

will suffice entirely to counteract the pernicious influence of Godless schools. The "Guardian" meets this argument by a gross personal attack on the clergy of all denominations. The argument of the "Guardian" amounts to this, a secular, or, in other words, a Godless system of education is good, nay, the best, because the clergy of all denominations neglect their duty, and that there is neglect he takes for granted. Perhaps there is neglect, it is not impossible that even the clergy themselves would readily admit they might do more in the way of instructing the young than they have done. But even admitting this, the neglect of the clergy does not prove the excellence of Godless schools, and it appears a rather strange way to cure the evil effects of the neglect of the clergy in imparting religious instruction, to exclude from schools all idea of Christianity, and even of God. If the writer of this article in the "Guardian," from which we have taken the above extract, denies the existence of God, or the divinity of Christianity, we can understand him; but if he believes in Christianity, he is unintelligible.

The position of our contemporary in reference to education appears to us somewhat strange, and not very consistent. He will hardly deny that he is an advocate of a secular system; and yet he strenuously defends the Otago system, which is practically a religious and a denominational system. It is well nigh impossible for any but Presbyterians to secure appointments as teachers in the important schools of the Province. The Board of Education, the Committee generally, and the teachers almost everywhere are, it may be said, exclusively Presbyterians, unless, indeed, here and there where some avowed infidels are to be met with. Then the law recognises and embodies the essentially Protestant principle, that people are to read the Bible without note or comment, and thus learn religion. The "Guardian," therefore, blows cold and hot at the same time. If he is a secularist he cannot consistently defend the Otago system, and if he is a genuine supporter of the Otago system he cannot be a secularist.

Some time ago the "Guardian" stated that in Otago all sects are equal in the eye of the law. This we denied, and said that according to the law now in force in Otago on the subject of education, "national schoolmasters are obliged to read the Bible daily in the schools, to such children as are not withdrawn by their parents from such readings. This is a penal law necessarily excluding all Catholics from the office of schoolmaster. Here, then, is an inequality imposed on Catholics by law. All sects, therefore, are not equal in the eye of the law." The "Guardian" replies, "this reasoning is fallacious unless it be held by the TABLET, that the reading of the Bible constitutes a deadly sin. But the Roman Catholic Church admits that the Bible is the revelation of the divine will, a knowledge of which is essential to salvation; wherefore, the reading of the Bible daily in schools to children should be encouraged by the Romish Church, which claims the right of giving religious instruction to children in our national schools." The argument of our contemporary is, that we admit the Bible to contain the revelation of the divine will; therefore, we should not only not object to, but encourage the reading of the Protestant Bible daily to Catholic children in schools by Protestants, or it may be infidel teachers, and that, consequently, there is no penal law. But our ideas of our duties are very different from those of the "Guardian." In the first place Catholics do not recognise the authorised version to be the true Bible; in the second place Catholics require a guarantee of the soundness of the faith of those to whom they entrust the teaching of their children in religion; in the third place they believe that the commission to teach religion has been given by God, not to the State, not to the schoolmasters, but to the Church; and that, consequently, they cannot permit any to instruct their children in religion except such as are authorised by the Church to do so. So far, therefore, from encouraging the reading of the Bible in the Otago Schools to their children, Catholics are bound to discourage and prevent such reading, as being dangerous, unauthorised and involving an unchristian principle.

And it is for this reason, too, that Catholics cannot, consistently with their religious principle, hold the office of teachers in these schools if bound to read the Bible to the pupils. To do so would be to acknowledge the authority of the State to teach religion, to decide which is the correct version of the Bible, to recognise the Protestant principle, that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is the rule of faith and judge of controversies, and that

men are to learn religion from the Bible independently of the authority of the Church; to repudiate tradition as entering into the rule of faith; and, consequently, to reject the faith and authority of the Catholic Church, which amounts to apostacy. The education law, therefore, in Otago is a penal law so far as Catholics are concerned. They are obliged, consequently, to pay for their own injury and degradation.

Our contemporary says he is not opposed to denominationalism, because he is willing to allow the several denominations to build and maintain schools for themselves, and teach in them their own religion. This is very liberal and considerate, indeed! How grateful we all ought to be to the liberal "Guardian," so just and so considerate! But he will tax all the denominations to maintain Godless schools, for himself and such as agree with him, or as a particular favor to Otago, Presbyterian schools here, and refuse to allow a shilling to be given out of the common taxation to aid the denominations. He will permit us to have schools for ourselves, provided we bear ourselves the entire expense of their maintenance. What does our contemporary mean? Is it that we should be very thankful to be allowed to spend our own money on our own schools? He seems to think it is a great condescension on his part, as well as an act of great liberality to permit us to reside in the Colony at all. It is an act of grace. We have no right to be here. We should, therefore, pay our money to educate his children, and be thankful that we are not called upon to feed and clothe them as well. What our contemporary says, amounts to this, and a good deal more besides. Well, all we can say is this, if matters come to the worst we must be prepared for the worst. Our fathers were, in their day, considered very impertinent and very disloyal for complaining at being compelled to pay tithes to men whose chief business it seemed to be to call them idolatrous papists, and oppose their admission to the rights and privileges of citizens and free men in the land of their birth, and the land that had been the home of their ancestors for more than a thousand years before the new-fangled religion had been heard of. And now it appears that we, their sons, are to be hunted and branded as traitors because we complain of being compelled to pay our money to maintain an anti-Catholic system of education, to keep in power a set of men whose business it seems to be to designate us as men opposed to progress, and our clergy as drones and designing knaves. For what is the meaning of the following words of the "Guardian," "And the TABLET is not warranted in wrongfully creating a prejudice against the institutions of the community where it is published with perfect freedom, notwithstanding its virulent opposition to constituted authority." How very loyal the "Guardian" is when the institutions of the country are in accordance with its tyrannical ideas! But what would be its ideas of its rights and duties, and what its estimate of constituted authority, were the picture reversed? Suppose the vast majority of the people were Catholics, that in all the schools supported by the general taxation all the teachers were Catholics, that the religious teaching insisted on in all the schools was distinctly and emphatically Catholic, that Protestant children were obliged to assist at this instruction, unless withdrawn from it by their parents, that hardly any other schools existed in the country, that all attempts to obtain a share of the monies contributed by all, in aid of Protestant or undenominational schools, were ridiculed as attempts to uphold shams and the schemes of idlers, and successfully resisted. Would our contemporary confine himself to the species of agitation, and the mild language with which we meet the injustice of which we are the victims? Let our contemporary lay his hand to his heart, and consulting his conscience answer that question. Let him examine himself on this subject, and perhaps he will feel ashamed of having suggested to the Government the propriety of prosecuting us for our "virulent opposition to constituted authority." Our contemporary is another illustration of what we have observed for very many years, that our liberals are the veriest tyrants towards all who oppose them.

WEEKLY EPITOME.

"KISSING GOES BY FAVOUR."—The "Otago Daily Times" complains that His Honor James Macandrew withholds important official information from it, of public interest, which he furnishes to those journals which present his sayings and doings to the public in the way that pleases him best. [There are evidently more ways of punishing an obnoxious paper than bleeding it by a libel action.]