

Correspondence.

We are not responsible for the opinions of our correspondents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONSISTENCY.

To the Editor of the N.Z. TABLET.

SIR,—Our Roman Catholic fellow citizens are deserving of great credit for the consistent stand which they have taken from the beginning on this subject and also for the persistency with which they have sought to realise their aim. The helpless condition in which the Protestant professing religious community finds itself in the matter of education is a lesson which ought not soon to be forgotten. It is cause for deep humiliation that as a people professing a supreme regard for the authority of God and the supremacy of a conscience enlightened by spiritual truth, we have yet, through division and false ideas of that wherein true liberty consist, bowed down our heads in the dust and allowed the unclean foot of secularism to be placed upon our necks, a secularism that fears not God nor yet regards any duty which is due to man.

It is the naked truth and it may not be denied that this professing Christian community has not had the courage of its opinions; it has been browbeaten with the idea that one man's opinion is as good as another until this strange result has been brought about, viz:—that the godless minority, unscrupulous as such a minority always is, rule with an iron hand. You must not suppose that this strange state of things has resulted without protest; by no means, but those who saw what was coming received no sympathy from those who affected to rule in the Church. There are those among us who put themselves forward as oracles and who yet care for little else than to please the crowd, and if a course of action would only bring them a little ephemeral popularity, they would follow it even if the result should be the ruin of the unfortunate church with which they are connected. They will hold out their hand and even open their door to any godless charlatan that comes hither to blaspheme. It is a small matter to them that a Peckles and Dunne, a Walker and a Bright, are attracted thither to deery, in hope of gain, a religion which they have too little soul to understand. If such adventurers can only gain the ear of a thoughtless mob, some of our would-be leaders will be on good terms with them. We have, you see, got far a-head of St. John who says that such are not to be received even into our houses. They will also encourage and support such men as the Attorney-General, who from the lofty height of his agnosticism, some say egotism, looks down upon them with the complaisant feelings with which it is said the wolf regards the sheep.

I am afraid that some of our so-called leaders will seek before the next election to tone down the feeling of deep indignation and disgust which is at present felt for the Attorney-General, if they should do so they will deserve to share with him a common ruin. There is a limit to forbearance, and I think, in this instance, our representative has gone beyond that limit. Had any one in the interests of religion acted so unscrupulously as he has done against religion there would have been a cry raised against him throughout the whole country. Mr. Stout, feeling secure in his own want of religion, comes here, and in the very face of the Presbyterian Church has the audacity to repeat the untrue statement, to wit, that he is doing as that Church desires, and when that statement gets the lie direct he has not the manliness to say he was mistaken.

I suppose this is what he meant the other night when presiding where no noble-minded Attorney-General would be seen he whined over the impossibility of a man being allowed freely to say what he thought. We know, Sir, this gentleman is *supra grammaticam* but it is quite another thing if he should seriously claim to be also *supra veritatem*. But, Sir, supposing he did not refer to being taken to task for unblushingly asserting that Mr. Bannerman said what he did not say, and supposing he meant that in Dunedin there was no liberty of speech, was this true? and did it become him to say so? Is there no liberty of speech in the anti-Christian nonsense talked during the last twelve months in the Princess Theatre by this gentleman's friend? Is there no liberty for secularists, seeing that obscene books—declared to be obscene by the judges of England—published by leading free thinkers, are sold in this city without hindrance? Is there no room for a man to hold his opinions in this place seeing that the paper over which this hon. gentleman rejoices as quondam editor is a repertory of writing against our common Christianity? And finally, looking at the position which Mr. Stout so frequently occupies as speaker at every meeting of vagarydom, it is a little too much to say that there is no liberty of opinion, unless he wishes an unrestricted right to blaspheme. I confess, Sir, that I know of no degradation deeper than that to which as a professing Christian community we have sunk in supporting a representative that is out of all sympathy with us on the most important of all subjects, and if we suffer such a state of matters to continue we deserve the scorn and the misery which we are likely to experience. If not for our own sakes then at least for our children's we should be true to our better feelings and rid ourselves of an incubus.—I am, &c.,

A PROTESTANT.

WHY IS THE GOVERNOR TO BE HONOURED ?

To the Editor of the N. Z. TABLET.

SIR,—It will be in the recollection of a number of your readers who are interested in curiosities of literature that some time ago, to wit before the present spotless ministry got into power, on the occasion of a visit of the Governor to Dunedin, a long, rambling letter appeared in the columns of the *Otago Daily Times* by the now Attorney-General which letter was entitled

"WHY WAS THE GOVERNOR HISSED ?"

It appears that some naughty little boy from, I suppose a certain northern island in the neighbourhood of Greenland, under "spirit" influence, made a feeble attempt to utter

a hiss, but it died away in the *th* sound which characterises that race. The then plain Mr. Robert Stout taking the tide at its turn, which leads on to glory, wrote the above named letter, in which it is hard to say which was most conspicuous—bad grammar, or bad taste. And, now, sir, the wheel of fortune having turned on its axle, Mr. Robert Stout having become the hon. the Attorney-General and the Marquis of Normanby about to leave the colony it is well to consider for a moment our surroundings and having cast the log to find whereabouts we are.

It happened once upon a time that a wasp found its way into the palace of a great king; by and by it lighted upon the king's nose, and, true to its instincts, as all wasps ever are, it stung its poor victim; being unused to such summary treatment, the king sprang from his seat in pain, but his foot catching in the dress of some of his nobles, he fell and broke his neck. His sons quarrelled over the division of the kingdom, and the result was that that wasp earned for itself in the annals of the nation a name to which it was not otherwise entitled. Now, to compare small things with great, Mr. R. Stout has by attempting to annoy our coming illustrious visitor sought to earn for himself a niche in the temple of fame, but like many more he is likely to find that it is not permitted to a cobbler to judge *ultra crepidam*. It is no doubt hard to convince the Attorney-General, even when he is manifestly wrong. The spirit that characterised Goldsmith's country schoolmaster, is strong in some natures—"though conquered he could argue still," and no doubt he will not see in the preparation to do honour to our departing Governor any indication unfavourable to himself. Still it might almost convince the Attorney-General that his son has pretty well set when the *personnel* of his platform friends is compared with that of those who on the present occasion lead in the preparation to receive the ex-Governor. It may well be asked why is all this desire to do honour to our late Governor? No doubt, it is, in a measure, because he has acted the part of a many upright gentleman during the time of sojourn with us. He has been quite a contrast to some of his predecessors; he has shown both firmness and urbanity, and in the face of insult he has shown no disposition to meet littleness of soul, otherwise than with the dignity that became her majesty's representative. All this, however, was only his duty, and on this ground alone we hardly have gone out of our way to honour him. There is, however, a reason, a very humbling one, why we should honour him,—our representatives have grievously misrepresented us in their treatment of him. Let the other parts of the colony deal with their own offenders, we have enough to do with our own, and we mean to show that sham points of order, that questions as to who hissed the Governor, as profound as the question "who killed cock robin," that stump orations as to elective governors, we mean I say to show that we as heartily despise such things as we see clearly through, and abhor the spirit from which they flow, and what is more such things read in the light of past experience effectually warn us of something ahead. It may be a strange psychological fact, but a fact it is that in all thoughts and motives of some men there is a shadowy something that stands out in bold relief; it is carefully hid from others but it somehow is ever revealing itself. Hobbs must either have been such a man or he must have mingled largely with such men. That something is *self*; they will do little for God's sake, if they believe their is such a being, and they will do as little for man's sake, unless a *quid pro quo* is to be had. And you may rest assured that when anything is done by those men there is something personal to which it points. Now, just look at the Attorney-General's political career, he "pitched into" all and sundry in power. Macandrew, among others, when he was an unfeathered lawyer, seeking place, and what followed? why place and power. The same process was gone over in the House of Representatives, and what followed?—place and power. Now all this was perfectly lawful, but it makes us shy, and it causes us to ask what is the object aimed at in this transcendent nonsense about an elective governor. Surely there is something more than merely annoyance to our Governor, etc. Do our representatives all or any of them aspire still higher, if so then we say—"pride goeth before a fall." Sir, we are richly deserving our humiliation in having made the Attorney-General our representative. When a man casts aside the faith of his fathers so lightly, as some among us do, we degrade ourselves by doing them honour, and why should we be startled at the result? I suppose the foolish farmer who put the frozen snake into his bosom wondered that the ungrateful reptile stung him—others did not wonder. Why in our circumstances should we be surprised that Christianity is tabooed by the laws invented by men, who see nothing better in Christianity, as a divine revelation, than in Hindooism, unless we bestir ourselves matters wont rest here, there is little basis for loyalty or any other part of the frame-work of society, if religion is destroyed. We may show our abhorrence of its results in spasmodic efforts, like the present reception of the Governor, and so far it is well, but the evil is deeply seated, and it must be pulled up by the roots. And not only Catholics, but all men who have got the least regard for the religion of Christ are bound in principle to rise and hurl from their seats men who will not recognise the claims of a religion that has procured for us everything good which we possess.

PRO BONO PUBLICO.

A CONTRADICTION.

To the Editor of the N. Z. TABLET.

SIR,—It would be but affectation to suppose that any other than Knox Church was referred to in a paragraph copied into your journal of 31st ult. from "a northern contemporary," and therefore I take upon myself to correct the statement therein contained. Such an alteration in the arrangements of the choir as is suggested in the paragraph has not in any way been thought of by me, and most certainly has not been found desirable.—I am, &c.,

W. G. INNES,
Precentor, Knox Church.

[The paragraph referred to was found by us in the *Poverty Bay Standard*, and ran as follows:—"The other day a member of the