

THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SCIENCE. RELIGION. PHILOSOPHY.

VOL. I.—No. 6.

WANGANUI, N.Z.: MARCH. 1, 1884.

PRICE: 6D. [6s per annum: or, post paid
to any part of N.Z., 6s 6d.]

The latitude and liberty accorded by Freethought Associations is clearly exemplified in the Braithwaite correspondence. In a second letter Mr. Braithwaite confesses himself in these words:—"I believe in the 'religion of Jesus Christ as I interpret it in the New Testament. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, the value 'of prayer, healing by laying on of hands, inspiration, 'and other matters I might mention, which I disbelieved 'when I left the Church, I believe now most firmly.'" And he is entitled to his belief without any question. But he is not entitled to convert his own want of moral courage into a charge of intolerance. "I seldom gave 'a lecture," he says, "knowing my views were 'unpopular. I never once gave any teaching on God, 'immortality, or prayer in the Children's Lyceum, 'neither did any Theistic teacher—supposing there are 'any. I knew well it would displease the Atheistical 'party. . . . How could I teach my views to my 'class if most of the children belonged to Atheistical 'parents. Suppose I had, and one little boy said, "'My father don't believe such,' what would be the 'effect? The question needs no answer. One was 'constrained therefore to sink what he conceived to 'be his best thoughts—and in a Freethought 'Association"! And so it comes to this, that the intolerance was in the little boys who preferred the teaching of their fathers to that of Mr. Braithwaite. "Conscience makes cowards of us all." And a man's "best thoughts" are kept to himself because they are unpopular! Now where does the implied intolerance come in? Parents surely should not be compelled to receive even "best thoughts" for their boys, if they don't like them. The Association exhibited a wide spirit of liberty and toleration in electing a Theist one of its Vice-Presidents if, as Mr. Braithwaite alleges, Theism is unpopular. It is Mr. Braithwaite who makes the distinction, that it was with the little boys, not with the Association, he feared his best thoughts would be unpopular. It may be unfortunate that a boy should believe his father before his teacher, but it is one of those things which no association can provide against.

It is quite possible the Association was deceived. Mr. Stout, evidently from his letter, looked upon Mr. Braithwaite as a Theist and Spiritualist; that is, one who rejects revelation, the divinity of Jesus, &c.; whereas he has been for some time—he was going to resign, he says, two years ago—a Christian of the Plymouth Brethren type. Now it must be admitted that a Christian—a believer in the Resurrection—is somewhat out of his element in a Freethought Association. It is probable that the knowledge of Mr. Braithwaite's belief would not have made much difference in the action of the Association towards him. It is one of the principles of Freethought to receive everyone whose conscience—he himself being the judge—will allow him to associate under its banner. And it is one of the remarkable features of this strange case that the individual conscience allowed itself so

wide a latitude. For the distinction must not be overlooked that while perfect freedom of conscience is extended to others, a man is required not to allow his own to run riot. "In November last (says Mr. Braithwaite) I offered by letter to continue the 'Echo' 'as a monthly, providing it *contained my religious views* 'occasionally' in its editorial columns, and was assisted 'with a monetary subsidy of £6 per month for twelve 'months. This letter remains unanswered." This confession suggests some grave reflections. Is it a part of the Christian conscience to receive a subsidy from Atheists—Mr. Braithwaite insinuates they are all or nearly all Atheists in the Dunedin Association—to run their representative paper? In that same November we find "J.B." telling his Atheistical readers "that 'Freethought was sure to succeed in the long run," and holding up the character of the veteran Freethinker, William Denton, for admiration. We have no hesitation in asking—Was it honest of a Christian to dissemble his views in this way? He was at that time treating for a subsidy! We are content to let this case illustrate the difference between the Christian and the Freethinker, the Christian Theist and the Atheist. And not another word need be said.

What would you give us in place of Christianity? In one of his addresses recently in Dunedin, Mr. Charles Bright answered this question in a single word—*Nothing*. One of the pulpits—which did not take the trouble of giving Mr. Bright's explanation of his meaning, or of ascertaining the attitude of the iconoclast—thought the admission condemnatory of Freethought. The justification of the bold negation depends on the result of the analysis of Christianity. When this has been performed, there will doubtless remain elements which must enter into any system of morals. No ethical synthesis can be perfect without many of the moral attributes which are to be found in all religions, however depraved and barbarous; and the question is quite as forcible—What would you give us in place of Mahommedanism? There is not a single ethical maxim or injunction in Christianity but which may be found in the secular teachings of philosophy—an observation made by Hypatia in Alexandria 1,400 years ago. But Christianity as a system is either true or false. The contention of the Freethinker is that, being false, its destruction would be a solid gain for truth, and consequently make for the elevation of humanity. There are hundreds of Associations at work to-day which, rejecting Christianity, are moving towards an ideal sufficient to satisfy the cravings of finer natures, and by education are moulding others. The good in connection with the Christian system would not therefore cease with the extinction of the system itself, but would rather flow with greater volume and force when released from the cramping effect of dogma, miracle, and priestly contrivance. "Nothing" in place of the system, would allow the good extracted from all systems to combine with greater freedom for social ends.

The Prince of Wales, in addressing the Grand Lodge of Masons lately, said: "As long, brethren, as Masonry remains as it is now—an order and an institution of charity and of usefulness—it will flourish as long as the world exists. Let us hope that the time may never come when we may in any way be biassed by politics. Above all, brethren, let us remember that we must as a charitable body be religious. As long as religion remains engrafted in the hearts of the Craft of our country it is certain to flourish—and be assured of it, brethren, that when religion in it ceases the Craft will also lose its power and its stability." This is a strange medley of "certainty" and "assurance." Would it have been in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that his Royal Highness had referred to the central principle of Masonry—morality—instead of dwelling on the allegorical part—religion? This is a weak point, and we shall not dwell on it. The Grand Orient requires no religion to assist it to be charitable and useful; but then perhaps it will not flourish "as long as the world exists." It does seem strange also that English Masonry should not be content with religion and charity, but should prefer princes and noblemen to ordinary men for the posts of honor, in spite of longer service, experience, and ability in the ordinary men. We fear that however much the Order in England may act on the square, it is determined not to apply the level to its morals.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in dealing a mortal blow at the religions of the past and present, has afforded the religious world some consolation in preserving for them an Eternal Energy shrouded in eternal mystery; for the votary of Jehovah loves to have his favorite deity well concealed in his native cloud. The gulph between the two deities will be easily bridged over in the imagination of the faithful, who, while regretting the great philosopher's iconoclastic thrusts at the superstitions of the past, will cordially welcome the conclusion that whatever of mystery is taken from the old conception of the Universe will be added to the new with interest. Jehovah, Jupiter, Pan, Eternal Energy, may only be different names of the same cause or being; and so theology and the theologians go on their way rejoicing—mumbling the same forms while the evolution proceeds. The prospect Mr. Spencer holds out is that the human faculty of wonder will have more employment in the future. With every fresh discovery the mystery will become more mysterious. The Unknowable will grow less knowable—if the paradox may be permitted—and some wise man a million of years hence will still be finding, like the Agnostic of to-day, solace in the contemplation of the lines:

"Knowledge is proud that he has learnt so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

What law of reasoning denies the possibility of a solution of the problem? If man were confined to a thousand or ten thousand years on the earth, the probabilities might be against his discovering the operation of this Eternal Energy; but give him time, and he may arrive at the point of culmination of the mystery. Mr. Spencer seems to have fallen into the error of regulating the inductions of the future by the facts of the present. Or if he thinks he has discovered some *à priori* principle which is final, he might be reminded that errors are very likely to have crept in to

vitiating the conclusion. We now read with amusement Lord Brougham, in his Dissertations on Paley, ascribing the perfection of the cell of the bee to the direct assistance of the deity. But thirty years ago, or before Charles Darwin spoke, we might have thought his reasons cogent. Sir John Herschell believed the tangential force was derived from an original motion given by the creator to bodies in space. The theory has no supporter among living astronomers. Mr. Spencer's Eternal Energy is the creation of his own mind, and limited by its conceptions.

"The Ethiop gods have Ethiop lips,
Bronze cheeks, and woolly hair;
The Grecian gods are like the Greeks,
As keen-eyed, cold, and fair."

We have as great a mind in the late Professor Clifford declaring that mathematics do not suggest infinity in the Universe, and hoping to find the secret of its energy in the property of atoms. Are we then to have a different shade given to the meaning of terms? Is Agnostic to mean one who believes in an existence unknowable called Eternal Energy? And is the Atheist the follower of Clifford who believes Nature all in all, revealing herself gradually to man pursuing the lines of scientific enquiry? We may accept Spencer in his inductions from accumulated facts, and bury the ghosts of the past. But we incline to hope with Clifford that, given time, and the inmost workings of the great mother of us all—Nature—will be explored.

The attitude of the State school teachers towards the Bible was a topic of discussion recently in the Presbyterian Synod of Otago, the question being raised by the Rev. Mr. Stevens, who asserted that a majority of the teachers in Otago referred to the Bible disparagingly in the presence of their pupils. This was strenuously denied by Mr. Fitzgerald, Rector of the Normal School, and a professing Christian. We are glad of the denial, for the imputation, we are assured, was unwarranted. Few Freethinkers are likely to forget the unsectarian and secular character of the education system, or their duty to avoid all reference to religion in the school. But the Rector of the Normal School went beyond his cue when he professed to be able to state approximately the number of teachers who are Freethinkers. The Normal School is not an inquisition to discover heresy for a Synod to punish, and as the private or speculative opinions of a teacher are clear of synodical jurisdiction, they should not have been made a subject of discussion. The priests—Protestant and Catholic—are growing daily more hostile to the State system of education, and it is not improbable they may have sufficient cause. In the one case the Protestant fetish, the Bible, has been banished; and the idolators must feel keenly the contempt cast on their idol. In the other the Church is no longer free to mix up the doctrine of mental subjection to spiritual authority with the inculcation of the "three Rs"—and hence these tears. The sects have numbers on their side; the Freethinkers are few. But it is wonderful how great is the resisting force of a compact, though numerically small, body of men inspired with a great cause. Though the priests may combine to assail the fortress of national secular education, unity of purpose, intelligence, and the entrenchments of the law are on the side of the Freethinker, whose true policy it is to defend the ramparts at all points.

Public opinion in the colony on the subject of an Australasian confederation of which New Zealand shall be a member, has taken a more decided turn since we first noticed the question in these columns. Sir George Grey's speech at Auckland has reached to all parts, stirring up the people to reflect on the possible and probable consequences of an alliance with the Australian colonies on the basis proposed at the Sydney Conference. We are not sure, however, that his argument touching the introduction of coloured labour can be maintained. It is well to avoid ground which in debate may be proved to be untenable. The real danger, as we suggested, is the inevitable tendency of the federal body to increase its powers at the expense of the provinces, and the weakening of the national instinct. In the November number of the 'Contemporary Review' the Marquis of Lorne points to the continual increase of the central or federal authority in Canada as one of the inevitable conditions of federation. It must be seen that if the proposed Federal Council is to have no larger powers than those drafted in the Bill by the Conference, federation will be purposeless. The most thoughtful perhaps of the English papers, the 'Economist,' takes this view. It says:—"The question is not such an easy one as it may at first sight appear, for two reasons. In the first place, it is clear that as the expense, or some part of it, incurred in carrying out the foreign policy of Australia is to be borne by the colonies, the Central Council must be invested with power to call for and apportion the necessary contributions. Thus indirectly, at least, it will be a taxing authority. And, secondly, inasmuch as the Council will not be able to take final decisions, at least in important affairs, without first submitting its proposals to the approval of the Imperial Government, some confidential channel for communication and discussion between the Home and colonial authorities must be secured." The "power to call for and apportion the necessary contributions" implies that preponderance of the central authority which would reduce the provinces to insignificance!

A little publication, called the 'Agnostic Annual,' just received by the English mail, contains a letter from Professor Huxley in reply to the following questions:—1. Is Agnosticism in accord with modern science? 2. What is its relation to popular theology? 3. Is Agnosticism destined to supplant religious supernaturalism? After stating that he invented the word "Agnostic" some twenty years ago, "to denote people who, like myself, confess themselves to be hopelessly ignorant concerning a variety of matters about which metaphysicians and theologians, both orthodox and heterodox, dogmatise with the utmost confidence," he says:—1 "Agnosticism is of the essence of science, whether ancient or modern. It simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe." 2. "Consequently Agnosticism puts aside not only the greater part of popular theology, but also the greater part of popular anti-theology. On the whole, the 'bosh' of heterodoxy is more offensive to me than that of orthodoxy, because heterodoxy professes to be guided by reason and science, and orthodoxy does not." 3. "I have no doubt that scientific criticism will prove destructive to the forms of supernaturalism which enter into the constitution of existing religions. On trial of any so-called miracle the verdict of science is

"Not proven.' But true Agnosticism will not forget that existence, motion, and law-abiding operation in nature are more stupendous miracles than any recounted by the mythologies, and that there may be things, not only in the heavens and earth, but beyond the intelligible universe, which 'are not dreamt of in our philosophy.' The theological 'gnosis' would have us believe that the world is a conjuror's house; the anti-theological 'gnosis' talks as if it were a 'dirt-pie,' made by the two blind children—Law and Force. Agnosticism simply says that we know nothing of what may be beyond phenomena."

It seems that Professor Huxley resented the publication of the above letter, and an angry correspondence took place between Professor Huxley and the editor of the 'Agnostic Annual,' Mr. C. A. Watts. The President of the Royal Society seems to have displayed more heat over a mere misunderstanding than might have been expected from a philosopher, who in this case certainly did not act in accordance with his own Agnostic principles, but, on evidence which was certainly not scientific, jumped to the conclusion that he had been "treated dishonorably" by Mr. Watts, who had published a letter which he knew was a private communication. It looks as if Mr. Watts was justified in saying—"With all deference, we repeat that it is manifest from the tone of each of his letters that the secret of his vexation is the wide publicity which has been given to his direct attack upon Christianity, and to his equally clear avowal of Freethought and Agnosticism." It would be well if all men, and especially men of science, realised the fact that—as Mr. Herbert Spencer says in an eloquent passage in his 'First Principles'—"Opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of that agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost convictions: leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles and repugnance to others. He with all his capacities, and aspirations, and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that while he is a descendant of the past he is a parent of the future; and that his thoughts are as children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die. He, like any other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause; and when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief, he is thereby authorised to profess and act out that belief."

Perhaps Professor Huxley's contemptuous reference to the "bosh" of "heterodoxy" is perhaps partly due to his dislike of a crude materialism which was popular a few years ago and found expression in such phrases as "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile," but though he declared on one occasion, "personally I am not a materialist; on the contrary I believe that materialism contains grave philosophic error" (Fortnightly Review for 1869); yet on another he wrote: "If there is anything which is clear in the present progress of science, it is the tendency to reduce all scientific questions, with the exception of purely mathematical ones, to what is called *molecular physics*,

"that is, to the attraction, repulsion, motion and "combination of the smallest particles of matter," and further, "the phenomena of biology are as immediately "related to molecular physics as are those of chemistry; "and this is a fact acknowledged by all chemists and "biologists who see beyond their own immediate "occupation." If this is not materialism in the only sense in which the question can be of any interest to mankind it is hard to say what is. Matter may be only a "permanent possibility of sensation" and "mind "a permanent possibility of feeling," or both may be modes of the unknown, as, on a monistic theory of the universe, is much more likely. In either case man is not an isolated being in his nature different from the rest of the universe, but part of it, the result of a play of forces which he can only know as coexistences and sequences related to the great whole. His personal identity is like that of a flame or a river, one of form only, and to flatter himself that he is something more because the unknown is infinite, is to re-introduce theological conceptions under the guise of science aping a humility which is misplaced. In relation to ourselves the "scientific imagination" may surely aspire to penetrate the unknown future by the same methods it has applied to the unknown past, though in the one case we can never arrive at a beginning or in the other at an end.

Passing Notes.

We publish in our present issue the first part of Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Retrospect and Prospect of Religion*. The concluding part will be given in our next. Though the essay has gone the rounds of the press, we have thought it desirable to publish it in the *REVIEW* for future reference. The advanced proof was sent out to Sir George Grey, an old friend of the author.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has a bitter parody on Tennyson, ending:—

Alfred, Alfred Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no toilers in our streets
Nor any poor in all these lands?
Oh! teach the weak to strive and hope,
Or teach the great to help the low;
Pray Heaven for a noble heart,
And let the foolish title go.

The following is from the 'Auckland Star' and is self explanatory:—To the Editor: Sir,—In your issue of last evening is a police report of the trial of two boys for defacing with paint the Wesleyan Chapel, New North Road, and the case is headed, "Young Freethinkers." I have read over the report carefully and cannot discover any allusion to Freethought or Freethinkers. If anything appeared in the trial to warrant the heading, please give it publicity. If the heading was the result of accident or other cause, please correct it. Many besides myself will be interested with your explanation. I trouble you because I am a Freethinker and from my knowledge of Freethinkers generally, and in Auckland, am of opinion that though in the matter of credulity they are not equal to Christians, in the matter of conduct they are.—Yours truly, A. CAMPBELL.—[We must really decline the task of conducting a research into the religious or non-religious opinions of these young scamps. Our correspondent will, however, admit that whatever their title to the use of this cherished designation on a religious ground, they certainly exhibited considerable freedom of thought on the subject of property rights. ED. E.S.] [The editor hardly does justice to himself as a man of candour and plain dealing. He has no objection to libel a society of men at least as honest as himself, but he declines "research" into the facts on which his allegation was based. He may be left there.—ED. F.R.]

'The Christian Record' is offended because the "Sacred Name" of God was not mentioned in the break-up of the Dunedin High Schools for the holidays, and arrives at the conclusion that "the whole thing was, in a word, intensely heathenish." The 'Record' is weak in its ancient history; the heathens, like good Christians, were always invoking the "Sacred Name" of their guardian divinity. In truth the heathens were perfect models of devotional feeling and expression.

The man Edwards who ruthlessly destroyed his wife and four children at Ormondville on the 10th Feb., is a Christian, believes in the immortality of the soul, and that murderers will be happy in the company of those they have murdered when they are "safe in the arms of Jesus." Edwards, in his confession, says:—"I believe I will be hung for it; I deserve to. I hope they won't keep me long. I want to meet my wife and family. I think I will go to the same place as they have, as they will forgive me." If the man was not insane when he committed the deed, a Christian priest will take care that he is washed in "the blood of the lamb," and be better off than those who believe in a life of kindness and good works—than the tender husband and provident father. Such is Christianity!

Freethinkers must follow with peculiar interest, and with feelings of pride, the events in the Parliamentary career of Charles Bradlaugh. His conflict with a bigoted, tyrannical, and utterly unscrupulous majority in the House of Commons has passed through many stages, each repulse appearing to be only the prelude to some more daring attempt to assert his clear and indefeasible right and title to represent Northampton. Mr. Bradlaugh went up to the table the other day and swore himself in. Mr. Gladstone offered to prosecute him if the House so directed—a course which would not have been unfriendly. But the leader of the Opposition came forward with his resolution to exclude the member from the precincts of the House. Mr. Bradlaugh at once resigned, and appeals again to his faithful constituency, which will no doubt still prove true to the cause of liberty. [Since the above was written Mr. Bradlaugh has again been returned.]

Mr. Joseph Symes left England in the beginning of January for Melbourne, whither he proceeded at the invitation of the Freethought body of that city. Before Mr. Symes's departure, his friends gave him a farewell supper, Mr. Bradlaugh presiding. A purse of sovereigns was presented, containing £139, the spontaneous gift of Freethinkers throughout Great Britain. The President delivered an eloquent valedictory address, and Mrs. Besant, in terms alike graceful and eloquent, presented the purse and the following testimonial:—

"To JOSEPH SYMES,

"Vice-President of the National Secular Society, and one of its
"Special Lecturers,

"Sir,—By resolution of the Executive of the National Secular Society, and on behalf of the Freethought Party in Great Britain, we take the occasion of your leaving England on a lecturing visit to the Southern Hemisphere to testify to you our good-will and affection, and our wishes for your health and prosperity. We desire to place on record our thorough appreciation of your devotion to the Freethought cause, and our recognition of the brave work you have done with tongue and pen during the time you have been active in our ranks.

"We bid you farewell in the full trust that you will win honor and respect amongst your new friends on the other side of the Pacific, and in the hope that we shall soon be able to welcome you back to your place in our midst.

(Signed) "CHARLES BRADLAUGH, President.
"ROBERT FORDER, Secretary.

The proceedings denote the sterling character Mr. Symes has earned in the mother country among Freethinkers.

The annual gathering of the members of the Dunedin Freethought Association to celebrate the birth of Thomas Paine was held in the Lyceum. Mr. R. Stout presided, and delivered a short address. Mrs. Clutnam sang a solo very effectively; Mr. Hopkins sang "The Death of Nelson," and was encored; and the Lyceum choir rendered a number of selections in a very pleasing manner. Mr. Charles Bright delivered a very eloquent address, in the course of which he said that Thomas Paine had been more calumniated during his life and since his death than probably any other soul that had

existed on the planet. No doubt the reaction that had sprung up would go on until the man who had been scandalised would be idolised. It had taken 200 years to vindicate the reputation of Oliver Cromwell, and Cromwell had not been half as much cursed as Paine. Had Paine merely struggled as he did for liberty in America, he would have been worthy of honor; had he but contended as he had done for the rights of man, his memory should be revered;—but when to these things were added his labors to free mankind from superstition, it is indeed well that they should hold in honor the birthday of this hero of liberty, Thomas Paine." At the close of the concert a ball was held, at which there was a fair attendance.

The Trades Unions and Councils of the Colony will in future be represented by a paper specially devoted to questions affecting these bodies. The title is 'Labour,' and, from the first numbers, it would appear to have set itself the task of vindicating the rights and interests of the working classes. If it will earnestly attempt the solution of certain problems which are vexing the souls of English economists, there is a wide field of usefulness before it. The nationalisation of the land, Malthusianism, and taxation are questions on which it might speak to the purpose.

Two large inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar have been found on Lebanon by M. Pognon, Assistant-Consul of the French Republic at Beyrout. The two inscriptions each contain a different text. They commence with the titles of the king: "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the Illustrious Pastor, the Servant of Merodak, the great Lord, his Creator, and of Nebo, his illustrious son, whom his Royalty loves." One inscription enumerates the wines figuring on the table of the god Merodak and of the goddess Zarpanit. The more evidence comes to hand of the religions of Babylon and Assyria, the stronger the proof becomes that Christianity is largely indebted to them for its central doctrines.

Col. Ingersoll says: "The great objection urged against me by my opponents is that I am constantly tearing down and never build up. Now I have lately published a little book in which I have endeavored to give most of the arguments I have urged against the Pentateuch, and the motto upon the title page is '*A destroyer of weeds, thistles, and thorns, is a benefactor, whether he soweth grain or not.*' I cannot for my life see why one should be charged with tearing down and not rebuilding, simply because he exposes a sham, or detects a lie. I do not feel under any obligation to build up something in the place of a detected falsehood. All I think I am under obligation to put in the place of a detected lie is the detection."

Progress.

A society in connection with the Dunedin Freethought Association, to be known as the Lyceum Literary and Debating Society, was formed on the 17th January, when rules were agreed upon and office-bearers appointed. Mr. W. Dickson was elected president, Mr. W. Hood vice-president; Messrs Merry, Newell, Jackson, and Lister committeemen; and Mr. John Stone secretary and treasurer. The meetings are to be held weekly on Thursday evenings, in the committee-room of the Lyceum Hall.

The following from the 'Lyttelton Times' announces "Ivo's" first platform appearance in Christchurch:—

Last night the lecturer who has adopted the name of "Ivo" addressed a large number in the Freethought Hall on the subject of "Christianity." From the announcement that the address was to be given in the Freethought Hall it can readily be understood that the subject was treated from a non-Christian point of view. As a matter of fact the lecture was a slightly modified version of one of three discourses given by the same gentleman in Wellington, and hit with much vigour at the inconsistencies between the theories and practice of so-called Christians, and at the diversity of sects. It would be impossible to give a fair epitome of the address, which lasted an hour and a half, and a full report would occupy too great a space. Suffice it to say that "Ivo" won an attractive hearing and

many tokens of assent, and that his arguments, if often sarcastic, were forcibly put and were founded on facts, for which he gave chapter and verse. The President of the Freethought Association was in the chair, and announced that "Ivo" would lecture on "Scepticism" on Sunday next.

The following letter will be read with great interest:—

A FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION FOR OAMARU.
(To the Editor Oamaru Mail.)

Sir,—Will you kindly permit me to correct a slight error that appears to have crept into the reports of my lecture furnished by the Oamaru papers on Saturday. The reports stated that those interested in Freethought were requested to remain behind after the lecture with the view of forming the nucleus of a Freethought Association in Oamaru, but that the appeal met with no response. As this portion of the report has been carefully copied into the Dunedin papers, I think it necessary to state that the invitation was given at the request of some Oamaru Freethinkers; that a few ladies and gentlemen did remain behind on Friday evening, and that a meeting of these was held at a private house on the following Sunday. At that meeting it was determined to take steps towards forming a Freethought Association in this city, and in view of this it was resolved that lecturers—notably Mr. Bright and Mr. Stout—be invited to give addresses on Freethought subjects.

From what I know of the members of the Committee that has been formed, and from the opinions that I have since heard expressed by a number of Freethinkers in Oamaru, I have no doubt that before long the advocates of freedom of thought will have the satisfaction of knowing that a vigorous Freethought Association has been established in this important centre.—I am, &c.,

T. CHEYNE FARNIE.

A SUGGESTION.

One of the objects of the forthcoming Conference of Freethought Associations ought to be to determine the best means of holding property. We mean briefly that the General Council should have the legal right of owning land, receiving bequests, gifts, etc. The Associations should seek to have a freehold site for a Lyceum in every town and township of the colony, and in each case, to prevent abuse, the land ought to be vested in the general body. Of course the management of a Hall or Lyceum built on the land, where a Freethought Association existed, would be local. To the friends then the appeal would go forth: obtain now the sites of the Lyceums of the future.

BLenheim.

We hope soon to see an Association established in Blenheim, where there are many brave Freethinkers who have the courage of their opinions. We take this opportunity of thanking a very old friend and Freethinker whom we knew in Wellington for his kindness in looking after the interests of the REVIEW.

PICTON FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Picton friends have organised their Association, and have very enjoyable meetings on Sunday evenings. The President, Captain Macneil, writes:—

"We are hopeful that the forthcoming Conference in Dunedin will have the result of encouraging others to join us, so that with increased numbers, and perhaps abilities, we may be able to forward the grand cause, the emancipation of the world from priestcraft, tyranny, and falsehood."

The President mentions that the Association is not strong enough to send delegates to Dunedin. We would suggest that the Association might appoint two delegates to represent it who are resident in Dunedin—say Mr. Stout and Mr. Bright.

WOODVILLE FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

We received the following pleasing intelligence just too late for the January number:—

A fairly well attended meeting was held in the Schoolroom on Friday evening for the purpose of forming a Freethought Association. Mr. Hagen was voted to the chair, and on the motion of Mr. Bexan it was resolved to form an Association, to be called the Woodville Freethought Association. Ten gentlemen signed their names in the room as intending members, and it was stated that a number of others in the district had signified their

intention of joining. The following office-bearers were elected:—President, Mr. E. A. Haggan; Vice-Presidents, Messrs. Chas. A. Bevan and T. Hyde; Treasurer, Mr. T. F. Fountaine; Secretary, Mr. Bevan; the Committee to consist of the foregoing gentlemen, with Mr. Eno Hutchins, making six in all. It was resolved that the Committee should draw up rules, etc., and submit them to a subsequent meeting for adoption, Mr. Bevan having courteously placed a room at the disposal of the Committee for meeting purposes.

Since the above was in type we have received the following further communication from Mr. Bevan, Secretary of the newly formed Association:—

Sir,—I am happy to inform you that the first meeting for forming the above Association took place on the 25th ult., when ten names were handed in as members. Officers and a Committee were then elected. The Association decided to adopt the rules of "Constitution" as published in the Review of November 1st with one amendment. The meeting was then adjourned to enable the Committee to draw up By-laws and submit them to the adjourned general meeting of Members.

In the meantime we were very pleasantly surprised by receiving a large quantity of books and pamphlets from "Blue Pencil" for the Association. Next some friend forwarded a copy of "The Colonist" from Nelson containing an account of the "Freethought Navy." Mr. Hyde, a member, also forwarded a quantity of books and pamphlets for the Association, which gift was followed up with some more from "Blue Pencil," and I must say that the thorough way in which the latter has used his "pencil" through every book and pamphlet, marking all that he thinks most useful, testifies to his great earnestness in the cause.

The adjourned general meeting was held on the 15th inst., when the By-laws were submitted and passed. The best thanks of this Association to the generous donors of Freethought literature was also passed, with orders for its insertion in my report to the Review.

Fortunately for us Mr. W. A. Ellis of "Chicago" was passing through, and he kindly attended our meeting and gave us an address. Twenty-two Members are now on our roll, which looks like progress. It was decided to hold our first monthly meeting on Sunday the 2nd of March, when our President Mr. E. A. Haggan will give us a Presidential address.

Yours truly,

CHARLES A BEVAN,
Hon. Sec. W. F. A.

WELLINGTON FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary has furnished us with the following report for the past month:—

Wellington, February 21st, 1884.

On Sunday, 29th January, a lecture on Spiritualism was delivered by Mr L. Stead, of Melbourne, to a numerous audience, which, to quote our local "Times," "was unmistakably mixed." Mr Stead ably stated his experiences at domestic firesides, and read several quotations from writings by American Spiritualists. After a lengthy, breezy, discussion, a "circle" was formed, thirteen persons of both sexes sitting round a table, with palms spread and fingers touching. After the lapse of perhaps twenty minutes Mr Stead declared that the table "tilted." About this some differed, and a "private circle" was formed, which meets every week. It is stated that several spiritual manifestations have appeared to them. On the 3rd instant an essay was read by "Echo," subject, "Man as compared with animals." On the 10th instant J. Henry, Esq., of the National Secular Society, London, delivered a very able and interesting lecture on "Jesus and his teachings," when the Hall was again well filled. "Ivo" had a good house at the Theatre Royal on the the following Sunday, subject, "Charles Bradlaugh, Esq., M.P." On Monday last "Ivo" delivered in our Hall several recitations from English and American poets, but the attendance was not so large as was anticipated. On Sunday next, 24th instant, J. Chantry Harris, Esq., editor of the N.Z. "Times," delivers another lecture in our Hall on Spiritualism, and we expect to have a very large attendance.

Yours truly,

ALFRED T. JARDINE,
Hon. Sec.

CANTERBURY FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

Mr. W. Pratt, President and Corresponding Secretary of the above Association, has forwarded his report for the past month, as follows:—

Since my last report we have had the benefit of "Ivo's" able assistance, which has attracted large audiences to our Sunday evening meetings. His subjects have been "Jesus and the Prophets," "Scepticism," and "David," in the order named, and last Sunday (10th) miscellaneous readings. During his visit he also gave two lectures on week days at the Freethought Hall—on the 23rd January upon "Christianity," and on the 13th inst. upon Chas. Bradlaugh. The liberality of the Wellington, Wanganui, and Nelson Press in their reports of his previous lectures, is in marked contrast to the meagre notices which have appeared in the Christchurch papers.

A Lieutenant Lowry, of H.M. ship *Espiegle*, has displayed a good deal of energy at religious and temperance meetings since the ship has been on this coast. On Sunday, the 10th inst., he attended our children's Lyceum, and having obtained permission to relate

an incident of his own life, used it as a vehicle for launching out upon the horrors of an eternal hell, and the merits of the blood of Jesus; but here he was quickly invited to desist, and informed that our object in establishing the Lyceum was to preserve the minds of the children from such fables and delusions. As the incident was silently ignored in the Secretary's published report, a reverend gentleman, doubtless disappointed that the wolf had not been allowed to make free havoc with the minds of the tender lambs, characterised the report as a "Jesuitical" attempt to make the Lieutenant pose as a Freethinker, evidently forgetting that the Jesuits are regarded as eminently religious, and their practices sanctioned by the highest Christian authorities.

The success which has attended the ordinary Sunday School teaching is lamentably apparent in the removal of the head-quarters of the Salvation Army to Christchurch. The "officers" have evidently found the Dunedinites too cute to "shell out" to the extent desired for their "blood and fire" doctrines, and have discovered that here is a fine field of specially prepared material to work upon, and the poor deluded victims, tortured in mind and cajoled out of their small means, yielding unresistingly to the sulphurous stupefaction, and become dancing, howling puppets in the hands of the wire-pullers.

The Committee of this Association have had under consideration a circular from the Dunedin Freethought Association & Federation, and, while recognising the advantages of combined action, consider that time should be allowed for the Associations only recently organised to become firmly established, before entering upon wider fields of action.

To-morrow Sunday, 17th, our second Pic-nic takes place, and we confidently expect it will be as great a success as last year, but as it is yet in embryo, I must leave further reference to my successor who will write the next report, as I am about to revisit Europe after a continuous residence in New Zealand of forty-one years.

Yours truly,

WM. PRATT

President and Corresponding Secretary of the C. F. A.

WANGANUI FREETHOUGHT ASSOCIATION.

The Secretary has forwarded us the following particulars:—

Wanganui, February 25th, 1884.

Sir,—In respond to an invitation from the Dunedin Freethought Association to send delegates to a Conference to be held at Dundin on the 10th March next, the Wanganui Freethought Association decided to appoint Mr Charles Bright and Mr A. D. Willis to represent their interests at the Conference. Both gentlemen have signified their willingness to attend, and we are to be congratulated on securing the services of earnest and able representatives. The holding of a Conference will be looked forward to with great interest by those in the ranks of Freethought; and those without will see that heretodox opinions are supported to a very much larger extent than they now dream of.

On Sunday last our talented and welcome friend, Mrs Moore, gave a lecture on Spiritualism, which was very well attended. The lecturer, as formerly, handled the subject with considerable ability, strongly advocating all sceptical as regards Spiritualism to investigate the subject. Mrs Moore, being a Materialist before embracing Spiritualism, urged several very strong points against Materialism. All of them, however, were answered by different members of the Association. A very pleasant evening was spent, and I feel convinced every member of our Association would be only too glad to welcome Mrs Moore on future occasions.

Great credit is due to Mr King for providing us with such excellent music. I am sure the musical part of our programme has never been excelled in New Zealand.

Yours faithfully,

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

The Auckland Freethought Association now has 114 members on its roll.

"On thinking the matter over, this theory seems so consonant with reason, that one feels ashamed of having suspected many excellent persons of being moved by mere malice and viciousness of temper to call other folks atheists when, after all, they have been obeying a purely intellectual sense of fitness. If the Jew says, that the Deity is absolute unity, and that it is sheer blasphemy to say that He ever became incarnate in the person of a man; and, if the Trinitarian says, that the Deity is numerically three as well as numerically one, and that it is sheer blasphemy to say that He did not so become incarnate, it is obvious enough that each must be logically held to deny the existence of the other's Deity. Therefore, that each has a scientific right to call the other an atheist; and that if he refrains, it is only on the ground of decency and good manners, which should restrain an honourable man from employing even scientifically justifiable language, if custom has given it an abusive connotation."—HUXLEY.

Notes & Queries.

ANSWERS.

PAGANISM.

In reference to "Queries" in the January number of the *FREETHOUGHT REVIEW*, I will answer them briefly. No. 1.: "What was Julian the 'Apostate's' true object in attempting to restore Paganism? Does he deserve the opprobrious title?" No. The character of this great Emperor has been the object of various and contradictory judgments, according to the religious or political spirit of the various writers. Let us take a common sense view of his character. His father, Constantius, A.D. 353, favoured the Arian Church—called a heretical sect—who taught that Jesus Christ was not "very God of very God," but persecuted what were then called the Orthodox—the Nicæans—for their dogmas (see the Nicene creed). Julian, his successor, was taught the Scriptures. His father intended him for a priest of the Arian religion, but he had no inclination for that profession, and at a very early age abandoned the various doctrines of belief called Christian, who were then fighting with each other for the ascendancy. When proclaimed Emperor in December, A.D. 361, he reformed the pomp and prodigality of the household, issued several wise edicts, corrected many abuses, instituted a court of enquiry to investigate the conduct of those who had abused their influence under the preceding reign. He then openly professed the old religion of Rome, sacrificed as high priest to the gods, ordered the former "heathen" temples to be re-built. This was a signal for a fearful reaction against Arians and Nicenes. Frightful persecution arose against them. Both the Emperor and the people found that the court and the nation under the old religion had deprecated immorality, that the masses were then comparatively happy and free, and that justice was dispensed. These were denied them under the reign of Arians and Nicenes, but Julian restrained and punished the persecutors. But because this great persecution happened in his reign—and he was admitted to be a sceptic—hence the nickname of the "Apostate"—a foolish name, indeed, as he never had changed his views, or pretended to teach anything else than hatred to the persecutions that emanated from the bosom of the early Christian Church. He died on the 26th June, 363, in perfect calmness and composure, surrounded by his friends, conversing on philosophical subjects, expressing his satisfaction at his own past conduct. A writer says:—"He had many brilliant and amiable qualities. His morals were pure and even austere."—A.

MASONRY, WHEN FOUNDED.

No. 3A: "When was the first Grand Lodge of Masons founded?" In the commencement of the 14th century, when Pope Clement V. and Philip le Bel, King of France, abolished the order of Templars. Many of them organised a secret society—first called in Scotland by the absurd name of Freemasons—said to be an organisation vowing implacable hatred and eternal vengeance against papacy and royalty.—A.

LEGENDARY ROME.

No. 5: "About what date does the history of Ancient Rome begin, as distinguished from the legendary or pre-historic period?" Roma (Rome) was founded B.C. 753 (legendary) by Romulus. His death is recorded as marvellous, as was his birth. Whilst reviewing his people, he was taken up by his reputed father, Mars, and carried into Heaven, but he soon afterwards appeared as a glorified hero to Proculus Julius, and bade him inform his people that he would watch over them as the god Quirinus. Period 1, from the building of the city to the establishment of the Republic from 753—510 B.C. Period 2, from the establishment of the Republic to the Dictatorship of Sulla 510—82 B.C. Period 3, from the constitution of Sulla to Augustus, 82—30 B.C. Period 4, the Empire to its downfall, 30 B.C.—476 A.D. It will be seen that any account of Rome previous to 753 B.C. must be legendary; that at

about that time, which includes the legendary account of Romulus and Remus, cannot be accepted as history. From that time till 510 B.C., history and legend are mixed up, but from 510 B.C. till the present date authentic history can be found.—AGNOSTIC.

DEFINITION OF GRAVITY.

In answer to No. 2, in your journal No. 5, "What is the best definition of gravity?" The act of matter "falling" to the earth, or the act of one body being attracted towards another. Whether on this earth, or other earth, or all other earths, drawn towards, or attracted to, one another, would define the word gravity. But I do not think this is the querist's trouble; it seems to me he, like others, sees the effect and wishes to know the cause! No doubt he knows that matter does not "fall" to the earth, for if the earth was small enough it would "rise" to a larger body; they would be attracted to each other. Matter at a distance over London would seemingly fall there, but while doing so it would rise to us, so that rising and falling are only names, seemingly opposite, but both expressing the same act. Gravitation or attraction is an inherent principle pervading all matter in the universe so far as our telescopes can reach, and by analogy to all matter contained in the eternity of space—the repulsion of magnetism of the same quality, or the repulsion of various bodies in the chemist's laboratory need not be mentioned here. What attraction or gravity is (cohesive or other) life, electricity, or other mysteries are, are beyond the ken of man and are likely to remain so. We know that the magnetic atmospheres surrounding the North and South poles of the earth extend as far as the equator, and there, as in other parts of the earth's surface, attracts the atmospheres of the mariner's compass, repelling one and attracting the other pole, forcing it into the magnetic meridian, drawing and repelling in horizontal lines; but whether the vertical or radiant lines emanating from the earth or other earths or suns meet each other half way, embracing each other there, and continuing the embrace until the bodies themselves were united—which they are sure to be if not coerced by some other power—is not known. When I use the word atmosphere querist will observe it is not the matter we breathe that I allude to, but something more akin to the ether which pervades all space; the atmosphere that surrounds all matter of various qualities, extending indefinitely in all directions, but attenuated in the distance. For instance, the various atmospheres surrounding iron, copper, lead, flowers, bread, &c., are distinguished by the smell. A grain of musk will fill a room with its atmosphere for many years, should it contain thousands of cubic feet of space, without sensibly diminishing its weight. The earth's atmosphere extends into all space; other atmospheres do the same. If there they unite, and continue the embrace till their principals meet, we are as much in the dark as ever as to the cause of gravity. The next question naturally arises, Why do they unite?—and so on. Querist will observe that the entire mass of the earth together constitutes the attracting power to another body. There are some parts of the earth where attraction varies. For instance, there is no attraction whatever at the earth's centre; but having regard to the editor's space I must stop here.—Yours respectfully, AN AGNOSTIC. Greymouth, Feb., 1884.

Mr. Emerson wrote to a friend in 1829:—"I suppose that prosperity is always dangerous, especially for the very young. In college I used to echo an ejaculation of my wise aunt: 'Oh, blessed, blessed poverty!' when I saw young men of fine capabilities, whose only and fatal disadvantage was their wealth."

Mr. Cross has almost finished the "Life of George Eliot," and it will be published by Messrs. Blackwood early this year. The work will contain a great deal of correspondence of the very highest interest. Mr. Cross has luckily been able to recover almost the whole of his wife's letters, among them being a series extending over several years, written to some of the friends of her younger days.

NAMES OF FREETHINKERS IN THE CALENDAR FOR MARCH.

1. Thursday.—John Badly, burned, 1409.
3. Saturday.—William Kingdom Clifford, died, 1879.
8. Thursday.—Freret, died, 1749.
9. Friday.—William Cobbett, born, 1762.
10. Saturday.—Joseph Mazzini, died, 1872.
11. Sunday.—J. Toland, died, 1722.
13. Tuesday.—Dr. Priestly, born, 1733.
15. Thursday.—D. T. Eaton, imprisoned for publishing "Age of Reason," 1812.
17. Saturday.—Madame Roland, born, 1754.
18. Sunday.—B. Leggatt, burnt, 1612.
22. Thursday.—T. Campanella, died, 1639.
24. Saturday.—Hébert, guillotined, 1794.
28. Wednesday.—Condorcet, died, 1794.
31. Saturday.—Descartes, born, 1596.

N O W P U B L I S H E D.
P R I C E — S I X P E N C E.

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Greymouth ...	W. H. Perkins		

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.

Received: 'The Kansas Lifer,' 'Labor,' 'Sydney Liberal,'
and 'The Boston Investigator.'

Received too late for insertion in our present issue—"Fiat Lux,"
and Report of Nelson Association.

E.B.—Thanks for reports. Condensed account of the month's
proceedings will be welcome.

AMICUS.—You will find a quantity of evidence on the subject of
Clairvoyance in Dr Carpenter's work on 'Mesmerism, Spiritualism,
&c.'

STOMA.—The "funny man" who tries to be witty at the expense
of Freethinkers does not deserve your serious consideration. If
you only knew his motives and methods you might pity him.

A correspondent writes us from Gisborne in reference to a
former notice, and states that the Freethinkers there subscribe
liberally to Freethought literature. We must have been misinformed.
Might we suggest to our friend that the best evidence of the
sincerity of Freethinkers is their organisation and hearty co-operation
in the movement.

We have received an interesting communication from a small
centre not 50 miles from Wanganui to the effect that there are only
two avowed Freethinkers in the place, and that one of them is
Churchwarden. If he is the people's Warden it speaks well for the
progressiveness of the people. If the Parson's, well, we don't know
very well what to think. It may indicate the breadth of the
Parson's sympathies, and his approach to "Civilised Christianity."

Received: 'The Church in the House'—a new weekly journal,
printed in Dunedin by Mr John Mackay, and edited by the Rev.
Wm. Carey. Our young contemporary seems of the usual orthodox
type, and though we are "wide as the poles asunder," we wish him
bon voyage so long as he tries to cultivate a spirit of charity and
truthfulness.

The Freethought Review.

WANGANUI, N.Z., MARCH 1, 1884.

THEOLOGY AND POSITIVE SCIENCE.

COMTE's great generalisation—that each branch of our
knowledge passes successively through three different
theoretical conditions, the Theological or fictitious,
the Metaphysical or abstract, and the Scientific or
positive—throws a flood of light upon the whole course
of the history of opinion. This "law of the three stages,"
as it is usually called, is deduced from the fact that
mankind has actually thought in the manner thus
indicated, and from considering the mode in which the
human mind is compelled to act by its constitution and
its relation to the universe. It is confirmed by
observing what takes place in the case of each
individual. Every man is "a theologian in his
"childhood, a metaphysician in his youth, and a
"natural philosopher in his manhood." No doubt
this statement must be taken broadly. Both in the
race and in the man each of the "three stages" may
co-exist in relation to some ideas, and it is rare to find
anyone who regards all phenomena from the scientific
standpoint. Only a slow and very gradual process of
evolution can bring this about, but the tendency is
obvious enough. In our time it is admitted that all
real knowledge must be based on fact, but it is equally
true that isolated facts are almost useless. We can
hardly perceive and remember them, much less follow
any train of reasoning about them, without the guidance
of some theory. In the ordinary practical affairs of
life we may not perceive the operation of this mental
law, but it is there, nevertheless, embodied in habit, in
the grammatical forms and organic structure of language,
and in the simplest process of inference. "This
"necessity of observing facts in order to form a theory,
"and having a theory in order to observe facts," is, as
Comte points out, "the fundamental reason for the
"theological character of the primitive philosophy."
It is only gradually that the real relations of phenomena
to each other can be worked out, but their real or
supposed relation to man's wants or wishes seemed
self-evident. However little primitive man knew of
that vast world of sky and mountain, flood and forest,
in which he found himself, he at least knew, or thought
he knew, that he was the most important being in it.
It is our emotions, not our reason, which impel to
action, and as belief always has in its ultimate analysis
a reference to action, it is easy to see why man, in the
infancy of our race, was so ready to transfer his own
attributes to surrounding objects. What is poetry to
us was reality to him. Beginning with "Fetichism,"
he conceived all he saw to be animated like himself,
but in different degrees. The conception of supernatural
intelligences separate from the things they were
supposed to control, was a later development. The
two ideas may still be traced even in classical literature.
Thus Ovid, describing the mode in which Chaos, a
"rude and undigested mass," was arranged by "God
"and bounteous Nature," refers to the sun as a Titan
and to the sea as Amphitrite. Hume, in his
"Natural History of Religion," is substantially in
complete accord with one of the latest writers on this
subject, Dr. E. B. Tylor, the well-known Anthropologist.
In short, it is only those who have not studied the
question who can find any difficulty in tracing the
origin of belief in the supernatural to its source, not in
the knowledge, but in the ignorance of mankind.
This being the case, it is clear that all such beliefs
ought to have but very little weight as evidence of
their truth. An increasing perception of the unity of

nature has produced Monotheism from Polytheism, but noble as the completed structure may appear, and great as has been its social, and even scientific utility, we cannot shut our eyes to the inherent weakness of the materials of which it is composed. Like Russian ice-palaces, it has lasted during the long night of superstition, but must gradually melt away in the bright sunshine of modern science. At best, we have but an hypothesis to deal with. A personal God may exist so long as personality does not imply anything contrary to experience, but the mere power to imagine such a being is no proof whatever of his existence. Indeed, a proposition incapable of proof may be logically regarded as false, so that, like any other assumption, its truth can only be decided by an appeal to evidence and reason. As for the metaphysical *a priori* arguments for the existence of God, they invariably break down at the point where it is essential to their validity that relative knowledge should become absolute. Kant no less than Hume perceived this distinctly, and evaded the difficulty by an appeal to the "Practical Reason," which really meant very much what theologians mean when they tell us that without a God conscience and morality are delusions. To this the doctrine of evolution furnishes a sufficient reply. Morality and conscience are growths of the social organism, and Humanity furnishes that ideal which theology seeks for in a divine person. There remains, then, the well-known argument from design, which, though scientific in character, is weak in logical force. It rests upon that imperfect induction known as analogy, and in any case reaches but a very little way towards rendering the existence of the kind of Deity which theology postulates, in the slightest degree probable. The theory of final causes really implies an anthropomorphic God, and such a being cannot be inferred from the order of the universe. Instead of design modern science sees only correspondence between an organism and its medium. Contrivance presupposes fixed laws; given the air and mechanical powers, a man may construct a flying machine, but given a flying bird, all we can say is that wings and the air are necessary conditions of its existence. Apart from the relation of air and wings, there would be no bird at all. Similar reasoning applies to every portion of the universe known to us, including our own consciousness. In short, the principle of relativity applies, and excludes all knowledge of the absolute. In accordance with the law of the "three stages," the gradual recognition of this fact is inevitable. But when we have eliminated the changeful element of the human imagination from nature, we are by no means left, as the theologians tell us, "without chart or compass" for our guidance through life. On the contrary, "that power, not ourselves," the knowledge of which is our highest wisdom, must become more directly regulative than ever. When it is no longer thought possible that the arbitrary personality supposed to rule the world can be propitiated by some quasi magical process, such, e.g., as the "Atonement," men will give more heed to the principles which should guide individual and social life before either can attain its highest good. Science, moralised by devotion to the interests of Humanity, though it may compel us to abandon many cherished illusions, will relieve us from many needless fears, and will furnish a far firmer basis for morality than can be obtained by appealing to "survivals" of a philosophy which has fulfilled its mission.

R.P.

Correspondence.

A WORD FROM MR. BRAITHWAITE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE FREETHOUGHT REVIEW.

SIR,—In last REVIEW you assert I changed my views since 10th November last, and quote in proof from the 'Echo' of that date, wherein I said "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." Why should I refer to the "unessentials of orthodoxy" if I did not hold the same opinions then as now? Any impartial person can see that my letter resigning the Dunedin Freethought Association and my rejoinder to Mr Stout are quite in keeping with the above extract.

To confirm this I quote from my letter resigning the Association thus:—"I do not doubt that when the Church finds that what I conceive to be the unessentials of religion—as related to the present age—have almost 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." You also seem to think Freethought inseparable from Freethought Associations. I never thought this. Freethought belongs to humanity, not to any special organisation. And you overlooked the fact that in the "valedictory address" you quoted from I wrote that "that much misunderstood subject, Spiritualism, would form a portion of the editorial policy" of the new 'Echo.' To me New Testament Christianity and Spiritualism rightly understood are the same, the proof of which I am content to leave in the hands of Science. So much for my "change of opinions regarding the future of Freethought since the 10th November, 1883."

The President of the Christchurch Freethought Association, Mr Wm. Pratt, not only misses the drift of my letter resigning the Dunedin Freethought Association and knocks down arguments of his own invention, but makes me say that "the mere right to think for one's self is not only of no value but absolutely powerless of good." I never used such words. They are opposed to the whole tenor of my letter. Besides, Mr Pratt acted most unfairly in placing the words, "the mere right to think for one's self," between inverted commas (as if quoting from my letter), coupling them with "is not only of no possible value," &c., thus fathering an absurdity upon me. I fail to see that misrepresenting others serves the cause of truth. Mr Pratt thinks I "hold opinions more in harmony with the Romish Church than a Freethought Association." How is this when the concluding part of my resignation says: "I shall ever be found standing up for civil and religious liberty and the completest toleration one to another!" Perhaps you and Mr Pratt think neither liberty, toleration, nor freethought can exist outside of a Freethought Association. I think differently. Yet there is no need to fall out because of this. My main contention, which neither Mr Stout nor Mr Pratt touches, was and is, that those who firmly believe in God and a future state cannot work effectively in religious matters with those who do not, and the fact that the Secular and Freethought Associations everywhere are, with rare exceptions, composed of the latter, and that the two parties have had to organise separately in America, England, and Australia, proves what I say.

I am, yours faithfully,

JOSEPH BRAITHWAITE.

Dunedin, February 21st, 1884.

[The resources of Etymology are in this instance only available to support a mental reservation. "Freethought" or "Spiritualism" no more represents Christianity than does Buddhism. We never implied in the faintest way that Freethought was inseparable from Freethought Associations. As Mr Braithwaite believes in the Resurrection, the reference to the "unessentials of orthodoxy" is obscure. Used in a Christian sense by one representing himself as a Freethinker, the phrase was deceptive.—Ed.]

Reviews.

False Claims: An address delivered before the New York Freethinkers' Association, at Rochester, New York, September 1st, 1883, by John E. Reinsburg. New York: Truth Seeker Office.

Lectures, brilliant, logical, and convincing, are delivered from time to time in the interest of Freethought, but the address under notice surpasses all we remember having seen, in its statistical range and the comprehensiveness with which it notices the salient features of Christianity. The address abounds in facts, figures, suggestions and deductions, and is an excellent summary of the arguments against the Christian system. We select one passage as an illustration of the vigour of the style: "The Evolution theory is promulgated. A million priests array themselves against it. From nearly every pulpit comes the cry of 'Darwin' and 'Monkey,' accompanied by an idiotic sneer that more than half reveals the 'missing link.' But Evolution triumphs. To-day the theory is accepted by every eminent scholar and scientist throughout the world. The Church has again been vanquished, and now her representatives are coming forward and declaring that henceforth Christianity and Evolution can dwell lovingly together. With what ease this theological baby swallows an unpalatable truth when powerless in the nurse's arms, unable to thrust the spoon from her mouth! In less than twenty years the Church will be claiming Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Haeckel, and Wallace as Christians, and pointing to their work as a monument of Christian civilization." For all purposes of ordinary controversy on the subject of Freethought and Christianity, "False Claims" is a perfect armoury of weapons of attack.

Poetry.

10 VICTIS.

I sing the Hymn of the Conquered, who fell in the battle of life—
The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died overwhelmed in
in the strife;
Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the resounding acclaim
Of nations was lifted in chorals, whose brows wore the chaplet of
fame—
But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary, the broken in
heart.
Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and desperate
part:
Whose youth bore no flower on its branches, whose hopes burned
in ashes away,
From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped at, who stood
at the dying of day
With the work of their life all around them, unpitied, unheeded,
alone,
With death sweeping down o'er their failure, and all but their faith
overthrown.
While the voice of the world shouts its chorals, the psalm for those
who have won—
While the trumpet is sounding triumphant, and high to the breeze
and the sun
Gay banners are waving, hands clapping, and hurrying feet
Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors—I stand on the field of
defeat
In the shadow amongst those who are fallen, and wounded, and
dying—and there
Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-knotted brows,
breathe a prayer,
Hold the hand that is helpless, and whisper, They only the victory
win
Who have fought the good fight and have vanquished the demon
that tempts us within;
Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize that the world
holds on high:
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight—if need be,
to die.
Speak, History! who are life's victors? Unroll thy long annals and
say—
Are they those whom the world called the victors, who won the
success of a day?
The Martyrs, or Nero; the Spartans who fell at Thermopylae's trust,
Or the Persians and Nerves? His judges, or Socrates; Pilate, or
Christ?

—Blackwood's Magazine.

WHY EVE DID NOT KEEP A GIRL.

A Lady writer furnishes some of the reasons why Eve did not keep a hired girl. She says:—There has been a great deal said about the faults of women, and they need so much waiting on. Some one (a man of course) has the presumption to ask—why, when Eve was manufactured of a spare rib, a servant was not made to wait upon her? She didn't need any. A bright writer has said, Adam never came whining to Eve with a ragged stocking to be darned, buttons to be sewed on, gloves to be mended "right away—quick—now!" Because he never read the newspapers till the sun went down behind the palm trees, and he stretching himself, yawned out, "Isn't supper ready, my dear?" Not he. He made the fire and hung the kettle over it himself, we'll venture, and palled the radishes, peeled the potatoes, and did everything else he ought to do. He milked the cows, fed the chickens, and looked after the pigs himself, and never brought half a dozen friends to dinner when Eve hadn't any fresh pomegranates. He never stayed out till 11 o'clock at night, and then strolled because poor Eve was sitting up and crying inside the gates. He never loafed around the corner groceries while Eve was at home rocking little Cain's cradle. He did not call Eve up from the cellar to get his slippers and put them in the corner where he left them. Not he. When he took them off he put them under the big fig tree besides his Sunday boots. In short, he did not think she was especially created to wait on him, and he wasn't under the impression that it degraded a man to lighten a wife's cares a little. That's the reason Eve did not need a hired girl, and with it was the reason her descendants did.

"Do you ever think what you would do if you had the Duke of Westminster's income?" Village pastor:
"No, but I've sometimes wondered what the Duke would do if he had mine."

A PHILOSOPHICAL CREED.

I believe in the existence of a universe of suns and planets, among which there is one sun belonging to our planetary system; and that other suns, being more remote, are called stars, but that they are indeed suns to other planetary systems. I believe that the whole universe is Nature, and that the word Nature embraces the whole universe, and that God and Nature, so far as we can attach any rational idea to either, are perfectly synonymous terms. Hence I am not an Atheist, but a Pantheist; that is, instead of believing that there is no God, I believe that in the abstract all is God: and that all power that is, is in God, and that there is no power except that which proceeds from God. I believe that there can be no will or intelligence where there is no sense, and no sense where there are no organs of sense; and hence sense, will, and intelligence, is the effect, and not the cause, of organization. I believe in all that logically results from these premises, whether good, bad, or indifferent. Hence, I believe that God is all in all; and that it is in God we live, move, and have our being; and that the whole duty of man consists in living as long as he can, and in promoting as much happiness as he can while he lives.

ABNER KNEELAND.

Written at Hebron, (N.H.), May, 28 1833.

QUESTIONS FOR CHRISTIANS.

- 1—If God created an endless hell before he created man, did he know there would be any use for it?
- 2—If God knew there would be any use for an endless hell, must he not have created some men for endless misery?
- 3—If God created an endless hell, was it included in the works which he pronounced very good?
- 4—If there be an endless hell, and it was not made before creation, when was it made?
- 5—If there be a personal Devil, who made him, and for what purpose was he made?
- 6—Can there be any such thing as sin in heaven?
- 7—If there was sin in heaven, and angels were cast out, may there not be sin in heaven again, and may not the present inhabitants be cast out?
- 8—As sin possesses temptation of some sort, who tempted a holy angel to sin?
- 9—If an angel could sin without a devil to tempt him, may we not sin without a devil to tempt us?
- 10—If a holy angel was tempted by surrounding evil, is heaven a holy place?
- 11—If an angel was tempted by evil passions, could he have been holy?
- 12—If an angel became a devil by sinning, was Adam's the original sin?

COMMON SENSE IN MARRIAGE.

If you must marry, let common sense have a show in de transackshun. Doan' go off your feet bekase you meet a girl who can sing like a robin, smile like a rose, an' jump off a street kyar widout boderin de driver to stop. A wife will have much to do besides singin' and cultivatin' dimples. If you am gywne to marry, ax yerselves how fur 10 dollars per week will go when divided up for clothes an' pervishuns, an' house rent an' feel an' incidentals. Befo' you fall in love wid a gal who looks too sweet fur anythin' in a red plush sacque, kinder figger on how many such duds your income would afford her. Befo' you am all broke up obea a gal who plays de pianner, talks French, paints landscapes, an' reads poetry, jist sit down an' figger who am to cook your meat an' taters, patch yer cloze, darn yer socks, and help yer make 12 dol. buy 15 dol. worth of things. Befo' you let a pa'r o' flashin' eyes an' a cunnin' dimple captivate ye, look aroun' a little an' see if de owner has got a temper like a wildcat. Marriage am a lottery, simply bekase people take each odder unsight an' unseen.—DETROIT FREE PRESS.

Science Notes.

Professor John Collett believes that the mastodon was alive in North America much more recently than naturalists commonly suppose. Thirty skeletons have been discovered in the marshes of Indiana alone; and one skeleton was found imbedded in wet peat of a recent formation. It is stated that in some cases the large bones contained marrow, which the bog cutters extracted and used as grease for their boots.

M. Paul Bert has recently communicated to the Academy of Sciences the results of his experiments in anæsthetics. He finds that the fatal dose is, curiously, just double that which is sufficient to produce insensibility. He calls the interval between these points the working zone, and states that an animal which has been made to breathe a mixture of the anæsthetic which is about the middle of the zone is quickly anæsthetised. The working zone is often narrow—for instances, eight grammes of chloroform failed to render a dog insensible, while twenty grammes kills. Ether, M. Bert finds, is much less dangerous; and protoxide of nitrogen has a more extensive working zone than any of the other anæsthetics tried.

A German medical paper gives an account of a series of observations by Professor Gerhardt, of Warrburg, on the liability of pheasants, pigeons, turkeys, domestic fowls, &c., to the attack of diphtheritis, and the possibility of disseminating that disease by this means. In 1881 some hundreds of fowls were sent from the neighbourhood of Verona to Nesselhausen, in Baden, where there is a fowl-raising establishment. Some of these were affected with diphtheritis before starting, and in the end nearly half died; five cats caught the malady; and a parrot also was invalided. A diseased hen bit a man's wrist, and he presently became ill, and had a most tedious recovery. Many of the workmen at Nesselhausen caught the disease, and in one case a man conveyed it to his children.

When rain falls upon a dry soil and moistens it to some depth, this moistening actually warms both soil and water. A. Stellwaag has recently made experiments on various kinds of soils, and finds that a humous chalky soil was raised as much as 15 degrees, and clay 9½ degrees by first finely pulverising them and then moistening with water. Thus we are justified in assuming that the light humous chalky soil which covers the chalk downs of England is, after dry weather, raised about 10 degrees by a smart shower of rain. This rise of temperature is due to the adhesion of the water to the surface of the solid. Such adhesion effects a certain degree of condensation, and condensation in that as in other cases is attended with evolution of the heat. The greater the surface exposed the greater the effect, and the pulverisation of course increases such surface.

It is known that deaf mutes can be taught to speak in a manner. According to M. Hémet, the individuals so taught have the peculiar accent of their native place. Since they cannot have acquired this by imitation, being deaf, he supposes that the fact indicates organic conformations similar to those of their parents: a new example of physical resemblance, transmitted hereditarily. M. Blanchard (in the French Academy) expressed doubts about this. The hoarse, metallic, guttural sounds produced by persons deaf from birth, without modulations or inflexions, seemed to him to be beyond the characterisation of accents by which human voices are distinguished. The question, as to whether the presence or absence of certain articulations, in the idioms of peoples, was connected with peculiarities of the phonetic apparatus, was (in his opinion) quite uncertain. The probabilities of such peculiarities he was disposed to affirm some time since, considering such facts as that the Chinese substitute *r* for *r* in French or English words (*Európe*, or *America*), but he had since met a Chinaman, familiarised with French, who articulated the *r* distinctly.

It is often found that silkworm caterpillars come out of the egg at a time when, through bad weather, the foliage of the mulberry has not reached its full development, and large numbers perish in consequence. To meet this evil, a Milan engineer, S. Suzani, throws the eggs into a lethargic state by application of a temperature near zero. They may thus be kept an indefinite time, awaiting the full development of mulberry leaves, and a means is also afforded of equalising the results of years of rich and of poor foliage.

THE BIBLE AND PROTESTANTISM.

It is truly astonishing and bewildering, when we read the Bible, to think that any person gifted with even an ordinary amount of perception, could believe that book to be the word of God. If people would only take it as they should on its merits like any other book, read it by the light of reason, if they are truthful and honest people, they must condemn it as being of divine origin. I have read it through from beginning to end several times, and of course, amongst very much wickedness, and quantities of rubbish, we read some high, true, good thoughts, but certainly not more so than can be read at intervals in the Bible of the Brahmins, Budhists, the followers of Confucius, Mahomet, &c. These latter all teach as high a moral standard, and some higher, than does our Bible, for where our Bible teaches goodness it always holds out a reward, either in this world or in the world to come, whilst several of the others I have mentioned teach goodness not for any reward, but because it *is* goodness; purity because it is purity. In the Christian Bible we cannot find any more *proof* of its divine origin than the others can offer. Then I say it is astonishing that anyone can have the assurance to still insult human intelligence by asserting that it is God's word to man. The Protestants seem to be making the greatest commotion against Freethought. They try at times to be quite valiant. This is very ludicrous, when we remember that even if they could prove the Bible to be true, they have no right to it. If it were the word of God, every promise and blessing in it means *curses* to the Protestant. This Bible, whether it be true or not, does not belong to the Protestants; it was stolen from the Roman Catholics. I will endeavor to explain what I mean. To begin with, of course we must carefully bear this in mind, that if Jesus of Nazareth was God, as all Christians believe and teach, he must have been infallible—all he did and said must be taken as unerring truth. You cannot love Him if you doubt what he said, and St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xvi 22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." That is, let him be under the curse of excommunication. Now, I deny that the Church of England is *the* Church founded by the Apostles of Jesus of Nazareth, and of course if the Church of England is but an imitation, then its offshoots, Wesleyanism, Calvinism, Presbyterianism, and all the other isms must be false too. We read that Jesus very clearly chooses twelve Apostles to preach to all nations, and he gave them all power equal to his own. You will read of this in the 10th chapter of Mathew, 3rd chapter of Mark, 6th chapter of Luke. In John there is no account of the choosing of the twelve Apostles, but in the 20th chapter, Jesus, after his death, is supposed to have appeared to the disciples, and, among other things which he spoke to them, in the 23rd verse he said, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained." Here you see Jesus gave all the disciples power to forgive sins. In the 16th chapter of Mathew, the 18th and 19th verses, Jesus appoints Peter as the head of the Church, for he said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon *this* rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." If we believe the words of Jesus at all, we *must* believe that he made St. Peter supreme ruler of the Church, and of the Apostles. He did not say to all the Apostles, "Upon these rocks I will build my Churches." No; he very plainly, in the presence of the other Apostles, chose Peter (whose name in the Syro-Chaldaic tongue means rock). Peter was the rock on whom he would build his Church. *One* rock and *one* Church. Jesus then evidently

founded but one Church, which he was pleased to build on Peter, therefore any Church that does not recognise Peter as the foundation-stone is not the Church of Christ. This is plain. In connection with the keys of heaven, it may be stated, on the authority of Dr Gibbons, that in the ancient times, and particularly among the Hebrew people, keys were an emblem of jurisdiction. To say that a man had received the keys of a city was to say that he had been appointed its Governor. It must be remembered that to Peter alone, and to no other Apostle, Jesus solemnly said he would give the keys of heaven. Now, as the *true* Church must descend from the *true* Apostles, and as the Church of England, or Protestantism, was not known until about A.D. 1519, it seems to me very plain that the Church of Rome is the one Church founded by Jesus. The Roman Catholic Church has traditions proving its direct descent from St. Peter, and it has also an unbroken succession of Popes, St. Peter being the first Pope. Many Protestants allow this to be so, among them Bishop Short, an Anglican historian. He candidly admits that "the existence of the Church of England as a distinct body, and her final separation from Rome, may be dated from the period of Henry VIII's divorce from his lawful wife, Catharine of Arragon." It is a matter of common history that the Pope would not allow the divorce of the Queen. The licentious King then divorced himself and kingdom from the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. Some Protestants have said to me, "Oh, yes; we believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the one founded by Peter; but so many errors had crept in, that the Church became idolatrous, and good, true men had to separate from it." Now, this should sound blasphemous to those who believe in the Bible and the words of Jesus, for did he not say, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." If Christians believe this, they must admit that it would be utterly impossible for the Church to fall into error. In St. John, xxi, 15-17, Jesus again makes Peter prominent before the other Apostles, by repeatedly saying to him, "Feed my lambs," "feed my sheep." It is very evident from this, that Jesus spoke of the lambs as representing the flock or Church; but by the sheep he meant the other Apostles, and priests. To the Apostles he assigned the power over the Church, but to Peter alone he gave absolute control over the Apostles as well as over the Church. An ordinary reader of the New Testament would certainly consider St. Paul as the prominent Apostle, yet he was not one of the twelve. In the 8th chapter Acts, we find Saul (afterwards St. Paul) one of the most bitter and unmerciful of the persecutors of the disciples. He was present, if not assisting, at the stoning of Stephen. In fact he seemed to be something like the Christian representation of the devil, "going about seeking whom he may devour." When Saul was converted and Jesus was said to have spoken to him, we see no mention of his being placed above Peter. No, he must have acknowledged, with the others, Peter as their Head after Jesus. When was Christianity first introduced into England, and by whom? No one is quite sure about it. Some say it cannot, at this distance of time, be exactly ascertained. Eusebius positively declares that it was by the Apostles and their disciples; Bishops Jewel and Stillingfleet, Dr. Cave, and others insist that it was by St. Paul; and Baronius states, on the authority of an ancient manuscript in the Vatican Library, that the gospel was planted in Britain by Simon Zelotes, the Apostle, and Joseph, of Arimathea; and that the latter came over A.D. 35, or about the twenty-first year of Tiberius, and died in this country. Dr. Gibbons, a Roman Catholic bishop, says that it was introduced by St. Augustine into England, by St. Patrick into Ireland, and by St. Pelagius into Scotland; but whoever it was that brought the religion of Jesus into England he could only have but a branch of the tree, of which St. Peter and a long line of Popes are still the trunk. The true Church must be Apostolical, must always teach the identical doctrines once delivered by the Apostles, and her ministers must derive their powers from the Apostles by an uninterrupted succession. No Church can be the *true* one whose doctrines differ from those of the Apostles, or whose ministers are unable to trace, by an unbroken chain, their authority to an Apostolic source. The Church, says St. Paul, is "built upon the foundations of the Apostles," Eph. ii 20. Hence St. Paul said to the Galatians, "Though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him

be anathema" (Gal. 1 8.) Not only is it required that ministers of the gospel should conform their teaching to the doctrine of the Apostles, but also that they should be ordained and commissioned by the Apostles or their legitimate successors. Even St. Paul himself, who was supposed to be miraculously called and instructed by God, had hands imposed on him (Acts xiii 2-3), lest others should be tempted by his example and preach without Apostolic warrant. Then, to discover the Church of Christ, we have to inquire—1st, which Church teaches in their entirety those doctrines that were taught by the Apostles; 2nd, what ministers can trace back, in an unbroken chain, their missionary powers to the Apostles? The Catholic priests alone, says Dr. Gibbons, can trace their descent from the Apostles; the Catholic Church alone teaches the very doctrines taught by the Apostles. Then if the Bible is true *all* Protestants are under the ban of excommunication, their ministers have no right to administer the sacrament, no right to the office of teacher and guide to the people, no right to the Bible itself, for that book proves, if they believe it, that outside the pale of the Roman Catholic Church they are *Anathema Maronatha!* Roman Catholicism is a reformed Jewish religion; Church of England a reformed Roman Catholicism; Dissenters generally reformed Church of England. Some people say that the Protestant religion is less blood-thirsty than Roman Catholicism. I do not think so; there was not a pin to choose between them when each had power. History clearly shows this. I am not a Roman Catholic myself—never was, and never will be—but *truth is truth* and always will be truth. By-and-bye when the more enlightened religion, Spiritualism, has gained power, and is more understood, Protestants will be only too glad to throw the Bible nonsense back on the shoulders of the Roman Catholics. This *precious (?)* book in my opinion was compiled from many other books—a piece here and piece there, tacked together, arranged, doctored and improved to suit the times and ideas, by some *precious (?)* monks. Part of it is a history of the Jews—all very well in its way, but where the nonsense comes in is when they want to force it as the word of God on enlightened minds. It has been undergoing another doctoring lately, as though people are stupid enough to believe that the true revelation of God needed alteration and arrangement at the hands of man. The *real* word of God, as seen in all his wonderful works, does not require man's interpretation; it does not require interference, translation, &c. Bah! it is difficult to think that anyone in this enlightened 19th century could be blind enough to accept the Bible as God's revelation when any man can take any word and twist its meaning to suit *any* purpose. Think of the many, very many, phases of religious opinions. They are all founded on the Bible; and in truth each has as much reality as the other, for if you seek you may find a verse which, *properly* interpreted, will allow you to do *anything*, if the end justifies the means. Then as to infallible interpretation, the ministers of *each* Church (however much they may differ) are considered by their followers to preach the *true gospel*; in fact each considers himself an infallible interpreter of the word; yet all Protestants deny the infallibility of one man, the Pope of Rome, while at the same time each considers himself his own Pope. I was rather amused to hear that a number of Protestant ministers had assembled under the protecting wings of a Catholic priest during a recent lecture against Freethought given by him in Wanganui. How that worthy man must have laughed in his sleeve at the spectacle, when in his own heart he believed those ministers of an Apostate creed were just as much, even more so, under the Church's ban of excommunication than were the open champions of Freethought.

M.M.

Professor Huxley recently delivered his first address as President of the Royal Society. It was occupied with a review of the scientific history of the year. Perhaps the most remarkable passage relates to Mr. Gardiner's researches respecting the continuity of protoplasm through walls of vegetable cells, which means, says Professor Huxley, nothing less than an approach to a demonstration of the essential unity of plants and animals.

WORK.

A HOMILY AND A HYMN.

"Work while it is yet day, for the night cometh when no man shall work."—JESUS OF NAZARETH.

In the 'Pall Mall Budget' of Nov. 9th, 1883, there is a brief memoir of Mr. Moody, the Revivalist, and a description of the new temporary tabernacle in which he and his partner, Mr. Sankey, were performing for the edification of North London. It is perhaps quite unnecessary for me to state that I have very little sympathy with these American traders in Christian emotionalism. Their existence is however a fact, and the influence which they have upon the middle and lower strata of Society is another fact well worthy of serious consideration. According to the memoir referred to, Mr. Moody began his career as a teacher in Chicago, in which city he was doing a good business in the boot and shoe trade. His sympathies for the young outcasts of society were awakened, and he opened a sort of ragged school for the Street Arabs of Chicago, and there can be no doubt that his labours in that direction were productive of a large amount of good. It is asserted that Napoleon the first declared that he was "by nature a Republican, but circumstances made him an Emperor." The force of circumstances upon the character and conduct of men is a phenomenon with which most of us are familiar, and I am inclined to believe that Mr. Moody was, or is, by nature a philanthropist, but circumstances have made him a Revivalist Preacher. The report from which I have quoted says:—"Mr. Moody is as unlike an ideal apostle as it is possible for any man to be. He is stout and thick set, with a broad chest, a hairy face, the beard grizzling slightly. His manner is brusque, his voice harsh, his delivery irregular and singularly unimpressive." The writer states that the building accommodated the vast number of five thousand persons—I put it in words so as to avoid the possibility of mistake—and after expressing his astonishment that so large a number should come "through fog and rain into a bleak and misty hall to listen to such a discourse," he says:—"From every point of view except the supreme one of effect upon the audience, Mr. Moody's remarks were most disappointing. Alike in style, manner, matter, there was nothing in them superior to what might be heard in any meeting house." The reporter interviewed Mr. Sankey, and sought to discover the secret of this wonderful "effect upon the audience," and plainly expressed his opinion on the poorness of the sermon. Mr. Sankey replied:—"We have no secret. I cannot explain it; nor can you. Behind all instrumentalities, feeble or mighty, there lies an inscrutable something which influences the soul of man. We call it the spirit of God. Beyond that we cannot go." With that dubious explanation the reporter had to be content.

As it is still a moot question, may we not hazard an hypothesis? Mr. Moody's perseverance, his unflagging persistency, has proved that he is in earnest. Whatever may be the inner and perhaps half unconscious motive, whether it be the saving of souls, the accumulation of the "almighty dollar," or a desire for fame, or all three mysteriously combined for singleness of motive is extremely rare—there can be no doubt that he is in earnest. That in my opinion is the primary cause of success, while the longing of the human heart for some higher, though undefined, ideal than is presented by the cares and toils of every day life, does the rest. Great as have been the strides of intellectual culture during the last twenty or thirty years, the minds of the adult population of Great Britain at the present time have been but slightly purified from the dross of superstition inherited from their seniors who are just passing away. The women, the mothers of the generation just budding into maturity, are most firmly clasped in the arms of Christian mystery and priestly influences. The progress of Freethought, and true secular advancement, cannot be stopped, but there are impediments that delay our march, and to overcome which we must *work*, not faintly but earnestly.

ONE MORE DAY'S WORK FOR FREEDOM.

Tune: No. 30. Moody & Sankey's Collection of Songs and Solos.

One more day's work for freedom
On this bright Earth for me,
Where science is revealing
What priestcraft is concealing—
Man's true nobility,
Reason's bright ray
Shall be our guide to day:
One more day's work for freedom
On this bright Earth for me.

One more day's work for freedom,
That precious, sparkling gem;
To win it is our duty,
We love it for its beauty,
Which no tyranny can dim.
We'll guard it as a treasure,
Priceless beyond all measure:
One more day's work for freedom
On this bright Earth for me.

We seek a glorious freedom
From error's painful thralls;
We seek the light of reason,
To slout it would be treason
To humanity's loud calls
For sympathy in sorrow,
Hoping for the morrow,
To work again for freedom:
One more day's work for freedom,
And this Earth our Heaven shall be.

Another day's work for freedom,
Till she smiles on all our race,
Till ignorance shall perish,
And truth alone shall flourish,
And beam from every face,
As o'er the earth shall move
Man's own evangel Love:
One more day's work for freedom
Till Earth a Heaven shall be.

CHARLES J. RAE.

Gems.

A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman of the next generation; a politician looks for the success of his party, a statesman for that of his country. The statesman wishes to steer, while the politician is satisfied to drift.

"Justice and equity were foreign to the Roman creed. Why should man try to be better than his God? A God to whom they were taught to ascribe a monstrous system of favoritism: arbitrary grace for a few children of luck, and millions foredoomed to eternal damnation."—FEUERBACH.

A female missionary who has been labouring in China says she was often bothered by the Chinese women, who wanted to know her age, and whether she was married or not. In one case a woman, turning to a about her, said in a tone of surprise,—“Forty years, and not married yet?” and she kept repeating this as though she was much shocked at the intelligence.

"It is far better to love your wife than to love God. You cannot help him, but you can help her. You can fill her life with the perfume of perpetual joy. It is better to love your child than to love Jesus Christ. If he is God you cannot assist him, but you can plant a flower in every footstep of a babe. The most sacred temple is a home, the holiest altar the fireside."—ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

"It is said that the King of Morocco, Muley Ismael, has five hundred children. What would you say if a dervish of Mount Atlas related to you that the wise and good Muley Ismael, dining with his family, at the close of the repast, spoke thus:—‘I am Muley Ismael, who have begotten you for my glory; for I am very glorious. I love you very tenderly. I shelter you as a hen covers her chickens. I have decreed that one of my youngest children shall have the kingdom of Taflet, and that another shall possess Morocco; and for my other dear children, to the number of four hundred and ninety-eight, I order that one half shall be tortured and the other burned, for I am the Lord Muley Ismael.’”—VOLTAIRE.

RELIGIOUS RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.*

[BY HERBERT SPENCER.]

Unlike the ordinary consciousness, the religious consciousness is concerned with that which lies beyond the sphere of sense. A brute thinks only of things which can be touched, seen, heard, tasted &c.; and the like is true of the untaught child, the deaf-mute, and the lowest savage. But the developing man has thoughts about existences which he regards as usually inaudible, intangible, invisible; and yet which he regards as operative upon him. What suggests this notion of agencies transcending perception? How do these ideas concerning the supernatural evolve out of ideas concerning the natural? The transition cannot be sudden; and an account of the genesis of religion must begin by describing the steps through which the transition takes place.

The ghost-theory exhibits these steps quite clearly. We are shown that the mental differentiation of invisible and intangible beings from visible and tangible beings progresses slowly and unobtrusively. In the fact that the other-self, supposed to wander in dreams, is believed to have actually done and seen whatever was dreamed—in the fact that the other-self when going away at death, but expected presently to return, is conceived as a double equally material with the original; we see that the supernatural agent in its primitive form diverges very little from the natural agent—is simply the original man with some added powers of going about secretly and doing good or evil. And the fact that when the double of the dead man ceases to be dreamed about by those who knew him, his non-appearance in dreams is held to imply that he is finally dead, shows that these earliest supernatural agents have but a temporary existence; the first tendencies to a permanent consciousness of the supernatural, prove abortive.

In many cases no higher degree of differentiation is reached. The ghost-population, recruited by deaths on the one side, but on the other side losing its members as they cease to be recollected and dreamed about, does not increase; and no individuals included in it come to be recognised through successive generations as established supernatural powers. Thus the Unkulunkulu, or old-old one, of the Zulus, the father of the race, is regarded as finally or completely dead; and there is propitiation only of ghosts of more recent date. But where circumstances favor the continuance of sacrifices at graves witnessed by members of each new generation who are told about the dead and transmit the tradition, there eventually arises the conception of a permanently existing ghost or spirit. A more marked contrast in thought between supernatural beings and natural beings is thus established. There simultaneously results a great increase in the number of these supposed supernatural beings, since the aggregate of them is now continually added to; and there is a strengthening tendency to think of them as everywhere around, and as causing all unusual occurrences.

Differences among the ascribed powers of ghosts soon arise. They naturally follow from the observed differences among the powers of the living individuals. Hence it results that while the propitiations of ordinary ghosts are made only by their descendants, it comes occasionally to be thought prudent to propitiate also the ghosts of the more dreaded individuals, even though they have no claims of blood. Quite early there thus begin those grades of supernatural beings which eventually become so strongly marked.

Habitual wars, which more than all other causes initiate these first differentiations, go on to initiate further and more decided ones. For with these compoundings of small social aggregates into greater ones, and re-compounding of these into still greater, which war effects, there, of course, with the multiplying gradations of power among living men, arises the conception of multiplying gradations of power among their ghosts. Thus in course of time are formed the conceptions of the great ghosts or gods, the more numerous secondary ghosts or demi-gods, and so on downwards—a pantheon: there being still, however, no essential distinction of kind; as we see in the calling of ordinary ghosts *manes*-gods by the Romans and *elohim* by the Hebrews. Moreover, repeating as the other life in the other world does, the life in this world, in its needs, occupations, and social organisation, there arises not only a differentiation of grades among supernatural beings in respect of their powers, but also in respect of their characters and kinds of activity. There come to be local gods, and gods reigning over this or that order of phenomena; there come to be good and evil spirits of various qualities, and where there has been by conquest a superposing of societies one upon another, each having its own system of ghost-derived beliefs, there results an involved combination of such beliefs, constituting a mythology.

Of course ghosts primarily being double-like the originals in all things; and gods (when not the living members of a conquering race) being doubles of the more powerful men; it results that they, too, are originally no less human than ordinary ghosts in their physical characters, their passions, and their intelligences. Like the doubles of the ordinary dead, they are supposed to consume the flesh, blood, bread, wine, given to them; at first literally, and later in a more spiritual way by consuming the essences of them. They not only appear as visible and tangible persons, but they enter into conflicts with men, are wounded, suffer pain; the sole distinction being that they have miraculous powers of healing and consequent immortality. Here, indeed, there needs a qualification; for not only do various peoples hold that the gods die a first death (as naturally happens where they are the members of a conquering race, called gods because of their superiority), but, as in the case of Pan, it is supposed, even among the cultured, that there is a second and final death of a god, like that second and final death of a ghost supposed among existing savages. With advancing civilisation the divergence of the supernatural being from the natural being becomes more decided.

There is nothing to check the gradual de-materialization of the ghost and of the god; and this de-materialization is insensibly furthered in the effort to reach consistent ideas of supernatural action: the god ceases to be tangible, and later he ceases to be visible or audible. Along with differentiation of physical attributes from those of humanity, there goes on more slowly the differentiation of mental attributes. The god of the savage, represented as having intelligence scarcely if at all greater than that of the living man, is deluded with ease. Even the gods of the semi-civilised are deceived, make mistakes, repent of their plans; and only in course of time does there arise the conception of unlimited vision and universal knowledge. The emotional nature simultaneously undergoes a parallel transformation. The grosser passions, originally conspicuous and carefully ministered to by devotees, gradually fade, leaving the passions less related to corporeal satisfactions; and eventually these, too, become partially de-humanized.

These ascribed characters of deities are continually adapted and re-adapted to the needs of the social state. During the militant phase of activity, the chief god is conceived as holding in subordination the greatest crime, as implacable in anger, as merciless in punishment; and any alleged attributes of a milder kind occupy but small space in the social consciousness. But where militancy declines and the harsh despotic form of government appropriate to it is gradually qualified by the form appropriate to industrialism, the foreground of the religious consciousness is increasingly filled with those ascribed traits of the divine nature which are congruous with the ethics of peace: divine love, divine forgiveness, divine mercy, are now the characteristics enlarged upon.

To perceive clearly the effects of mental progress and changing social life, thus stated in the abstract, we must glance at them in the concrete. If, without foregone conclusions, we contemplate the traditions, records, and monuments of the Egyptians, we see that out of their primitive ideas of gods, brute or human, there were evolved spiritualised ideas of gods, and finally of a god; until the priesthoods of later times, repudiating the earlier ideas, described them as corruptions: being swayed by the universal tendency to regard the first state as the highest—a tendency traceable down to the theories of existing theologians and mythologists. Again, if putting aside speculations, and not asking what historical value the "Hid" may have, we take it simply as indicating the early Greek notion of Zeus, and compare this with the notion contained in the Platonic dialogues, we see that Greek civilisation had greatly modified (in the better minds, at least) the purely anthropomorphic conception of him: the lower human attributes being dropped and the higher ones transfigured. Similarly, if we contrast the Hebrew God described in primitive traditions, manlike in appearance, appetites, and emotions, with the Hebrew God as characterised by the prophets, there is shown a widening range of power along with a nature increasingly remote from that of man. And on passing to the conceptions of him which are now entertained, we are made aware of an extreme transfiguration. By a convenient obliviousness a deity who in early times is represented as hardening men's hearts so that they may commit punishable acts, and as employing a lying spirit to deceive them, comes to be mostly thought of as an embodiment of virtues transcending the highest we can imagine.

Thus, recognising the fact that in the primitive human mind there exists neither religious idea nor religious sentiment, we find that in the course of social evolution and the evolution of intelligence accompanying it, there are generated both the ideas and sentiments which we distinguish as religious; and that through a process of causation clearly traceable, they traverse those stages which have brought them, among civilised races, to their present forms.

And now what may we infer will be the evolution of religious ideas and sentiments throughout the future? On the one hand, it is irrational to suppose that the changes which have brought the religious consciousness to its present form will suddenly cease. On the other hand, it is irrational to suppose that the religious consciousness, naturally generated as we have seen, will disappear and leave an unfilled gap. Manifestly it must undergo further changes; and however much changed it must continue to exist. What then are transformations to be expected? If we reduce the process above delineated to its lowest terms, we shall see our way to an answer.

As pointed out in "First Principles," section 96, Evolution is throughout its course habitually modified by that Dissolution which eventually undoes it: the changes which become manifest being usually but the differential results of opposing tendencies towards integration and disintegration. Rightly to understand the genesis and decay of religious systems, and the probable future of those now existing, we must take this truth into account. During these earlier changes by which there is created a hierarchy of gods, demi-gods, manes-gods, and spirits of various kinds and ranks, Evolution goes on with but little qualification. The consolidated mythology produced, while growing in the mass of supernatural beings composing it, assumes increased definiteness in the arrangement of its parts and the attributes of its members. But the antagonist Dissolution eventually gains predominance. The spreading recognition of natural causation conflicts with this mythological evolution, and insensibly weakens those of its beliefs which are most at variance with advancing knowledge. Demons and the secondary divinities presiding over divisions of Nature, become less thought of as the phenomena ascribed to them are more commonly observed to follow a constant order; and hence these minor components of the mythology slowly dissolve away. At the same time, with growing supremacy of the great god heading hierarchy, there goes increasing ascription to him of actions which were before distributed among numerous supernatural beings; there is integration of power. While in proportion as there arises the consequent conception of an omnipotent and omnipresent deity, there is a gradual fading of his alleged human attributes; dissolution begins to affect the supreme personality in respect of ascribed form and nature.

Already, as we have seen, this process in the more advanced societies, and especially among their higher members, gone to the

* This article will eventually form the closing chapter of "Etiological Institutions," Part VI. of "The Principles of Sociology." The statements concerning matters of fact in the last part of it are based on the contents of preceding chapters. Evidence for nearly all of them, however, may also be found in Part I. of "The Principles of Sociology," already published.

extent of merging all minor supernatural powers in one supernatural power ; and already this one supernatural power has, by what Mr. Fiske aptly calls deanthropomorphization, lost the grosser attributes of humanity. If things hereafter are to follow the same general course as heretofore, we must infer that this dropping of human attributes will continue. Let us ask what positive changes are hence to be expected.

(To be concluded in our next).

SECULAR TEACHINGS.

SECULARISM teaches that this life and this world in which we live demand and will reward our utmost cultivation ; that the instruments of this cultivation are reason and social effort ; that the harvest to be reaped from it is happiness, general and individual. Secularism offers for man's guidance in the duties of life the plain, straight, spacious pathway of reason and experience. It has no science, no history, no books, no opinions, that it wants to hide or shield from free human criticism. It has no theories which it is not ready and eager to abandon, directly facts shall have declared against them ; no rule of conduct which it will not at once modify, if change seems necessary in the interest of the general happiness. Mysteries it acknowledges, and confesses that they are truly mysterious, without proceeding to exhibit them in dogmas as if it had turned them inside out. It is not weighted with the impossible tasks of reconciling the existence of evil with that of an Omnipotent and All-good Creator ; and of proving and worshipping the infallibility of a book crowded with evident errors. It does not threaten the vast majority with never-ending torments, and promise an elect few never-ending bliss, both alike preposterously disproportioned to any possible merits or demerits of human life ; it simply seeks by the best approved means to make this life as happy as possible for all, assured that if there *should* be another, it *could* in no better way be prepared for.

Looking at the world, we are convinced by what human reason has already discovered in it, and by the experience which has verified the discoveries, that it is perfect order, in the sense that its operations follow unvarying laws, that the like antecedents have always the like consequents. This immutable constancy of what are termed the Laws of Nature gives us a stable foundation on which to build up physical science and all the arts which are the applications of such science. The laws themselves we know we cannot change ; but the more we learn of them the better we can adapt ourselves and the conditions of our life to them, the better we can avoid such of their workings as would be harmful to us, the better we can avail ourselves of all in their workings which is profitable to us. We are also convinced, in the same manner, that human nature, no less than nature in general, is the subject of unvarying laws, that in it also the like antecedents have always the like consequents ; and the stability of law in this domain gives us firm ground on which to build physiological, psychological, and sociological science, and the political and social constitutions which are the applications of such science. These laws also we know we cannot change ; but in their case also the more we learn of them the better we can adapt ourselves and the conditions of our lives to them, the better we can avoid the injurious, and avail ourselves of their beneficial, workings. Thus Secularism regards Science as the true Providence ; and affirms that by the study of Man, and the application of the results of that study, this Providence can be wrought to confer ever richer and richer boons on our race.

And since Man's supreme desire is happiness, and he is so essentially a social being that the real happiness of any one is impossible without the happiness of all around him, Secularism adopts the Utilitarian theory of morals, which uplifts as the standard of praiseworthy conduct that which tends to the greatest good of the greatest number. The happiness that Secularism seeks to realise, is not in any supposed Heaven, but on Earth ; not in Eternity, but in time ; not for elect individuals here and there, but for all Mankind. This happiness implies, firstly, material well-being, sufficiency of food, clothing, and house-room, with good air, good water, and good sanitary conditions ; for these things are necessary to

bodily health, and this is essential to the health of the mind, and only in health is real happiness possible. Again, it implies mental well-being, sufficiency of instruction and education for every one, so that his intellect may be nourished and developed to the full extent of its capabilities. Given the sound mind in the sound body, it further implies free exercise of these, absolutely free in every respect so long as the exercise does not trench on the equal rights of others or impede the common good. In this full development of mind as well as body, it need scarcely be said that true happiness brings into its service all the noblest and most beautiful arts of life. Some persons seem to fancy that Utilitarians have nothing to do with music, painting, sculpture ; care nothing for the glories and grandeurs of the world, have no part in the treasures of the imagination ; as if there were no utility in any of these. But we recognise in them the very high utility of touching to rapture some of the finest chords in our nature ; we know and feel just as well as others, and perhaps better than most—since we give ourselves more to scientific study of man—that there are different kinds and degrees of enjoyment, and that some kinds are far superior to others, and we know how to value the superior as compared with the inferior.

But yet more, this social happiness implies all the great virtues in those who can attain and keep it. Wisdom, for without this, transitory and selfish pleasures will be continually mistaken for happiness, and even with a desire for the common good, this good will be misconceived, and the wrong means taken to secure it. Fortitude, to bear when necessary—and the necessity in the present state of the world is as frequent as it is stern—deprivation of personal comfort rather than stifle our aspirations and relax our efforts for the general interest. Temperance, for with excess no permanent happiness is possible. Magnanimity, for only by aid of this virtue can we keep steadily in view, as the sole aim of all our striving, the sole aim worthy of true men and women, the greatest good of the greatest number ; all little-mindedness ever turns to selfishness. Justice, and above all else Justice, for it is the profound and unchangeable conviction of the equal rights of all which alone can inspire and impel us to seek the freedom and happiness of all ; oppressions since the world began having been based on injustice, the oppressors exaggerating their own rights at the expense of those of the oppressed. And to these great virtues of the mind, we must add, as essential to his true happiness, those which are commonly called the virtues of the heart, the fervour of Zeal or Enthusiasm, and the finer fervour of Benevolence, Sympathy, or, to use the best name, Love. For if Wisdom gives the requisite light, Love alone can give the requisite vital heat : Wisdom climbing the arduous mountain solitudes must often let the lamp slip from her benumbed fingers, must often be near perishing in fatal lethargy amidst ice and snow-drifts, if Love be not there to cheer and revive her with the glow and the flames of the heart's quenchless fires.

CHARLES WATTS.

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Printed and published by A. D. Willis, at his Caxton
Printing Works, Victoria Avenue, Wanganui, New
Zealand. March 1, 1884.