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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Temuka.—We do not think it opportune to deal with the subject at the present moment.

F. C. (Ettrick).—Next month. For precise date apply the Administrator, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland.

J. O'S.N. (Christchurch).—In compiling our Irish news we do not differentiate between the counties in any way. We give the news as we find it in our exchanges. At the same time some counties are more regularly mentioned in our columns owing to the fact that they are better served with local newspapers than others. News items from Kerry are not by any means as scarce in our columns as you make out. We will take, by way of illustration, our issues for the months of June and July. Of the 132 items of Irish county news which appeared during these two months, 14 were credited to Kerry, which is more than double the average, seeing that there are 32 counties in Ireland. If we take June by itself we find that our issue for the 1st had two items from Kerry out of 25 county items for the whole of Ireland; the 8th had 3 out of 14; the 15th had 4 out of 20; and the 22nd had 2 out of 10.

DEATHS

KERR.—At his residence, Dacre, on July 13, 1905, Arthur Kerr, dearly beloved husband of Eliza Kerr, late of West Plains, native of County Antrim, Ireland; aged 61 years. Deeply regretted.—R.I.P.

MOYNIHAN.—On August 5, John Francis (Jack), at the Cafe de Paris Hotel, Palmerston North, the beloved son of M. and E. Moynihan, of the Club Hotel, Shannon; aged 7 years and 7 months.—R.I.P.



To promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

LEO. XIII. to the NZ TABLET

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 1905

SOME NUTS TO CRACK



NCE in the course of his history Chesterfield got into disgrace at Court. He was banished to Holland as Ambassador, and spent his time there gambling and watching how the political cat jumped. 'I find treating with two hundred sovereigns of different tempers and professions,' he wrote, 'is as laborious as treating with one fine woman, who is at least of two hundred minds in one day.' That is precisely one of the troubles that makes dealing with the braided captains of the Bible-in-schools movement a 'labor dire and heavy woe.' They have exercised to a bewildering degree during the past few years the right of changing their minds, and have wandered through so many permutations and combinations that the public of New Zealand, like little Bo-Peep, 'don't know where to find them' for four-and-twenty consecutive hours. On Thursday of last week, for instance, they profess to have been again 'committed' to their edition of the text-book of 'religious instruction' drawn up by a group of Protestant clergymen in Melbourne. What their view was on Friday morning we cannot say. Perhaps they themselves cannot.

'For it's all a problem,
Prob—prob—problem,
A mixed and curious problem,
What road they'll follow next.'

The Anglican Bishop of Wellington has, in this matter, taken a handspring and 'turned his back upon himself.' Some time ago, with his hand upon his heart, he declared to his clergy in Synod assembled that people would never believe in the sincerity of the Protestant clergy unless they took advantage of the opportunities—which, he said, were rarely refused—of imparting religious instruction to the children in State schools under the present Education Act. Last week, at a big meeting in Wellington, he declared himself 'heartily in sympathy' with the efforts that are being made to relieve all the Protestant clergy of that duty, and to force it upon the unwilling shoulders of lay State officials. 'I agree,' said he, 'that all Christians should combine to teach the plain facts upon which Christianity was founded.' Let us tease out this sentiment a bit. 'All Christians' should 'combine' to impart this 'teaching' in our public schools—and, of course, at the public expense. But (1) by what right do you compel Jews and other non-Christians into this 'combine' by forcing them to pay tithes for your scheme of Christian teaching? And (2) On what principle of equity do you propose to plunder the pockets of Catholic and other Christian objectors to meet the expenses of this scheme of Protestant teaching? Again: (3) on what principle of morals or of statecraft do you refuse to other faiths the privilege which you claim for yourselves? And (4) why are your clergy—whose special duty it is—to be excluded from the burden of carrying on the teaching formulated by the 'combine'? Is this a counsel of despair—the result of a deep conviction, gained by long and melancholy experience, that the 'sincerity' which you postulate is lacking in the clergy, and that their zeal for the souls of Christ's little ones will not stand the acid test? Of this, at least, you may rest assured: that if the Protestant Churches were half as interested in the Christian up-bringing of their children as the Catholic body is, there would be no religious 'prob-prob-problem' in New Zealand to-day.

(5) Which are 'the plain facts upon which Christianity was founded'? Who is to decide the facts and the plainness thereof? And who is to determine the particular brand of Christianity that was erected upon the 'plain facts' aforesaid? Bishop Wallis and his friends of the Bible-in-schools League have made up their minds that the form of this 'Christianity' is Protestant, and, more specifically, a sort of washed-out Unitarianism. But who gave them a monopoly of the right to decide this question? Have not other Protestants an equal right to be consulted in the matter—not to speak of Jews, Catholics, etc.? The public of New Zealand have an impression that our constitution and laws provide equal justice and liberties to people, irrespective of creed. But Bishop Wallis and his variegated Protestant friends propose to alter all that. They have drawn up a State religion which satisfies (for the moment) their requirements. They would make Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and Agnostic dissenters pay for the propaganda of that creed, or go to gaol. But they would see the heavens fall and the earth aflame from China to Peru rather than allow the before-mentioned Catholics, Jews, and the rest of the objectors so much as a farthing-piece out of the State-creed tax for the teaching of the forms of religion that would meet the said dissenters' conscientious requirements. The good men have dropped out of their proper statification in history. They belong by right to the State creed days of Queen Anne and not to the nineteenth century or to New Zealand.

Again: (6) People who believe in the God-Man Saviour of the world regard, and have always regarded, the Incarnation and the Virgin-Birth as the grand cen-

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