

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."