

as we have been able to unearth in the pronouncements, and to one or two points which have been raised before but which may be regarded as deserving of somewhat fuller treatment than they have yet received.

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Under this latter heading may, perhaps, be placed the episcopal references to the question of conscience. 'Are the consciences of the majority,' asks the Bishop of Waiapu, 'to have no redress and no consideration?' And the Bishop of Christchurch echoes the same cry: 'The Roman Catholic conscience is not the only conscience in New Zealand. The conscience of that far larger body of which I have spoken is also to be considered. It is impossible to satisfy both parties. Is it therefore reasonable or wise to satisfy neither?' One can only say that, for gentlemen who are supposed to be more or less experts on questions of religion and morals, these two ecclesiastics exhibit a surprising haziness as to the meaning and scope and exact significance of rights of conscience in their relation to the State. Bible Leaguers have no rights, as such, which do not at the same time and to the same extent, belong to Catholics as such, to Congregationalists, Baptists, Jews, Unitarians, and to every section of the community. They have a civil right to enjoy their own belief, to worship in their own way, to read the Bible and to teach it as part of their religion; but they have no right in this respect to any preference from the State, or any of its institutions. They have no right to insist upon Protestant practices at public expense, or in public buildings, or to turn public schools into seminaries for the dissemination of Protestant ideas. *They can claim nothing on the score of conscience, which they can not concede equally to all others.* If, therefore, the Bible League denominations wish to have their particular view of religious education recognised by the State they must concede precisely the same right to Catholics and others before they can put in any valid claim on the score of conscience. It is not a question of majorities or minorities; for if the conscience of the majority is to be the standard, then there is no such thing as right of conscience at all. If, then, it be said that the Bible-in-schools conscience requires that the Bible be read by and to Bible-in-schools children and that it is a denial of a right of conscience to forbid it, the answer is (1) that no such right of conscience can require that the State shall provide out of the common taxes for its gratification, and (2) that Catholics and others have, too, the same right to have their children taught religion according to their views; and if the one right is conceded, the other must, as a matter of absolute justice, be also granted. As to Bishop Julius's declaration that 'it is impossible to satisfy both parties,' the statement is simply not true. It has been found possible in many countries which are in the very van of educational efficiency; and if the League would fling aside those features of its proposals which violate justice and the rights of conscience, and would consult and consider other religious bodies interested, a way out of the educational difficulty which would be fair to all parties would assuredly be found.

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The Bishop of Waiapu makes an astonishingly perverse and one-sided application of a recent striking utterance of Mr. Balfour when he contrives to make himself believe that it tells in favor of the League's peculiar proposals. The position is quite 'the reverse to the contrary,' as Artemus Ward would say—the words tell strongly and directly against the League and in favor of the Catholic position. Bishop Averill quotes Mr. Balfour as saying: 'When you are dealing with a population of 36 millions—I do not remember the exact figure of England and Wales at this moment—and are considering the conditions under which most parents work, it is quite impossible, whatever their will, whatever their moral qualifications, that they should all do the work of training which is required. That is universally recognised. If that be so, it follows that you ought to provide the parents with that kind of religious training, if any, which they desire in the

schools to which you compel them to send their children.' That is a perfectly sound principle; but what we complain of is that the League's scheme utterly fails to give proper scope and application to the principle. The retort to Bishop Averill's contention is obvious. We have merely to ask, What provision is made in the League proposals for the application of this principle to the case of Catholic parents, and of Jewish parents, and of Unitarian parents? And the answer is, None whatever. The Jewish parent is told that if he cannot accept the Bible lessons on the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ—which are to him blasphemy and sacrilege—he must make provision elsewhere for the religious teaching he desires, and pay for it at his own expense, besides bearing his share of the cost of the League's scheme. The Unitarian parent is in like case. As is well known, Catholic parents, while willing to submit to State control—and therefore claiming State recognition—in regard to the secular teaching, desire for their children their own religious teaching and religious atmosphere in their own schools; and the League advocates—the men who are posing as the champions of the rights of parents—are forever telling us that this is the very thing they are out to prevent!

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Bishop Julius's utterances are usually marked by more candor than discretion; and in a single sentence he gives away the whole case of those who oppose the Catholic claim. 'Is it fair,' he asks, 'to complain that we have not made like sacrifice with the Roman Catholics, nor joined with them in a claim which must overturn the national system? Why should we? *We prefer a national to a denominational system.*' If that be so, how can the recognition of the Catholic claim by any possibility overturn the national system? How can the incorporation of the Catholic schools into the national system by State recognition of the secular instruction imparted drive Bible Leaguers out of a national system which they prefer into denominational schools which they do not prefer? And—if Anglicans and Bible Leaguers generally 'prefer a national to a denominational system'—what becomes of the cry that if Catholic schools are recognised other denominations will clamor for like recognition? Altogether, the Catholic position, so far from being weakened, has been materially strengthened by the two latest episcopal pronouncements.

Notes

Panama's Last Barrier

The last barrier at the Pacific end of the Panama Canal was destroyed by dynamite on Sunday, August 31, and on the Tuesday dredgers began to remove the last barrier at the Atlantic end. Among those who watched the explosion, to such beneficent purpose, of a charge of forty-five thousand pounds of dynamite were the officers of H.M.S. New Zealand.

The Moving Pictures Craze

Miss Edith Cowell, in a recent number of the *Month*, gives an amusing account of her experiences in a small country town that had gone 'picture palace mad.' Attending one performance, she was surprised to find in the sixpenny seats a woman from whom she had the same morning received the following letter:—'Dear Madame,—Hoping you will be able to send me a skirt which my father is dying in the infirmary and me with eleven children and me having nothing to wear. And my eldest being out of a situation.' The eldest thus referred to was sitting beside her mother, very smartly dressed.

A Sir Joseph Ward Story

Going away from home for news items we learn from our contemporary the *Brisbane Catholic Advocate* that 'the Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Ward, Bart., the

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