

fact that a leading member of the Statutes Revision Committee told Sir John Findlay that he could inform me that such was the intent and purport of the clause. It would seem to be confirmed, also, from the fact that the Leader of the Council asked that it should be passed at once without discussion. From this it would seem to me, at any rate, that the Government hesitated to avow the real purport and intent of the new amendment, and so had it rushed through quietly before explanations could be asked. On receiving the opinion of the two learned counsel yesterday, I immediately acted on their advice and wrote to the Prime Minister enclosing it, and formally requesting him, as head of the Government, to have made in the Bill before it advances to its final stages in the House, the changes recommended by Sir John Findlay and Mr. Myers; and I asked Mr. Massey to make the matter urgent, because in order to remove all possible doubt from the minds of Parliament and people as to what the attitude of the Catholic body will be, should the clause as it stands become law and have the effect of penalising the Catholic Doctrine on the Sacrament of Matrimony. To remove all doubt, I said that I intended to make a public statement on the question to-day, and I informed the Prime Minister in my letter that I intended to say "that if this law is passed as it stands and has the meaning put upon it by the learned counsel whom we have consulted, then I will take the first opportunity of deliberately breaking it. I will encourage my priests and people to disobey it on every possible occasion, and as I intend to pay no fines, you will have to imprison me, and I will state that I know that the other bishops, priests, and Catholics of the Dominion will take up exactly the same attitude towards the law." Last evening I received a telegram from the Prime Minister, which reads: "Your letter of even date received. I will have the opinion referred to therein referred to the Crown Law Office prior to the Bill in question being dealt with by the House.—W. F. Massey."

#### "THE END OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY."

Now, I want to assure you, my dear brethren, that we mean precisely what we say when we declare that we will defy and disobey any law that will have the effect of preventing us from teaching the doctrines of our Church. Such a law would be religious persecution, and it would affect not only Catholics but other denominations, who reject State interference with their doctrines. What they will do I do not know, but I know what Catholics will do. Once this principle is admitted that the State can penalise our doctrines on marriage, then they can punish our teaching the doctrine of the Mass and Real Presence. And that it might come to this is no idle fear, because the first plank of the membership declaration of the people who have asked for this legislation on marriage, is the rejection of our doctrine of the Mass as superstitious. The exact words are: "I reject as superstitious the Romish doctrine of the Mass." Other doctrines of other denominations would in course of time become liable to be penalised, and this would be the end of religious liberty. I have on more than one occasion during the past couple of years warned you that movements are being fostered in certain quarters to rob the people of various civil liberties. But with the ruin of religious liberty, tyranny would make short work of all civil liberty and more and more corruption would overshadow the land.

#### "A PENAL LAW AGAINST RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE."

It will be now for the members of the House or, I suppose, the Government, to make their decision and say whether New Zealand is to be the first place in the British Empire since the passing of Catholic Emancipation, to introduce penal laws against religious doctrine. I cannot do better than conclude by quoting from the eloquent peroration of our counsel, Sir John Findlay, before the Statutes Revision Committee. The

Catholic body owes a great debt to Sir John for his able and whole-hearted defence of our rights before that committee. I commend his words to the Government and Parliament: "If religious teachings and doctrines are to be brought here . . . for examination and repression, you are establishing a system of State interference with religious liberty fraught with the utmost danger to social order and public safety. The past has proved how readily men will shed their blood in defence of their religious liberties and convictions. The Catholic Church regards its sacrament of marriage as of the holiest, its doctrines of marriage as of Divine origin with a sacred tradition; it would regard—and rightly—any attack by the State on these doctrines as a deadly and tyrannical attack upon one of its most cherished sacraments and institutions. I beseech the committee, therefore, to ponder well the gravity of the step it is really asked to take here and to contemplate, if fearlessly yet justly, the consequences of any interference by law with one of the very bases upon which the Catholic Church rests—upon the doctrine that marriage is a sacrament and that without that sacrament, although there can be, and is, a 'valid civil contract'—there is 'no marriage at all in the sight of God.' . . ." With all respect to this committee, I say that if I were a Catholic, as I am a Protestant, I would never lay down my arms against a deliberate State attack on the cherished religious beliefs of my Church. I would seek to maintain them against a temporal power that sought to crush them to the dust, until I had reached the last ditch; and I earnestly and respectfully beseech you to conduce no more to the great social and political bitterness so rampant at the present hour by adding to these deplorable differences, the antagonism, resentment, and revolt of a determined Church."

#### NO MISAPPREHENSION.

These were Sir John's concluding words, and I commend them to the Government and Parliament before they decide this question. I will merely add that I do not intend to leave the Government or Parliament under any misapprehension as to what the attitude of Catholics will be in regard to a law that attacks our religious doctrines. We will resist and defy such a law, if it is passed, by every means in our power, and God helping, we will never allow it to prevail over us.

#### WHY SHOULD I BE MORAL?

A correspondent of the *Bombay Examiner* asks the editor to answer in one or two sentences the question: "Why should I be moral?" Father Hull admits that the shortest answer which he has ever heard to that question was that of a laconic American, although some might accuse him of irreverence, put it crudely yet sincerely thus: "If I didn't believe in the Boss upstairs, I should jest do as I darn please!" The American reply was equivalent to saying: "God is our Maker and our Master. He has the right to command, and we have the right to obey."

In academic form, the noted writer gives his correspondent the following answer, in which clearness is not sacrificed to brevity: "Morality consists in doing what is right as a duty; that is, because I ought. A 'duty' means something due to somebody, and that somebody is God. God, being our Maker and Master, has a right to command; and it is therefore our duty to obey. From God we receive all that we are and all that we can do; and therefore we owe it to Him to be what He wills us to be, and to do what He wills us to do. And this is morality."

"Wisdom is knowledge springing from the highest causes," says St. Thomas. It is a shield then, which preserves those who have the good fortune to possess it from the perils with which their desires surround them.