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LEO. XIII. to the N.Z. TABLET

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1904.

THE DILEMMA: ONE HORN



SPASMS and jerks of controversy here and there serve to still keep languidly alive the interest in the recent declaration of the chief spokesman in the Bible-in-schools League that his party will now have no such thing as direct 'religious instruction' in the public schools; neither will they permit the teachers to 'enlarge upon the language of the Bible' This latest gyrations in the party's programme will, we ween, bring them small surcease of trouble. It shifts them from one horn of a sharp dilemma, but it lands them full square upon the point of another. At the very outset of discussion they are met with the pertinent inquiry: What translation of the Bible do you propose to place in the hands of children attending the public schools? And we learn that it is the Protestant Authorised Version, with all its sins of commission, omission, and mistranslation, which were in great part intended to justify certain distinctive teachings of the Reformed creeds and to antagonise the doctrines of the Ancient Faith. Moreover, the Bible-in-schools League serenely propose to forcibly pick the pockets of Catholics and other recusants for the purpose of printing, distributing, and teaching this sectarian version of the Scriptures to the budding youth of New Zealand.

Let us suppose that—as set forth some time ago in the official pronouncements of the League—the Scripture lessons would be accompanied by 'simple explanations of a literary, historical, and ethical character.' Such explanations would necessarily, in the vast majority of cases, be given by Protestants of various creeds. 'It would,' as our Bishops remarked, 'be obviously impossible for the teachers—of various creeds and of no creed—to whom it is proposed to entrust these lessons to do such watchful and continuous violence to their convictions as to avoid coloring their "literary, historical, and ethical" explanations with their own beliefs or unbelief. In a great number of cases they would, no doubt, derive from the lessons conclusions