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Pending further arrangements, F. C. Hall Esq., the Secretary 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.

W.D.—Our correspondent sends us a clipping from the New Zealand Herald, in which a writer signing himself “Index” asserts that the Dunedin Freethought Association have “dismissed their Secretary for the offence of exercising his freedom of thought. In an unguarded moment this gentleman not only thought, but expressed, some thoughts which were not the thoughts of the Association to which he belonged.” This will be news indeed to the Dunedin Association, to the Secretary of which we have forwarded the extract. The part which deals with the object of Freethought is crude and absurd as to be unworthy of notice. We shall always be glad, however, to receive statements of fact regarding Freethinkers so that we may be able to repel attacks of a slanderous nature.

# The Freethought Review

WANGANUI, N.Z., MAY 1, 1884.

## THE OBJECTS OF ORGANISATION.

THE Freethought body in the colony having thought fit to bring its numerous detachments into communication with each other, and to march in line, the question has been asked by outsiders, What object is to be gained by organisation which could not be attained as well without it? It is urged that the country is free, that individual liberty is not in jeopardy, and that such dangers as the creation of ‘crimes against religion’ are either imaginary or would be rendered harmless by the ‘good sense’ of the people and their rulers. To which it may be replied that the facts do not warrant indifference, but show more conclusively every year that “the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” The shapes that persecution takes are protean. At one time it is found in legal prosecutions; in another in proscription, as in Mr. Bradlaugh's war with the House of Commons; in another, persecution is to be seen embodied in social prejudice. In theory, liberty of thought and expression has for some time been admitted in England and other countries; but in practice it can hardly be pretended that we have more freedom than was enjoyed when Hume denied the possibility of miracles, and Junius made Burke's “blood run cold” by the “venom and the rancour” of his attack upon the King. To-day an organisation exists in the United States whose object is to have Christianity recognised as a part of the Constitution of that country. The success of the movement would almost certainly inaugurate an era of disfranchisement and persecution. Christianity has ever been a persecuting religion, and there is no reason to suppose that, given the opportunity, it would not in New Zealand be true to its past history.

But the defence of Liberty is only one of the many objects of Freethought. Christianity is a great force in the world, and if, as Freethinkers believe, its principles are false and hurtful to humanity, it must receive no quarter. It has been checkmated effectually in British India. The 250 millions who live under the flag of England are receiving a Freethought propaganda as active and potent as the Christian, and infinitely more likely to succeed. For the prevailing religions have only to be reformed and stripped of their moral impurities to transform them into the religion of humanity. Buddhism, as originally promulgated, is the best of all religions, and admirably adapted to the genius of the people of India. Turning to England herself, Freethought is winning its conquests through agnosticism in the upper strata of society, and by means of two great secular organisations in the lower. In France, Atheism meets Catholicism face to face. In Germany, there is a metaphysical scepticism enthroned in its Universities, and a happy indifference in all religious questions widely spread throughout Fatherland. In the British colonies, the religions of the mother country have been transplanted, and appear to flourish, yet in no part of the world has scepticism so firm a hold in the minds of intelligent men. It is still fashionable to go to church, to be baptised, married, and buried by the church, to send wife and children twice on Sunday to church, and to pay seat rents and subscribe moderately to missionary enterprise. These are the conventionalities of society, with which conformity is less difficult to the easy-going man of the world than to step out of the beaten track and take the course into which his honest convictions might lead him. What says Freethought to all this? It finds a chaos of beliefs built up out of the private interpretations of the Bible; and it finds one religious corporation with its *semper, ubique et omnibus*, with a mind of its own, and possessing a wide and intimate knowledge of what is passing in every country in the world. The Protestants have for some time