

This action of the General Synod is important, because it brings us into line, I think for the first time, with other great religious bodies in this colony. (*See Appendices III. and IV.*)

In compliance with the request of the General Synod, the Primate invited the Bishop of Christchurch, the Bishop of Nelson, and myself to draw up a Bill, and take such steps as we thought fit for submitting it to Parliament. The Bill was drafted at Christchurch by the Bishop, with the help of an association which has existed there for some time, and deserves our hearty gratitude for the part they have taken as pioneers in this movement. The Bishop of Nelson joined me in asking for some slight alterations, which were readily conceded. I have acted throughout in concert with an association recently formed in this city, which, like the Christchurch association, is composed of representatives of various Christian denominations, including the Salvation Army. Major-General Schaw has been good enough to act as our secretary, and has been at pains to ascertain the opinions of other similar associations which have now been formed in all parts of the colony. This work has taken some time, but it was held to be absolutely essential that we should present a united front, even if action were delayed for some weeks. General Schaw reports that the Bill has been accepted by all associations, and we hope that in a day or two it will be laid, if it has not been laid already, before Parliament.

By this time you are probably all familiar with the proposed text-book. Any who have not seen it can procure it at the Bible and Tract Dépôt in Willis Street. It is not by any means a perfect manual of Scripture history; how can it be when the extracts from the Old Testament end with the death of Moses? Here and there we miss familiar phrases of our Bible. The authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, who helped to draw up the book, naturally demanded that the Douay should be occasionally substituted for the authorised version, and this was done. But, meagre as it is, it is accepted by all; it has been used for many years in the schools of New South Wales, and, I am told, without causing any friction.

In petitioning for the use of this book there are one or two things which we should not forget.

First, this application cannot be justly stigmatized as a compromise. We are giving up nothing which we either have or hope to have.

Secondly, it is not a movement in the direction of what is called denominationalism. If it succeeds it will render it a harder thing than it is now, if that be possible, to establish denominational schools. Many of our people would at once say to us if such an attempt were made: "The Bible is taught in our schools; is not that enough? Why ask us to subscribe for Church schools? You can teach Church doctrine on Sundays." I do not say that this objection is unanswerable; but I am quite certain that it would be very strongly urged. We do not propose to close the one Church school in the diocese, the kindergarten, in the Tinakori Road, Wellington. We do not pledge ourselves that under no circumstances will we erect another school, and we do not ask for a similar pledge from others. But for such a school we could expect no subsidy from the State. There is a strong prejudice in the minds of our fellow-countrymen in favour of educating our children side by side according to a uniform system, and no Legislature is likely to view with favour the establishment of rival schools in the same place.

Thirdly, the measure proposed is meant to be fair to all Christian bodies. If it could be shown that any clause, or part of a clause, in the Bill is devised in the interest of our own, or any other, denomination, I am sure that we should be among the first to desire its modification. Nor is it sought to force religious instruction upon any teacher or upon the child of any parent who, for conscience sake, does not desire it.

Lastly, there is a strong desire among us not to do the slightest injury to our present free and compulsory system. We pride ourselves justly that every little township and settlement in the colony is provided with efficient teaching. Our hope is that our excellent system of education may be placed on a still firmer basis.

VII.

CONSTITUTION OF THE SCRIPTURE TEXT-BOOK ASSOCIATION.

Place.	Denomination.	Members.		Place.	Denomination.	Members.	
		Clerical.	Lay.			Clerical.	Lay.
Auckland..	Church of England	3	0	Nelson ..	Church of England	3	3
" ..	Presbyterian ..	2	0	" ..	Wesleyan ..	1	2
" ..	Wesleyan ..	1	0	" ..	Baptist ..	0	1
" ..	Baptist ..	1	0	Christchurch ..	Church of England	3	2
" ..	Congregational ..	1	0	" ..	Presbyterian ..	2	1
Napier ..	Church of England	6	0	" ..	Wesleyan ..	2	2
" ..	Presbyterian ..	3	0	" ..	Baptist ..	1	1
" ..	Wesleyan ..	2	0	" ..	Congregational ..	1	1
" ..	Baptist ..	2	0	" ..	Free Methodist ..	1	1
Wellington*	Church of England	7	5	" ..	Primitive Methodist	1	1
" ..	Presbyterian ..	2	2	" ..	Bible Christian ..	1	1
" ..	Wesleyan ..	3	1	" ..	Church of Christ ..	0	2
" ..	Primitive Methodist	0	1	Dunedin ..	Presbyterian ..	5	0
" ..	Salvation Army ..	0	2	" ..	Wesleyan ..	3	0

* The Methodist clergy and 1 layman (Mr. Luke the Mayor) have withdrawn temporarily from the association pending the decision of their conference, in January, 1896, as to the suitability of the Scripture text-book.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (2,050 copies), £28 6s.

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Price 1s.]

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