

AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF THE FREETHOUGHT
REVIEW.

Wellington (Lyceum) ...	F. Wilson	Hokitika ...	H. S. Wales
Pahmerton North ...	W. Park	Nelson ...	W. H. West
" ...	C. W. Macco	Pictou ...	Capt. Macneil
Woodville ...	E. A. Hagger	Blenheim ...	E. Augustus
Kennedy's ...	M. T. Blackburn	Timaru ...	T. Collins
Waverley ...	H. F. Mason	Oamaru ...	J. Cagney
Patea ...	Jas. Kenworthy	Danedin ...	Jos. Braithwaite
Hawera ...	Jones & Son	" ...	S. & W. Mackay
Normanby ...	C. E. Gibson	" ...	Jas. Horsburgh
Opunake ...	F. Simson	" ...	J. Stone
New Plymouth ...	J. Gilman	Invercargill ...	E. R. Weir
Wellington ...	W. Mackay	North East Valley (Otago)	
Masterton ...	T. E. Price	" ...	W. J. Prior
Napier ...	R. T. Smythe	Melbourne ...	W. H. Terry
Auckland ...	A. Campbell	" ...	D. A. Andrade
Grahamstown, Thames ...		Secular Hall, 120 Swanson St.	
" ...	R. Barra, stationer	Sydney ...	J. Dunne, Gov. St.
Grey mouth ...	W. H. Perkins	" ...	Market, every Saturday
Reefton ...	S. Schulhof	Rockampton (Queensland)	
		" ...	W. Munro

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. F. G.—Scarcely up to our standard, though showing signs of future excellence.

The Freethought Review.

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

THE GROWTH OF A CREED.

My name is Tangata Tito, and I live in Poverty Bay. I am getting to be an old man now, so I have seen many changes since the days of my youth. The greatest change of all was the arrival of the Pakeha with his new ways and his new religion. I was a young man then, and to the young any change is delightful, so I rejoiced greatly when I saw the wonderful things of the white man, his guns, his tools of iron, his women's dresses of many shapes and colors, and heard his stories of strange lands, and above all of his Gods, whose ways he knew all about, while of our own we knew little, for they dwell in a mist, and no one seemed to know exactly how they would act on any occasion, being indeed much like our great chiefs, easily provoked and ready to do a man an injury or a kindness just as it might suit their temper at the moment. The Priests indeed claimed to have great influence over them, but we could not always trust the Priests. They often had their own ends to serve, and also frequently made mistakes, saying the wrong words in an incantation, or making some mistake in the performance of a ceremony, than which nothing could more offend the invisible powers. So on the whole we Maoris felt little interest in the unseen world, more especially as we believed that only some men lived long after they were dead, and that even these, our wisest men and boldest warriors, when they became spirits gradually faded away and died the second death at last, as was evident from their ceasing to appear in dreams and visions. But the Pakeha Gods (whom we at first thought to be four, namely the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and the Devil, but who we found afterwards was one, or three in one, like three spears tied together—I never could quite make it out) or God, was quite a different being. He was, his missionary Priests told us, enormously powerful and so good that no punishment was too great for the least offence committed against him. Then they told us the story of Adam eating the apple, and the way in which nearly all the people in the world had been drowned in a great flood, and how Moses worked miracles, and finally how Jesus was born and went about performing lesser miracles than Moses did, but still wonderful enough of their kind, and how at last he was cruelly put to death in spite of all his power and goodness, and rose again and ascended into heaven, where any man who believes all this and does no work on a Sunday, is sure to join him and live for ever, while the man who does not believe this and goes out fishing on a Sunday, will indeed live for ever and ever but in a place of torment called Hell. All this the missionaries said had been written by their God in a book. Clearly they believed this, and most of the missionaries were good and earnest men, evidently men of truth, who had come thousands of miles to tell us this good

news. There was their book, the Bible, in proof of it. All the Pakehas we met believed in it. We saw too that the Pakeha God had given them much more than our Gods had given to us, and besides those who accepted the teaching of the missionaries were favoured by them and had many advantages over the "Devil" natives, as the missionaries called those Maoris who remained heathen and refused to put away their wives and worked or amused themselves on a Sunday. Hence nearly all the younger men and women resolved to become Christians. For me it was easy enough; I had no wife, I liked to hear the singing and preaching on Sundays, and I found it easy to believe all that I found in the Bible. We have to take many things on trust, and this was only one thing more. When I was baptised I felt myself safe. The Devil could have no claim to me, for any such claim had been satisfied by the death of the son of God. It was pleasant to think that I should live for ever as well as the richest missionary lived on earth.

Besides this we all saw that the Christian teaching as to right and wrong was good and in some respects better than our own. Our custom was to kill and eat our enemies, and that led to their killing and eating us, which was not so pleasant, and evidently injured the tribe; and so as to stealing, and many other things. The law of Tapu too was hard to bear and Christianity did away with much of it. There was much talk about sin, but repentance was easy and faith was all the new Priests really cared much about, and we had plenty of that, for our knowledge was small and one thing seemed as likely as another to be true. Why not, for many strange things happened in old times, and in places we knew not of; still stranger things may have happened, and the Pakehas had no interest in telling us lies, for we knew them to be friends not enemies. So as I say, nearly all of us were Christians and took much more interest in the new religion than we had done in our old one, at which indeed many of us laughed, as did the Pakeha. Time went on and as I grew older I began to perceive that the new faith had its drawbacks. It taught that all men were equal, and so gradually the common people took no heed to the words of their chiefs. Slaves refused to work, and when some were killed, the missionaries denounced the chiefs who had punished them, as murderers. The people agreed with the missionaries, and said one man was as good as another, for were we not all brethren in Christ? This looked right and just, but it led to much confusion. Each man paddled the canoe a different way, and so it drifted. To me, as a chief of many ancestors, it was painful to see the influence of the chiefs slipping away from them in this manner. A well-born man used to be looked up to and if he proved himself fit to lead in council or in war the tribe gladly followed him. Now they said what right has he to lead more than us? Then mean-minded men went about telling tales, and set one family against another and so got power for themselves, and in this the missionaries often assisted, they being easily imposed upon by men of this sort. "Crooked back is first through the hut door," says the proverb, and so it was that these sneaking fellows always got into any place they wanted. They were made catechists and agents and represented the tribe in its dealings with the Pakeha. Greatly owing to these men it was that our lands passed into the hands of the Pakeha. They took bribes right and left and persuaded the people to sell their lands for a few pence per acre. For this I do not much blame the Pakeha. He gave the price agreed on and it was low because these agents sold one against the other. The ignorance of the native was no match for the knowledge of the white man. Now I began to see that our old men were not such fools as I had thought them when they warned us against the new religion. It had destroyed the power of the chiefs and leaders of the people and left us in the hands of many fools led by a few rogues. Therefore again I rejoiced greatly when the King movement began, for in this I saw a way of salvation for my race. We the chiefs of New Zealand would no longer permit ignorant and dishonest men to ruin their tribe by the sale of land which we now knew could be made a source of wealth and power. This led to the war that began at Waitara, where the Pakeha was wrong even according to his own law, but had he been right war would have come at last. I and my people fought against the Pakeha and I felt I was really a chief again. Then Te Ua announced a new religion. It was in some respects a revival of our old faith. To me it appeared possible that misfortune had fallen upon us because we had deserted our old Gods. Clearly they were helping us now