

blasphemy in ridiculing the faith of an Infidel (if we may express the paradox), there should be none in ridiculing the faith of a Christian. There should no longer therefore be such a thing as the crime of Blasphemy known to the law.

Bishop Luck, of Auckland, thinks the State has no conscience, and that the Atheistic State has no sense of duty. Before the Select Committee on Education last session, this Bishop expressed himself to the effect that—"The State has no conscience whatever; it is very elastic, and whether we are Jews, Protestants, Catholics, Mohammedans, it does not matter one bit to the State." The meaning of this is that the State has no religious conscience—a very different thing from having no conscience. But the State at any rate professes to be the guardian of liberty of conscience, and in making the profession it claims to have a conscience on this point of duty. The State seems to have a very clear conscience when it makes a law and votes money that no child shall grow up without the means of education. And it appears to be acting moreover with a conscience when it refuses to allow religious jealousies, hatreds, and feuds to interfere with the duty it has undertaken to perform. Bishop Luck gives another definition when he observes: "We have States of all colors and shades—the atheistic amongst the rest which admits no duty." If he means no religious duty, he is expressing a truism, but if he means no duty whatever, he should have been asked to name the State. When the French Republic banished the Jesuits, it at once provided with princely liberality the secular schools which it intended should replace those of the Order of Loyola. The atheistic sense of duty is founded on the welfare of mankind in this life, and is of the strongest and deepest.

The veteran secularist William Swanson put the following question to Bishop Luck: "Are you aware of any Catholic State, where there is a Catholic majority, where they do not allow some of the State funds for education?" The answer was thus given: "The Catholic Church never gives any grant to any religious education which it does not know to be the true one. This great cry for State education is entirely one of our own times." The Catholic Church admits of no compromises, and of course if it believes in itself it is quite justified in pursuing the policy. But let us see if the State should not be influenced to act in a similar way. The Catholic Church presumably feels itself to be right and every other church to be wrong. The State, however, 'without a conscience' knows nothing about one church being right and another wrong—it has no knowledge on the point—and being in this state of oblivion it solves the difficulty by refusing to recognise any church. In this dilemma the State has no alternative but to cut the Gordian knot and reject all demands from the rivals until they have agreed on a common religion, or found out what Pilate was in search of—Truth. The more the State attempts to compose the differences and adjust the claims of the warring sects, the further will it become involved in the maze of their interminable pretensions. It can only do as the Roman Governor did, and wash its hands. Before the "great cry for State education," we had the education of the churches, and let it be placed on the record how well and satisfactorily under the direction of 'conscience' they performed their duty!

The fourth centenary of the birth of Martin Luther is being celebrated by Protestant Christendom in honor of the lion of the Reformation. Luther had exactly those qualities fitting him for war with Rome. Possessed of unflinching courage and burning religious zeal, he returned blow for blow, eliciting the admiration of sturdy Germans whose rough sense of honor bound them to defend him against menaced dangers. Luther had studied the Bible, and failing to harmonise it with the half Pagan rites and doctrines of Rome, he founded the system of Bibliolatry which has obtained since his day among Protestants. Though we cannot admire the character, we shall not refuse our tribute of gratitude to a man who faced with unflinching bravery untold dangers, with a constancy never excelled, and with results highly advantageous to humanity. His dogmatism and ignorance were largely the fruit of the age in which he lived. We can now afford to laugh at his attack on Copernicus: "People (he contemptuously remarked) gave ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system which of all systems is of course the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy. But Sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth." It was confidence of this kind, though better founded, that enabled the monk to win against all the organisation and machinery of Rome. For his bravery and success we honor his memory. It was hardly his fault that he retained the vices of a monk, and saw but dimly in the first dawn of science what so few then were able to see with clearer vision.

The Protestant Bishop of Dunedin in a recent address to his Synod said: "It may be within your recollection that last year I devoted a part of my address to you to the consideration of certain possible steps towards the reunion of divided Christendom." In token of his success in this direction, he mentioned that since his return from England in 1879, he had been concerned in the reception of six ministers of other communions into our own." It happened that two of these perverts were probationers for the Wesleyan Ministry, who, according to the statement of the Rev. Joseph Berry, Wesleyan Minister, went over without discharging certain debts of honor incumbent on them. On this point we do not care to dwell. Charges of the kind are often the result of disappointment and bitterness. The striking feature of the case is Bishop Nevill's happy idea and plan of promoting "the reunion of divided Christendom" by appropriating the novitiates of other churches. "It has always been the desire of my heart," the Bishop remarks, "that I might be in some humble way instrumental thereto." The humbleness of the method of promoting the "reunion" goes without saying. If the ingenious Bishop and his coadjutors could only win the whole of the Wesleyan probationers, the Wesleyan Church would undoubtedly be "reunited" out of existence in a single age. And so the plan would be as effectual as it is "humble." On the other hand, if the ranks of the novitiates should be duly recruited after every secession, it is difficult to see any approach to reunion. But if the students for the Ministry are inclined to receive calls from the Church of Henry, the Wesleyan foundations are certainly in some danger. Bishop Nevill may have struck a rich vein.