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Roman Catholic Churches, Cathedrals, Convents, Schools, Colleges, &c., all built from the hard-earned wages of a comparatively small section of the community! Is it any wonder that the Roman Catholics of the colony are as a rule poor?—"Hewers of wood, and drawers of water." The following is one of many similar cases:—A large stone convent had to be built, and the money had to be provided by a not very large parish; the priest made out a list of his congregation, and opposite each name placed the sum he considered they could pay. We know of one who by thrift and hard work had accumulated property to the outside value of about £700, who was assessed to the tune of £70! And we have it on reliable authority that another faithful one raised his donation by mortgaging his growing crops. It is undeniable that fear is the motive power which moves these people to give so liberally. Fear, which is the result of a blind unreasoning faith! Let a people believe that their priests (no matter of what religion) have the power to shut the gates of a heaven and to throw open the gates of a hell; and that people will maintain, in more or less splendour, their priests and their temples. This is why the Roman Catholic Church so bitterly opposes the growing disbelief in a material and a burning hell! and tries with all its power to stifle free enquiry and scientific research—knowing full well that with the advance of knowledge, men will rid themselves of this frightful hell fire bugbear, and in doing so will,—well, will not contribute so freely! This applies, though with less force, to the Protestant sects, and one cannot but be struck in travelling through the country with the number of Churches and comfortable parsons' houses—in every little township is to be seen one or more of these *houses of God*. A great deal has been written and spoken about the ruinous expense of our secular national education system, and the cost, per head of population, has been figured with an admirable mathematical nicety; but, we wonder if the calculation has ever been made of the tax per head to build these many Churches, residences, &c.; and to maintain the many hundreds of social drones. We believe the statement would astonish some of our political economists—and that in the future it will be no inconsiderable tax removed from the industry of the colony.

From many a Christian pulpit has been preached the funeral sermon of General Gordon, the Christian soldier. The religious papers have also used his name "to point a moral or adorn a tale"; and have urged their readers "to go and do likewise." We admire the brave soldier, the man who sacrificed his life to his sense of duty; but when we come to consider his character as a Christian gentleman what do we find? We find a gloomy fanatic with peculiar *views*, a man who shoots with his own hand some treacherous Sheiks, and in the same exultant telegram informing his friends of the act entreats them to pray for the poor

Soudanese! We have it on the best authority—the authority of a comrade in arms—that he was a morose and gloomy religious enthusiast, intolerant of opinions that differed from his *views*. General Gordon was evidently more inspired by the Old than the New Testament—by Joshua than Jesus!

"Ivo," in a recent lecture he gave in Wellington, made some very sensible and telling remarks on the subject of "Gospel Temperance." He said that total abstinence from strong drink was not a question of creeds, it belonged to all alike; Mohammedans, Christians, Jews, and Freethinkers, and that to make a Christian guild of it, like the blue ribbon movement, deterred many (who did not believe in the Christian faith) from joining; and thereby damaged the cause. Indeed we cannot but think that, in the fitness of things, if any sect is entitled to claim temperance as a tenet, it is Mohammedanism, for the Koran absolutely prohibits the use of intoxicating drinks—but we do not think that the cleverest casuist can claim the same for the Christian Bible. The fact is, that the Church was first of all, by outside pressure, forced to take up the temperance question; and now hopes to regain lost ground by patronising so practical and useful a cause. But we think that the cause of "temperance" will be benefited when its advocates prove its worth from social and economic grounds alone, disassociated from any creed.

The passage from a speech of Sir Julius Vogel, quoted and commented upon by Mr. Rac, in our last number, is well worth further consideration. Sir Julius's words were:—"Those who have the interest of religion at heart, no matter what their faith or creed, should not let differences between themselves so interfere with what they all have at heart, as to allow those who believe in nothing to creep in, and create such a spirit as the dreadful one I have described." This dreadful spirit appears to be want of faith in "God or religion," which absence of belief Sir Julius thinks will not be "for the happiness of the country." From the reference he makes to different creeds, it is evident Sir Julius holds broad views on theological questions. He would be quite content, so long as the people of the colony held some form of belief in the supernatural, but he objects to people "who believe in nothing." So do we. Fortunately, this particular form of belief is rare, or perhaps non-existent. In the course of its evolution the human race has had a good many beliefs impressed upon it under pain of extinction if disbelieved. These are the beliefs which people "who believe in nothing" really hold most tenaciously. What they object to is the attempt of theology to substitute for these real beliefs in real things what in our day has become a sort of half belief in figments of the human imagination.