as one of the non-essentials of religion, although from the growing intelligence of the age it is not made so prominent in the pulpit as it was fifty years ago. It is still regarded as an integral part of her *positive* teaching; especially is a belief in it impressed upon the tender minds of children; and their evidence is refused in our Law Courts, unless they are found to be well-grounded in this comforting belief..

Mr. Braithwaite supplies us with a surprising and novel reading of history in the words: "The Church always espouses a new fact, or new version of an old truth when mankind are *ready to receive them*," which would have been nearer the truth if rendered when the majority outside of, and in defiance of, the Church have received and adopted them. What says Professor Fowler, the Professor of Logic at Oxford, in his great work "Bacon's Novum Organum," in explanation of Aphorism, 89, book I.: "A new discovery in science is at first decried as contrary or even fatal to faith; then, after a time, it is grudgingly admitted and incorporated into the received doctrine, till at last no one dreams of calling it in question. But the process soon begins afresh with some more recent discovery, so that a constant warfare is going on between the unwise theologian and the scientific investigator." In Mr. Braithwaite's reasons for withdrawing from the Dunedin Freethought Association there is an implied, if not plainly expressed, failure to remodel it in a "constructive religious sense," with, it may be safely inferred, Theism and Spiritualism for its *positive* truths,—we are afforded pleasing evidence of its strength and vitality in maintaining first principles. There are many other fallacies in the letter referred to, but space will not permit of further references. Holding opinions more in harmony with the Romish Church than a Freethought Association, Mr. Braithwaite appears to be unable to realise the possibilities of a *character* religion progressing with its environment, unfettered by the chains of a theology based upon tradition and unauthentic paper records.

Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM PRATT,

President of the Christchurch Freethought Association.  
Christchurch, January 21st, 1884.

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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.

In consequence of unusual pressure on our space, we are compelled to hold over several communications.

Received from that enthusiastic Freethinker "Blue Pencil" a number of pamphlets, including one on "False Claims," which we shall notice in our next.

We would remind the Dunedin Freethought Association that Freethinkers generally would occasionally like to hear from them through the medium of the usual monthly report under the head of "Progress."

ESQUIRE.—We have heard that the Spiritualist to whom you refer has joined one of the Churches, but we have nothing sufficiently authentic to justify us in mentioning names.

L.P.—The REVIEW is representative of no Association in particular, but of all—our purpose being to make it represent in the best sense the Freethought movement in the colony.

"A RAY OF LIGHT."—You will notice that the movement has taken form in the manner you suggest. We believe there will be a general and favorable response to the action of the Dunedin Association. You must permit us to differ from your friendly proposal that the REVIEW should be formally constituted the organ of the United Associations. It aspires of course to a representative position, and will gain and keep it by being worthy of it. But if any paper more worthy were established, it should and would occupy the first place. The REVIEW is far better untrammelled. We hope to enjoy the confidence of the Freethinkers of the colony on the merits alone.

The Freethought Review.

WANGANUI, N.Z., FEBRUARY 1, 1884.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE ABJECT POOR.

A RECENT article of Lord Salisbury's in one of the 'Reviews,' and a pamphlet headed "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," published under the auspices of the London Congregational Union, have directed more than usual attention to one of the most difficult social problems ever presented for solution—how to prevent that extreme poverty which is both cause and consequence of a state of physical and moral degradation shocking to contemplate, and rendered all the more horrible by contrast with the wealth, luxury, and refinement existing by its side. "The churches," says the pamphlet referred to above, "are making the discovery that seething in the very centre of our great cities, concealed by the thinnest crust of civilisation and decency, is a vast mass of moral corruption, of heart-breaking misery and absolute godlessness, and that scarcely anything has been done to take into this awful slough the only influences that can purify or remove it." These "influences" are, of course, in the opinion of the Congregational Union, more gospel preaching and evangelistic work, an increase, in short, of "that noble army of men and women who penetrate the vilest haunts, carrying with them the blessings of the gospel." Now I am far from denying that much good has been effected by what is called Christian effort among a class of persons who at present can only be moved by appeals to their superstitious fears and hopes, or at best to moral sentiments which have become so associated with Christian dogmas as to seem identical with them; but this principle applies to any religion, however false, so long as it is *believed* to be true, and military and moral conquests are equally possible under Cross or Crescent, while the indirect effects of an erroneous opinion may be extremely mischievous. Now, if Christianity is a delusion, and if the world, instead of being under a supernatural, paternal government, is simply under "the reign of law," it is clear that all action motivated by "other worldliness" in its countless forms, can only lead to good results by accident. Hence if the purely Positive view of nature and humanity is accepted, Christian teaching does at least this negative harm—it leads men to look into the clouds for means to remedy admitted evils, when they should look for them on earth. "Whilst," to quote from 'The Bitter Cry,' "we have been building our churches and solacing ourselves with our religion, and dreaming that the millennium was coming, the poor have been growing

## Gems.

"poorer, the wretched more miserable, and the immoral more corrupt." Could there be a more complete confession of failure? Can we ask for a better indication that the means used are not likely to attain the end desired? Looking at the question from the standpoint of scientific sociology, it is clear that this abject poverty, and this more than savagery in the midst of the grandest civilisation yet known, is no isolated phenomenon, but the necessary result of antecedent and co-existing conditions. Prominent among these is the utter disregard shown by large masses of English people to the Malthusian law of population, and its consequent increasing pressure upon the means of subsistence. For this Christianity is largely responsible, with its reliance upon the providential government of mankind and its tendency to put sentiment in the place of reason. Indeed public opinion, moulded by Christian supernaturalism, forbids the discussion of the population question in any effective way, and regards with indignant horror any suggestion of artificial limitation, as witness the prosecution of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, while Mill has not escaped the denunciations of the orthodox. Hence the essential conditions for the solution of the problem, free and full discussion, are wanting, and so the 'Saturday Review' merely alludes to "the enormous families of these people on the verge of pauperism," as constituting a difficulty in the matter of lodging them, just as the author of 'The Bitter Cry' speaks of overcrowding as the cause of vice and crime and scenes of "heart-breaking misery." This is as if a New Zealand runholder were to express a sentimental regret for his starving and dying sheep and cattle, which he had allowed to breed far beyond the carrying capacity of his land, and yet to go on calmly ignoring the origin of the evil. But apart from this primary consideration, which if ignored must render all other remedies for the evils of poverty at least, merely palliatives, it is evident that as Mill has demonstrated, the future well-being of the laboring classes, and indirectly of all classes, depends principally on their own mental cultivation. Now, if this is so, how is gospel teaching likely to conduce to progress in this direction? By their fruits ye shall know them. In no respect has Christianity, with its jarring sects and its absurd pretensions, been more injurious than in preventing the education of the people. Theology instinctively perceives that ignorance is the mother of devotion, and even where she has been shamed into teaching anything but dogma, she has taught with eyes half shut to the reality of things, and only open to the dreams of the imagination. No doubt social evolution is a slow process, and there is a strong temptation to apply quack remedies and to deal with the symptoms, rather than the causes, of morbid growths of the social tissue; but even these are efforts in the right direction, and if found injurious can be abandoned or modified as experience dictates. As Mr. Goschen has lately said, that while accepting the doctrine that *laissez faire* should be the rule, and State interference the exception, "the argument was almost irresistible that it was as just to prevent, and if necessary to punish, house-owners who let out rooms unfit for human occupation as tradesmen who offered putrid food for sale," nor need too much tenderness be shown to those capitalists who make 60 per cent. out of such places as "Collier's Rents," or to those ground landlords who receive a large proportion of such ill-gotten gains. State socialism must indeed be narrowly watched, not so much, as Mr. Fawcett has shown, because it is dangerous to the rich, as because it is destructive to the poor, as tending to sap the foundations of that energy, self-reliance, and thrift on which all progress depends. Human sympathy combined with the dogma of justification by faith has done good service, but would it not do more if combined with the doctrine of justification by fact? The drunkard might after all pay greater regard to the teachings of physiology than of theology, and the thief, respectable or otherwise, might be brought to feel that his anti-social proclivities did not benefit even himself in the long run, when he no longer thought that "faith" might avert the inevitable penalty.

R.P.

The mind can read nothing grand and difficult unless it passes out of the beaten track into regions where it has feared to go.—SENECA.

The less government we have the better—the fewer laws and the less confiding power. The antidote to this abuse of formal government is the influence of private character, the growth of the individual.—EMERSON.

To think we are able, is almost to be so; to determine upon attainments, is frequently attainment itself. Thus earnest resolution often seems to have about it almost a savor of omnipotence.—SAMUEL SMILES.

If rectitude is not regulated by education, it entails the greatest confusion. . . . We may force the people to follow the principles of justice and reason, but we cannot force them to comprehend them.—CONFUCIUS.

Satisfaction of mind, to be permanent, is not to be derived from frail and transitory pleasures; the only mode by which it can be enjoyed is to dispense with melancholy, and avoid thinking of sad and afflicting subjects.—DEMOCRITUS.

Do good to all, both the evil and the good, even your enemies. Men who have no self-command are not capable of fulfilling their duties. Pleasure and riches should be renounced when not approved by conscience.—CHRISHNA.

Man is but a little thing in the midst of the objects of Nature; by the moral quality radiating from his countenance, he may abolish all considerations of magnitude, and, in all his manners, equal the majesty of the world.—EMERSON.

To make laws against and ordain punishment for a crime that hitherto has never been known or heard of is the way to introduce it, rather than prevent it. Act honestly and live temperately. I feel that I leave the world better than I found it.—SOLOX.

The following epitaph was inscribed on the tomb of the Pharaoh Amenaphis III. more than 1000 years before the Christian era:—"A strong arm, a brave temper, a heart faithful to its love, and a delight in works that should survive its own span of life."

Know thyself. Let your study be to correct the blemishes of the mind rather than those of the face. Stop the mouth of slander by prudence. Enrich not thyself by unjust means. Be not idle, though rich. Entertain not evil. Idleness is troublesome; intemperance hurtful; ignorance intolerable.—THALES.

Truth is to be sought with a mind purified from the passions of the body. Having overcome evil things, thou shalt experience the union of the immortal God with mortal man. The noblest gifts of heaven to man are to speak truth and do good offices. These two things resemble the works of God.—PYTHAGORAS.

The close connection between the good and the beautiful has been always felt, so much so that both were in Greek expressed by the same word, and in the philosophy of Plato moral beauty was regarded as the archetype of which all visible beauty is only the shadow or the image. We all feel that there is a strict propriety in the term, moral beauty.—LECKY.

To know that God is and that all is God, this is the substance of the Vedas. When one attains to this there is no need of reading or of works; they are but the bark, the straw, the envelope. No more need of them when one has the seed, the substance, the creator. When one knows him by science he may abandon science as the torch which has conducted him to the end.—THE VEDAS.

He who feels anger on proper occasions, at proper persons, and besides in a proper manner, at proper times, and for a proper length of time, is an object of praise. This character will therefore be the meek man, in the very points in which meekness is an object of praise; for by the meek man we mean him who is undisturbed and not carried away by passion, but who feels anger according to the dictates of reason.—ARISTOTLE.

The efforts of Judge Hoadley's opponents in Ohio to make political capital out of his connection with the Free Religious Association of Boston did not prevent the people of that State electing him Governor.

## Passing Notes.

The Protestant Bishop of Liverpool, speaking of the Episcopate recently, said there was no order of men so severely and savagely criticised and unceasingly vilified, sneered at, ridiculed, abused and condemned as the English Protestant Bishops. Unless they were treated with more consideration and fairness, he predicted a day would come when no right-minded man who loved direct spiritual work, and hated wasting precious time in strife and wrangling, would consent to be a bishop at all.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bright of Sydney are at present on a visit to Dunedin, partly for the benefit of Mr. Bright's health, which we regret to notice has not been good. Since Mr. Bright's arrival at the scene of his former successful labors, he has delivered two or three lectures which have been favourably spoken of in the press. Mr. Bright makes many warm friends wherever he goes, and in Dunedin he may be said to be a public favorite. Mrs. Bright also lectures, and her abilities on the platform have been generally acknowledged in Sydney. We trust Mr. Bright's health will be completely restored by his trip. The cause cannot spare him.

"The career of individual man," wrote Dr. Draper, "is of a mixed nature. In part he submits to free-will impulses, in part he is under the inexorable dominion of law. As he advances in life he insensibly changes his estimate of the relative power of these influences. In the confidence of youth he imagines that very much is under his control, in the disappointment of old age very little. Towards the end of his days he finds that the things he has secured are not the things which he expected. He sees that a Supreme Power has been using him for unknown ends; that he was brought into the world without his own knowledge and is departing from it—perhaps in a far-distant land—against his will."

Mrs. Besant has been delivering some interesting lectures throughout England on the "Roots of Christianity," and has the following note on the subject in the columns of the 'National Reformer':—The letters on the "Roots of Christianity" continue to pour in, and I really have not time to write so many answers. Inquirers should ask me at the time of the lecture, and write down the names for themselves. The following were the chief authorities used, and to this list I must refer all future enquirers. "Origine de tous les cultes," Dupuis. "La Bible dans l'Inde." "India in Greece," Pococke. "Egyptian Mythology," Sharpe. "Talmud." "Freethinker's Text Book," part ii. "Asiatic researches, essay by Sir W. Jones." "Translations from the Sanscrit," Muir. "Notes on the Evolution of Christianity," Yorke. "Life of Buddha," "Egypte Ancienne," Champollion-Figeau. "Livres Sacrés de l'Orient." "Wheel of the Law," Alabaster. "Religions of Egypt," Tiele. Works of Josephus.

Mr. Joseph Braithwaite, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Dunedin Freethought Association, has withdrawn from the Association. His reasons are given at great length in a letter which we publish, together with replies from Mr. Robert Stout and Mr. William Pratt. We shall only note here that Mr. Braithwaite appears to have changed his opinions with regard to the future of Freethought since the 10th November, 1883, when a valedictory address appeared over his initials in the last number of the 'Echo.' "We have the satisfaction (he then observed) of knowing that Freethought is sure to succeed in the long run, and that the unessentials of orthodoxy must give way before the ever advancing tide of an educated public opinion." He then proposed to start a monthly issue of the 'Echo' to advocate the eclecticism and latitude of thought which Freethought Associations specially represent and uphold. The difference between Mr. Braithwaite then and now is, that whereas he was identified with a movement that led and formed public opinion, he now prefers to sail with those who with favoring breezes are wafted along on its tide.

An effort is about to be made (says the Wellington 'Evening Post') by a few earnest Christian workers in Wellington to establish in this colony a branch of the World Wide Prayer Union, an organization which has for its object the offering up of prayer for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Branches of the Union are

distributed throughout the greater part of the civilised world, and the membership is said to be exceedingly large. The covenant of membership is as follows:—"Believing that Satan is still the god of this world; that under his reign multitudes of souls are perishing daily; and that the darkness is likely to grow deeper and deeper until the glorious appearance of the Son of Righteousness, I gladly consent to pray often and earnestly—(1) That the Lord Jesus may come quickly; (2) that all believers in all lands may be filled with the Holy Spirit and entirely consecrated to God; (3) that the Gospel may be everywhere preached in the power of the Holy Ghost, and that the 'fulness of the Gentiles' may soon be gathered in." [A sensible and practical proposal. If he should refuse to come, what then? Would he not be morally responsible for the "perishing souls"?]

The Rev. W. J. Williams, Wesleyan, residing in Wanganui, fell a few days since on the point of his own sword, and cried out pitifully. It will be remembered this was the gentleman we had to take to task a month or two ago for his coarse and slanderous allusions to Paine. A local paper contained some references of a not very favorable character to some of the early Wesleyan missionaries. The allusions roused Mr. Williams, who wrote: "Sir, the greater number of the missionaries referred to have passed beyond the reach of slander; some, however, still survive. We have one such in Wanganui, who, bending beneath the burden of more than four score years, has the pain of finding himself in common with his fellow-laborers, the object of a most cowardly and most unprovoked attack in your columns." Yet the writer of these words—intended to elicit sympathy—had no tenderness for the memory of an Infidel! But tenderness was not needed. The truth only was called for, and this Christian Minister was unequal to the demand. His indignation in the case of the missionaries would have been entitled to more respect if his regard for truth had been displayed in speaking of the "mighty dead," who do not belong to the Wesleyan cult.

## Personal Notes.

General Thibaudin, the late French Minister of War, has been elected President of the Parisian Freethinkers' Society.

It is said that Professor Huxley's son is the rising young poet of England, and that his friends see in him the future laureate.

There is to be a monument erected to Dr. Samuel Johnson, at Lichfield, England, on the centennial anniversary of his death, December 13, 1884.

Count Von Moltke's mind is failing. His memory is a blank, and he fails to recognise even intimate friends. He is living on his estate at Kreisau, in strict privacy, having ceased all official work.

A funny but thoroughly enjoyable feature of the attentions paid at Ramsgate recently to Sir Moses Montefiore, the Jewish philanthropist, was the singing under his window, in the early morning, by an admirably trained choir of children. First they sang in Hebrew the famous Jewish hymn of Moses, and then "Rule Britannia," which closed the programme, as intended by the teachers who had drilled the choir. But the little fellows had not roused their enthusiasm and trained their voices for so much only, for they concluded by singing "For he's a jolly good fellow."

A German journalist gives an interesting account of the surroundings amid which M. Renan delivers his lectures at the Collège de France. The lecture room is one of the smallest in the College, about thirty feet long and half as wide. Its principal furniture consists of a long table laden with old Bibles, an enormous blackboard, and a faded map. Its sole ornaments are two busts—one of Aristotle, the other of Quintilian. The audience is surprisingly small, consisting mainly of elderly scholars, with here and there a clergyman, a rabbi, or an occasional visitor. Renan appears punctually at the stroke of the clock. He begins his lectures in a quiet, almost indifferent sort of way, but soon warms up, and never fails to charm his hearers.

## Notes &amp; Queries.

## ANSWERS.

## CHRISHNA AND CHRIST.

A close resemblance has been found between the life and mythology of Chrishna and of Christ. For instance, Chrishna was born in a stable, escaped from a massacre of infants, was nourished by shepherds, crucified with a wound in his side, had a virgin mother, used the words—"I am in them, and they in me." The legends and dogmas of Buddhism and Brahminism were disseminated in Western Asia by Indian missionaries, and thus became mingled into Jewish doctrine among the Essenes of Palestine—a sect to which both John the Baptist and Jesus belonged.

## ROBESPIERRE AND MARAT.

In answer to A., I may state that Robespierre was in theology a disciple of Jean Jacques Rousseau (i.e., a deist of a sentimental type.) He believed in the existence of a just and merciful God, and in a future state of rewards and punishments, but not in any authoritative supernatural revelation. He had a considerable sympathy for the priesthood, and the greatest abhorrence of Atheism. As to Marat, I cannot say positively what his religious convictions were; but it is reported that his favorite books were Rousseau's "Confessions" and the four Gospels. Many Agnostics could say the same for the latter, but the partiality for Rousseau probably implies Deism.—AGNOSTIC.

In reply to A.: Robespierre was a Deist. In 1794, the Convention upon a report of Robespierre proclaimed the recognition of deity and the immortality of the soul. The following extract from Robespierre's speech on the occasion of the decree being adopted (1840, Floreal, [May 7th]) will show what the theological opinions of the "sea-green incorruptible" were:—"What is there in common between priests and the deity? Priests are to ethics what charlatans are to medicine. How infinitely is the god of nature different from the god of priests! I know nothing so much resembling Atheism as the religions they have fabricated. By degrading the Supreme Being, they have annihilated him as much as in them lay; they have made him sometimes a ball of fire, sometimes an ox, sometimes a tree, sometimes a man, sometimes a king. Priests have created a God after their own likeness; they have made him jealous, capricious, covetous, cruel, and implacable. They have treated him as in times past the mayors of the palace treated the descendants of Clovis, in order that they might reign in his name and usurp his place; they have chained him in Heaven as in a palace, and have called him on earth only to demand for their own profit titles, lands, honours, luxury, and power. The veritable temple of the Supreme Being is the universe; his creed, virtue; his worship, the gladness of a multitude assembled before him to strengthen the bands of universal brotherhood, and to offer him the homage of pure and sensitive hearts." I cannot find any authority on Marat's theological views. His parents were Calvinists.—W.H.T.

## GODS BORN OF VIRGINS.

Through a work presented to the Wanganui Freethought Association by our generous donor "Blue Pencil," I am enabled to answer "Pan's" query as to some "Gods born of virgins." Ancient and mythological history abounds with such events. It once became so common in Greece that a king issued an edict decreeing the death of all young women who should offer such an insult to deity as to claim such paternity for their children. The virgin Alceus claimed God as the father of the divine Redeemer Alcides, 1280 B.C. Ceres, the virgin mother of Osiris, was said to be the child of "the father of all the Gods." Mayence, virgin mother of the god-sired Hesus, of the Druids. Tien and Chang-ti were worshipped by the Chinese as Gods born of virgins more than 2500 years ago. Maia, mother of Sakia; Yasoda, mother of Chrishna; Celestine, mother of the crucified Zulis; Chimalman, mother of Quexalcote; Semele, mother of the Egyptian Bacchus; Prudence, mother of Hercules; Alceaus, mother of Alcides; and Shing-Mou, mother of Yu,—were all believed to be pure, holy and chaste virgins, their offspring divinely begotten Saviours and sin-atoning mediators, just as Mary and Jesus are credited by Christians. Any standard dictionary of mythology

will furnish more particulars, and Davies' "Universal Etymology," Auguste Nichol's "Philosophical Essays on Christianity," Guigne's "History of the Huns," and Riquard's "Theology of the Ancient Gauls," are good authorities. As to "Pan's" further query anent the origin of the word Christ, I cannot do better than quote Mr. Kersey Graves: "The Christian writer Elsley, in his 'Annotations of the Gospels' (vol. i., p. 25), spells the word Christ as *Chrest*. The people of Loretto had a black Saviour, called *Chrest* or Christ. Lucien, in his 'Philopatrie,' admits the ancient Gentiles had the name of Christ, which shows it was a heathen title. The Chaldeans had their *Chris*, the Hindoos their *Chrishna*, the Greeks their *Chrest*, and the Christians their Christ, all, doubtless, derived from the same original root."—Y.

## THE MAORI ATUA.

Reply to the Query respecting the Maori Atua in No. 3 of the REVIEW:—The conception of the New Zealander with regard to the future state after death would seem to be very vague. They supposed there were many gods, but there were only two or three of them of any recognised importance, such as Maru, Tu, and Tauhaki. After the death of anyone, his spirit proceeded rapidly to a cliff near the North Cape and sprang off, disappearing into the sea and re-appearing again in the Reinga, the abode of disembodied spirits; here they all assembled, the good, bad, and the indifferent. They carried on their contentions here as they used when they formerly inhabited the human form when on earth. They fought, they loved, and died again, but after this second death no one seems to be able to tell what became of them—even their tohungas do not pretend to say, except they became Ngaronoiho, viz., disappeared. Maru, Tu, and Tauhaki ruled the destinies of man on earth, but it does not appear that they had anything to do with the Reinga, and flitted about from place to place, appearing only to the seers and tohungas (priests). These deities were, on the whole, antagonistic to mankind, but if propitiated through their priests would permit the tribe to be successful in war or in any tribal undertakings. Then they would assist individuals in their pursuits. If a tribe was going to war they would make presents to propitiate the gods through the priests, who would place a number of reeds in the ground, and then retiring a short distance, pronounce an incantation, and then send short clubs whirling amongst the reeds, and judge by the way they fell whether the gods would crown the expedition with victory. If a man caught an unusually large and fat eel, it was expected he would give, if not the whole, at least a portion; of it to the priest as a present for Maru or Tauhaki, and thus secure a continuance of good fortune. Woe betide the unhappy person who should steal Maru's presents; certain death would follow such a transaction. There was no hope of reward hereafter or punishment for good or bad conduct during the life upon earth. Opinions differ as to the food eaten by the spirits in the Reinga. Some say they live on large kumaras; other priests say they catch flies and insects and subsist on these, over which they quarrel and fight. On my return once to Wanganui from the North, I happened to mention that I had been to the Rerenga Wairau (Spirit's Flight)—the cliff. An old man drew near me, and asked me if I had noticed any spirits leap off into the sea. I told him that they came so rapidly one after the other, that the noise made by the splashing as they jumped into the water made quite a noise. "Ah," he replied, "Then it is true. I thought it was so, and what the missionaries have told us is wrong."—T. McD.

## MASONIC.

In answer to M.—(1.) General Assemblies of the Craft are spoken of as being held as early as the fourth century of the Christian era, at which a Grand Master was annually chosen. But the first record of a Grand Lodge meeting, when the constitution and charges were framed and adopted, is said to have met at York in the reign of Athelstane, A.D. 926. (2.) The history of Speculative or Free-Masonry shows that it was grafted on to Operative Masonry, and we do not learn from the transactions of any of the guilds that women were admitted to participate in their labors. The construction of material Temples by our ancient operative brethren are idealized by their descendants of to-day in the construction of the Temple of the Mind, and as our operative brethren required a male as an apprentice,

so it has ever been a landmark of Free-Masonry that the Entered Apprentice should be of that sex. (3.) The position of the Grand Orient of France, numerically speaking, is improving. It is not so important as either of the ruling Masonic authorities of Great Britain or Ireland. In 1882 it had 323 "ateliers" or "workshops," composed of 276 lodges, 25 chapters, 12 councils, 1 consistory, and the Grand College of Rites under its jurisdiction. In Sept., 1883, it had increased its "ateliers" to 329. Its financial position is very weak, the income being comparatively small (about £5000), and the expenditure so extravagant as to leave a balance on the wrong side of the ledger. (4.) I have been informed there is a lodge in Queensland holding from the Grand Orient; there are none in this colony. A letter was forwarded to the Grand Secretary from New Zealand some five years since, requesting information as to their mode of work and if charters could be procured, but no answer was returned.—

### QUERIES.

- 1.—Can any of your readers inform me concerning the literary career and position of Mr. Shorthouse, the author of "John Inglesant, a Romance," who about a year ago suddenly rose to the top of Mudie's list?—Y.
- 2.—What is the best definition of gravity?—
- 3.—Where does St. Paul recommend craft and lying?
- 4.—What were the religious opinions of Emerson?—
- 5.—Can any of your readers give a sketch of the programme and work of a children's Lyceum?—
- 6.—How would one proceed to draw up a code of morals for instruction in the State Schools?—

### Reviews.

*The Belief in the Immortality of the Soul: 'The Westminster Review,'* October, 1883.

The belief in the immortality of the soul is made the subject of an exhaustive enquiry in the article under notice. It is observed that great beliefs remain unchanged, while the ground is continually shifting upon which they are maintained. "Position after position is chosen and abandoned; entrenchments, seemingly impregnable, are relinquished after short contests; changes of front are effected to elude defeat; each army seems to be 'feeling' its opponent, and gradually manœuvring towards the ground where it means to put forth its full strength. But again and again decisive action is deferred, and one line of defence is no sooner broken though than another is thrown up behind." First there was the *theological* belief, accepted on the authority of a creed. Next came the *metaphysical*, founded on notions concerning immaterial essences. Then reasons were sought in *positive* research, the metamorphosis of insects furnishing a kind of parallel. "History was invoked to show that the belief in a future life was a necessity of the human intellect, an instinct which could not be without a justification in reality; and finally, the phenomena elicited by Modern Spiritualism . . . must be regarded, in a great measure, as an endeavor to establish the desired demonstration by actual experiment." "Alongside of these defences must be placed the plea that the belief in immortality is indispensable, inasmuch as morality would be baseless, and life not worth living without it." The reviewer proceeds to enquire from these different starting points—"Why and how did it originate, what has been its function in the education of our race, and what is its value now?" Space will not allow us to do more than give the writer's conclusion that in each case the ground for the belief is untenable. The Reviewer concludes: "To the present writer (for in such matters every one must speak for himself) there seems to be something excessive, abnormal, morbid, in this clinging to existence through eternity. Are you *never* to have enough of it? We can admit that a man should rise hungry from a feast, especially if he has been interrupted in it—well then, let the courses be brought on again, and if a second dinner is still insufficient, let there be a third, a fourth. . . . But is there never to be an end? Is this Self so precious that it can never be resigned? May it not be that *others* will

want their turn? We can but put the question, and let each reader answer it as best befits his taste."

*The Biography of Charles Bradlaugh:* By ADOLPHE S. HEADINGLEY. Freethought Publishing Co., Fleet Street, London.

There is recently to hand a second edition, revised and enlarged, of the history of Charles Bradlaugh to the present time. It is a plainly-written book, and no doubt is not intended to be considered an exhaustive examination of the work and character of the "incomplete" member for Northampton. We are of opinion that the best-written biographies are generally those which describe the lives of memorable men and women when they are beyond praise or censure, and the work under consideration is no exception to this rule. Another striking instance of the truth of this principle we have in the "lives" of Mr. Gladstone, by Barrett Smith and Lewis Apjohn. However, there is nothing calling for regret in this biography of Charles Bradlaugh, and Mr. Headingley within the limits of his sketch has produced a very interesting book. One cannot read the first chapter, detailing the school-days of the great reformer, without being carried along through all the exciting and singular incidents of his dauntless career to the historic Northampton election of April, 1880. It is generally conceded that but for his iconoclastic attitude towards theology and great interests, Charles Bradlaugh would have been numbered among the greatest statesmen, orators, and lawyers of his time. He has scholarly pretensions not to be despised, as a platform speaker he has a power and finish which few men possess, and he is an uncompromising foe to any abuse. That he has made mistakes none can deny. Where is he who has not? But in almost every instance it has been on questions of policy, and the probity of Charles Bradlaugh's life is above any serious charge. But we are just now most concerned with Mr. Headingley's literary production. We think it a pity that this writer did not give a fuller history of the secular movement, and more especially where the subject of his biography was concerned. For example no mention is made of the well-known two nights' able debate in the Hall of Science between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. G. J. Holyoake. It is an important and interesting chapter in the history of the Freethought movement in England. It threatened all organisation at the time, and we can recall to memory some other equally momentous events not alluded to even by Mr. Headingley. Taking it, however, as a fragmentary biography of Charles Bradlaugh, we welcome it most heartily as showing what singleness of purpose and courage can accomplish. Here is a great deed which calls forth our admiration, and a perusal of the biography cannot fail to act as a stimulus to increased efforts on the part of all Freethinkers.

### Correspondence.

#### SERMONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SIR,—I have heard many sermons, but the following are so unique in their way that I will give you the mere outline, and then let your readers judge for themselves. The first was by a Dailyite, taken from the text, "If I, your lord and master, wash your feet, so ought ye to wash one another's." One would expect that a lesson on humility was the burden of this text; but in place of that, this minister occupied fully half an hour in proving, or trying to prove, that the feet must be the dirtiest part of the body, and this is the reason why Christ so peremptorily commands his disciples to wash their neighbor's feet. The second sermon was given in a Church of England place of worship in this city. The subject was a charity sermon, and the text was, "Make for yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations." From this the rev. gentleman endeavored to press on his hearers the necessity of giving alms or charity, for "we are to make friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, and if we fail in obtaining one place of rest in the world to come, they may at least receive us into their everlasting habitations." The authors of these two sermons are dead and gone, and by withholding their names we render some respect to the old adage, "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*"; but the author of the following is still alive, and Rector of St. Matthew's Church in this city, and he can, if he likes, defend himself if I have misunderstood him. About two years ago he was delivering a course of lectures on "Heaven, Hell, the Judgment, &c," and in reference to this last he remarked, "We are not to imagine that the old orthodox opinion

was right as regards our immediate departure to Hell or Heaven at the time of death." He instanced the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison (as told by St. Peter), and reminded his audience that Christ must have expected to do good by preaching to these bad spirits who had been in prison for four thousand years, since Noah's time. He further reminded his hearers that "we ought to be most careful what we should do or say, as the spirits of our dear friends, instead of being in Hell or Heaven, were actually *near us, around us*, watching and listening to our actions and words." By this last sermon we are led to expect that we have freethinkers doing our work *nobly* at their post, without our paying them for it.

Yours, &amp;c.,

Auckland.

OBSERVER.

## WORK AT GREYMOUTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SIR,—Some of the "orthodox" here, not satisfied with their views being disseminated from half a dozen pulpits, have taken to publishing "sermons" in the daily paper, these sermons consisting of the usual diatribe against Truth-seeking or Freethought. For instance, the believers in that natural faith have been stigmatised as "blatant ignoramuses," "whipped atheists," &c. They also state that they (the orthodox) have been attempted to be crushed by an overwhelming array of scientists—who have only endeavored to teach common sense—who are considered by the orthodox to be the most unholy and unprincipled men in endeavoring to upset some of their pet theories; but, thank God, their ranks are thinning, and orthodoxy has now come out of the fire doubly refined and strengthened, whilst the array of unbelievers are humbly begging pardon for the impious acts of writing or lecturing against "our holy religion." To some of the Freethinkers of this town the audacity of such statements could not be allowed to pass unchallenged. An article was inserted in the same paper showing that Freethinkers were not the vile creatures that they were said to be; that they were increasing daily; and an attempt made to expose some of the obnoxious theories that we are commanded by the orthodox to observe, but which are repugnant to intelligent men. Of course, exception has been taken to the article by some of the orthodox; the old spirit that condemned "The Echo" for being admitted to the Public Reading Room has been aroused, and to prevent "hatred and all uncharitableness" from being indulged in, the editor of the paper has, I think, very properly refused to allow any more "sermons" to appear in his paper. Of course, this has also the effect of closing his paper against the other side—at a loss, no doubt, as all appeared as advertisements—but the Freethinkers of Greymouth have the satisfaction of knowing that they will not be further maligned under cover of a "sermon," and that some very objectionable theories will not be again presented to them in the columns of our daily paper. I think the gentlemen who had the "sermons" inserted thought they were doing good—as they interpret the word—but in this they have made a serious mistake. They were not inserted to convert their own brethren—they have been converted already; it must have been to convert the opposition. But surely they went the wrong way about it.

Yours faithfully,

AN AGNOSTIC.

Greymouth, Jan. 1, 1884.

## DOG-VANES.

It is many years since I was a wanderer on the face of the ocean, but amidst all my subsequent wanderings on the face of the earth I have not forgotten the use of the Dog-vane. Like straws on a stream, the little fragile and generally fanciful bit of bunting hung on the back-stay gave evidence of the shifting currents of the breeze. In the present series of papers, I propose to direct attention to such minor events in the social and political progress of the time as appear to me to indicate the currents of public opinion, which, like variable winds to the voyager, alternately hasten or retard the progress of humanity to its goal.

The much hackneyed quotation, "There are stranger things in this world, Horatio, than are dreamt of in our philosophy," receives daily confirmation, notwithstanding the long flight of time since those words were written. Can there be anything stranger than the persistency with which the priesthood of all denominations continues to preach, and their followers continue to believe, or profess to believe, in a *merciful* Divine Providence. So utterly at variance with the daily experience of our race, and the dictates of common sense, does this doctrine appear to me, that all the philosophy I can muster fails to afford me a key to the blind gullibility of the people; the persistency of the so-called shepherds of the human flock is more easily accounted for, although their audacity in the face of facts is something wonderful. To illustrate the cause of my astonishment, it is not necessary that I should ask my readers to go back to ancient history, nor is a long retrospective survey of our own times needed, as numerous events within the memory of even the children of to-day are sufficient for my purpose.

Among the thousands who can remember the sinking of the excursion steamboat Princess Alice\* in the Thames, is there one who cannot recall the feelings of horror which the details of that catastrophe excited? Within the limits of this paper I cannot presume to give a complete list of the numerous accidents, as they are generally termed, but which in strict consistency should be called acts of God, which have resulted in the death and misery of hundreds of human beings from infancy to old age. Theatres, crowded with people, have been destroyed by fire; mines have exploded; bridges have broken down; railway trains have dashed into each other, and ploughed a road through throngs of helpless and panic-stricken people; ships have collided in the English Channel, and vessels have been wrecked on our own coasts, as well as in every other known portion of the globe; and lastly, though far from least, earthquakes and eruptions have destroyed whole cities and districts, involving in one common ruin rich and poor, young and old, the just and the unjust, proving most emphatically that God is no respecter of persons or of things, but, like some hideous cannibal, he sacrifices all sorts and conditions of men to his thirst for blood and his delight in human suffering. Banish the idea of an anthropomorphous deity and my impeachment falls to the ground, but as long as the personal interference with the affairs of the universe and man in particular is attributed to a personal God, my accusation is more than justified. War against such a barbarous and humiliating creed becomes one of the noblest occupations of the intellect. In order to assist in the battle against priestcraft and superstition, I have recently turned my attention to improving on the weapons of theology. The most effective means of blinding the reason and dwarfing the understanding has been the excitement of the imagination and powerful appeals to man's emotional nature. High-flown language, the gorgeous imagery of Oriental poetry, the gilded trappings and costly vestments, the magnificently painted windows, shedding their dim, religious light through aisle and chancel, and above all, the heart-stirring and enthralling power of music and the united harmony of the human voice, have all been used with most consummate skill to enslave the mind, and with what success the present condition of society too plainly proves. The tinsel and millinery of ritualism I have no desire to imitate, but music is an element of human pleasure and instruction, and I propose to divorce as much of it as possible from the delusive rhapsodies and incantations of theology, and to unite it with the words of truth and the aspirations of a purer and nobler faith. I therefore offer the following verses in common metre as a humble contribution to the Hymnology of Freethought:—

## JEHOVAH'S WONDROUS LOVE!

Behold Jehovah's wondrous love  
On Ischia's isle displayed,  
Where stately halls and cottage walls  
Are in one ruin laid!

Show me the mercies of that God  
Who hears the widow's cry,  
Who leaves in nameless agonies  
The old and young to die.

Has he who marks the sparrow fall,  
E'er stretched his hand to save  
The hapless crews who on him call,  
While sinking 'neath the wave?

To Sunderland turn the eye of faith,  
And mark the floods of tears,  
Shed o'er the mangled little one,  
Crushed on those fatal stairs.

The startling "truth" that "God is good,"  
Though earthly tyrants reign,  
Is written deep in human blood  
On every battle plain.

Millions of tongues in humble prayer  
To God for mercy cry;  
He only laughs at man's despair,  
And leaves the weak to die.

Then ask me not to bend the knee  
To such a senseless clod;  
Built up by ignorance and fear,  
And called by priests "our God."

CHARLES J. RAE.

Dec. 30th, 1883.

## THE MONK AND THE WOMAN.

It will be generally acknowledged as a true statement that there is no time when political danger is so imminent as during the period of great national change. This proposition, which is so trite and well-known in reference to the individual State or people, is even more correct in regard to the peril which arises to the welfare of the whole community of nations which border the particular State in which the change is occurring. Never perhaps was this so well marked as at the time when the disintegration of the great Roman Empire had become an accomplished fact. On no particular date can the historian lay his finger and say, This was the end!—that Colossus of nations was so immense, that blows here and fractures there, which would have shattered any frame of less vast proportions, only told gradually and slowly towards its sure decay. But when Rome had parted into its Eastern and Western divisions, when the heart of the Empire ceased to throb forth its strong centralising pulsations of command and order into the far-away limbs and fingers of its colonies and once-subject nations, out of that paralysis of the extremities, out of that senility of law and decrepit military rule, arose the greatest danger to which civilisation was ever exposed—the danger of universal anarchy. The irruption of the barbarous nations threw the world of culture back for centuries; although even this had its good side in giving to the peoples of Western Europe that “iron of the blood” which the northern savages had kept and nurtured, while the luxury born of conquest, of the use of slaves, and of the large estates, had sapped the constitutions and drained the courage of their southern neighbours. The eagles of Rome were screaming no more for war; they had flown back for the last time over Alps and Appennines, and the strong voice of the Legionary echoed no more from the banks of the Tigris to the shores of the Isles of Tin. In the place of the old military rule arose among the abandoned nations a fierce turbulent spirit, a love of bloodshed, a scorn of authority not supported by power, which threatened to crush out every softer impulse and every gentler virtue of humanity. During the time which saw the Ostrogoth and the Visigoth, the Saxon Heptarchy, the Lombards, the Merovingians, and the Norse Vikings, each king and kinglet, chief and noble was as a God to his followers, so long as he led them where blood was to be shed and booty secured. Men seemed to be losing all human feeling in the blood-thirst of the wolf, when amongst them passed small bands of earnest messengers who preached the doctrine of universal brotherhood, the gospel of mercy and forgiveness, and under their courageous teachings the spectral form of anarchy drew back, the threatened chaos of society took a form a shape which grew day by day into more perfect symmetry and more practical organisation, an organisation which has survived the passage of ten centuries, and is visible working among us in our own day. The men who wrought this unity taught that the Pontiff was the Vicar of God, his foot was on the neck of kings, his was the power to bind and loose in heaven and earth and hell. No less claim would have availed; under threats of the terrors of darkness for the unbelievers, and promises of sure reward eternally for obedience, the discordant particles of seething humanity settled and crystallised around the chair of the High Priest at Rome. Scattered into every village, gathered together in every town were the emissaries of the Christian Pontifex Maximus; where the Convent rose, where the monks tilled the lands of the Monastery were centres of law and order, nuclei of industry and good conduct. It may be urged that there is nothing inherent in Christianity as Christianity to have made it such an unifying and organising power, that any strong religious spirit, such as Mahometanism, would have done as much; and such objection is to some extent just. The hand of the Caliph stretched out from Mecca could make its grip shut as hard at Jerusalem or Bassorah as in the temple of the Caaba, and could reach as far as the touch of the successor of Peter; but in considering historical facts we must deal with what was, not with what ‘might have been,’ and it was Christianity which stood in the western breach between

savagedom and the possibility of government. For which let us be glad, and thankful for the beauty of its youth.

The servants of the Church were not only examples of discipline and morality, but possessed another power for good in their celibacy; it is impossible to rate too highly the effect of such celibacy *at that particular time*. The world had seen many priesthoods, had seen the sway of the priests of Babylon and Egypt, of Judaea, Greece, and Rome become stronger and more intolerant each year their nation existed, the people more and more crushed beneath sacerdotal influence until the sword of the invader shone the Gordian knot of trouble and servitude. A little study will show how the arrogance of priestly caste, increasing from father to son and propagated by family traditions, grows into a shape beside which regal pride sinks into insignificance. But in the Christian Establishment was an order of priests recruited from all classes; into the ranks of that priesthood the sons of the meanest could gain admittance; within that order was safety from the famine and sword which sometimes swept the land; there was a constant succession of “new blood”; a strength resulting from the blending of many diverse races, and the absence of that intolerable family pride of priesthood which is the inheritance of a sacerdotal caste. We can hardly imagine the disastrous effect on men which would have resulted had there been a Christian Hierarchy mingling at once the blood of kings and hereditary priests in the veins of certain noble families.

Having said so much in unmixed praise, let us turn to another side of the question, and see how the light faded and the fine gold became changed. If the unity and celibacy of the Church had many and good effects upon the history of men, they had many cruel and unwritten effects upon the position of women. The doctrines of human depravity, the fall of man, and the vileness of all natural instincts made the celibate who would rise to bodily holiness look upon woman as his personal enemy. His teachers brought with them from the East a contempt for the physically weaker sex not wholly undeserved by those Eastern women. If the effect of the use of slaves was degradation for the male slave and effeminacy for his owner, still worse was the result for the female slave and her master. Not only did slavery spread its social cancer, but the massing of the freedmen in cities (where they had been driven by the slave competition in agriculture on the large estates) had its vile consequences. Any man who wished not to be utterly crushed down became a follower of some great noble, and paid in sycophancy for that noble's protection; if the freedman could scarcely call his life his own, the freedman's wife and daughters were at the beck and call of the great lord in a way which made morality impossible. The mixture with the northern barbarians gave not only strength and courage to the men, but a renewed faith in and higher ideal of womanhood, for the sanctity of marriage and the chastity of their women were articles of belief in the Norse and Teutonic tribes. As we read the Eddas, the Niebelungen Lied, and the other old poems and stories which are our legacy from those stormy days, we see indeed that the Northern women had fingers rather too apt to close round the haft of the axe and the hilt of the knife, but then they did not spare themselves, their love of bloodshed or sufferance of it had nothing of the cruel selfishness which made the delicate Roman ladies in the Flavian amphitheatre turn down their dainty thumbs as the death signal for others. The Scandinavian woman was the house-mother, in her own home-domain, man's equal; looked upon with almost religious respect, because in her veins ran the blood of the ‘fighting man,’ and the wife and the mother of the Northern warrior were the wife and the mother of heroes. But the monks, trained in the later Roman contempt for women and the pietist horror of the sex, changed all that. In the quiet working room of the Convent, in rainy days of winter, on drowsy afternoons of summer, when the Brothers were at their missal-painting, or labouring in their tidy garden, when the low murmur of the conversation turned upon the theme of Women, what

pungent satire, what bitter words were poured forth upon that sex which to the celibate and the ascetic represented "the world, the flesh, and the devil." And if the holy and sincerely pious men, of whom there were many in the early Church, could revile women as their stumbling block and chief temptation, still more would the hypocrite who wished to disguise his sensuality put on a double portion of outward contempt for females, and make his teaching lower them in the eyes of laymen. He would affectedly preach what Saint Chrysostom preached in earnest, that woman was 'a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, and a painted ill.' They raved and slandered and reviled in a manner laughable exceedingly were not the consequences so terribly cruel and degrading. A favourite theme for the modern orthodox to descant upon, is what the Church has done for the purity and elevation of women, as though there were no virtuous women in the older days. 'Were there no bards before the fall of Troy?' The elevation of mind which would allow mediæval women to look on at vile Biblical dramas (the Monkish Mystery, or Miracle plays) where Adam and Eve were brought on the stage in a state of innocence, &c., was not so greatly above that of their pure Saxon and Norse ancestresses, and there is no more comparison between them than between the chaste Lucretias and Virginias of Ancient Rome, and the profligate daughters of nobles who swam naked round Nero's barge in public procession. Countless centuries before, in the dim hazy days of the East, had grown up the worship of the female power in the Universe, that great sense of the infinite Motherhood of Nature which appeals to all generations of men. The subject of the Dual Deity in the Everlasting is too gigantic to be more than touched on here, and the temptation must be forborne which prompts us to glance toward Isis and Hera, Ceres and the Venus Genitrix, with the mystical allegories which sanctified them, and the mysteries which polluted their later worship. The worship of the Virgin, which was the form taken by the mediæval mind in its communion with the Great Mother, has had too much claimed for it when it is asserted that it helped vastly to improve the condition of women. The mind which had been resting in religious ecstasy upon the spiritual bosom of the Madonna, the eyes which had been raised in half-delirious adoration toward the "rosa mystica," felt little but contempt when lowered to the level of earthly women, who, not having been honored by supernatural visitors from Olympus or the New Jerusalem, could not enter the holy land of maternity through the gates of pain without leaving behind them the chaplet of virginity. The monk, too, in preaching the vanity of earthly happiness and the utter insignificance of the search for it, weakened the sanctity of the regard for home and home duties. His hatred of the body not only encouraged dirtiness, but ruined the love of physical beauty which had been almost a religion among the Greeks, and gave us ideals from which Art is still suffering; so in sanitary matters and a hundred others, the old foolish, prudish contempt of the body appears and fights against any rational reform.

But it was in its effect upon the belief in witchcraft that we see the cruellest result of monkish teaching. To consult authorities upon this subject makes the blood boil with indignation to find what fearful pain men inflicted, under supposed Biblical direction, upon members of their race, and nine-tenths of the victims were women. They were accused of having children by fiends (incubi), and women with beautiful hair were supposed to be peculiarly liable to attract demon lovers—this was supposed to be the meaning of St. Paul's command to women to keep their heads covered 'because of the angels.' They were accused of frequenting witches-sabbaths where all sorts of vile orgies went on; of eating dead bodies as were-wolves; and of every other idiotic trash which minds rotten with superstition could conceive. And the ascetic familiarity with bodily pain, nurtured by dwelling on horrible pictures and stories of the sufferings of the saints and martyrs, intensified by a gloomy faith lurid with the flames of purgatory and hell, made these judges and accusers use torture in the most heartless and unsparing manner. The poor

victim was often kept awake for days and nights by having a "witch's bridle" fastened on her mouth and secured by a padlock to the wall, so that the sufferer could neither sit nor lie down. Let us read: "These instruments were so constructed that by means of a hoop which passed over the head, a piece of iron having four points or prongs was forcibly thrust into the mouth, two of these being directed towards the tongue, the others pointing out towards each cheek." (Dalyell's 'Darker Superstitions of Scotland'.) In this position she was watched by men set to keep her awake for days and nights in order to make her confess her guilt, the torture of thirst being added. So thousands of the poor weak, worn-out creatures acknowledged anything they were required to confess, and were removed to the flaming faggots of deliverance. Llorente states that from his perusal of the documents of the Spanish Inquisition, he found that at least 31,000 persons were burnt by that institution alone. 50,000 perished in the Netherlands under Charles V. In Italy 1,000 persons were burnt in one year (Spina 'De Strigibus'). 7,000 persons were burnt at Trèves ('Thiers' 'Traité des Superstitions'). Sprenger, who had unusual opportunities of judging, states that he believes that from the introduction of Christianity to the present day, nine million persons have suffered violent deaths on this account. Nor did the result of monkish fear of demons and monkish hatred of women end with the suppression of the monasteries; a legacy of horror was left to the Reformers. The Puritans in England and America, the Presbyterians in Scotland murdered more women than even the Roman Catholics had done. Luther, the first Reformer, said, "I would have no compassion on these witches, I would burn them all"; and John Wesley, the last Reformer, said (Journal 1768), "the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible." Let us turn away from this darkest record of human history, and glance at one more result of monkery. It was the degrading view taken of Love. It has been truly said that Love, as it is regarded to-day, is of modern growth; that the exquisite and refined sentiment, which is the ideal of the intellectual world in opposition to brutal passion or coarse sensual indulgence, is a new product of our later civilisation. The notion of an affection which can survive all loss, grow without possession, and exist without hope of fruition, that "'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all," may be of modern date, but that it should be so is the result of the degradation of women by ascetic preaching from Eastern books. As the Church for ages persecuted intellect in men, and tortured thinkers as heretics, so they threw down the lofty womanly ideal of our Northern ancestors, and gave us centuries of grossness and sensuality. Every step towards freedom for women, every link of her chain which has dropt broken, has been the work of that liberalising, widening tendency of thought which has been fought for inch by inch, year after year, against the monk and the monk's successors. Let me quote the noble words of noble George Eliot: "What in the midst of that mighty drama are girls and their blind visions? They are the yea or the nay of that good for which men are enduring and fighting. In these delicate vessels is borne onward through the ages the treasure of human affections."

EDW. TREGEAR.

New Plymouth, Jan. 3rd, 1884.

#### HOW SHOULD HE DIE?

Unto each his handiwork, unto each his crown,  
The just Fate gives;  
Whoso takes the world's life on him and his own lays down,  
He dying so, lives.  
Whoso bears the whole heaviness of the wrong'd world's weight  
And puts it by,  
It is well with him suffering, though he face man's fate;  
How should he die?  
Seeing death has no part in him any more, no power  
Upon his head;  
He has bought his eternity with a little hour,  
And is not dead.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

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(Signed) HERBERT RAWSON,  
 Dentist.  
 Wellington Terrace, Nov. 12, 1883.

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