

your correspondents have anticipated matters and have exposed the precious "principle" without more ado. The alleged principle is nothing more or less than the old persecuting doctrine—which we had all hoped had been finally abandoned—that in matters of religion and conscience might is right, and that a majority—even a bare majority—are entitled to trample on the religious convictions and do violence to the consciences of the dissenting minority. That is what the referendum, as applied to questions of religion and conscience, amounts to. It is based on the mathematical principle that by multiplying nothing by thousands you get everything. The word of one ill-equipped or biased person is admittedly valueless as a guide to truth and right doing; but, by adding to his voice those of ten thousand others as ill-equipped and biased as himself, the expression of infallible justice and wisdom results. Against this "principle" the whole history, as well as the teachings, of Christianity are a protest. Where was the majority on Calvary? What was it about? "Christ or Barabbas" was made a State question; on which side did the majority range itself? Was it to reward the fidelity of the majority that the deluge came? Were the prophets in the majority or those who stoned them? What part did the majority play in the death of Stephen? After the severe handling which Mr. Braithwaite and his "principle" have received from the Rev. W. J. Ashford and Mr. J. J. Ramsay it would be cruelty to subject them to further punishment.

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 'I have waited for nearly a fortnight to give the Rev. R. E. Davies an opportunity of answering my queries and of vindicating, on Presbyterian principles, the revolutionary proposals of the League, but apparently Mr. J. J. Ramsay was right in his prediction. Mr. Davies, like the rest of his ministerial brethren, is determined to keep as far away as possible from the firing line. I am exceedingly sorry; and can only say that I will be ready at any time, whenever Mr. Davies is willing, to discuss with him the question. Is it in accordance with Presbyterian teaching to allow the State to set up as a teacher of religion, to force the consciences of any section in the community, or to decide vital questions of religion and conscience by a mere count of heads? all of which proposals are embodied in the programme of the League. In the meantime I commend to his thoughtful notice the following pregnant passage from a volume on *Scotland's Battles for Spiritual Independence* (1905) by Hector Macpherson: "If we are to be saved from social and political anarchy on the other hand, and social and political despotism on the other, we must fight the evils which grow out of the principle of the Sovereignty of Parliaments and Law Courts by another principle—that of the Sovereignty of Conscience. We must fall back upon the old view, that man as man has certain rights which neither kings, lawyers, nor Parliaments can be allowed to touch. This is the question at issue in the present crisis, and all who value the birthright of humanity—freedom of conscience—should rejoice that once more it is left to Scotland to vindicate the glorious principles for which our fathers went undauntedly to the stake and the scaffold." And these principles—for which their fathers made such heroic sacrifices—New Zealand Presbyterian ministers are prepared to betray.

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 'Mr. Ramsay is right also in his indictment of the League's methods. There are certain fundamental questions of right and wrong involved in the League's proposals—questions in regard to which ministers, of all men, ought to be able to give a strong and clear lead. Some, at least, of these questions have been set forth again and again in your columns, and League apologists have been challenged to give an honest and straightforward reply. Not one of them has so much as attempted to do so. On Monday night two League meetings were held, one at Roslyn and one at North-East Valley. In all, seven ministers took the platform, and with one consent they avoided the moral and conscientious issues involved in the League's scheme as they would avoid the bubonic plague. League apologists may, and presumably will, continue to shirk and avoid

the plain issues raised by their proposals, but they may rest assured that the public will not fail to notice the fact of their evasion, and its significance. Several of the speakers referred to the address to be delivered next week by Bishop Cleary in the Garrison Hall. As will be duly notified in your columns, members and officials of the League are particularly requested to be present, and are cordially invited to submit relevant questions to the lecturer to their heart's content. If they do, I can give assurance that there will be no evasion or beating about the bush, but that all relevant questions will be promptly and straightforwardly answered. Will the League speakers, at their future meetings, give us a similar opportunity to question them? And if not, why not?

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A further glaring example of the inability of League advocates to defend their position and of their utter helplessness under straightforward cross-examination, is furnished by the episode at Hamilton, which is fully reported on page 22 of this issue. The League representative on that occasion, the Rev. Alex. Miller, is a man of undoubted ability, but he made no sort of showing at all under Bishop Cleary's courteous but searching interrogation. Question after question was either feebly parried, or openly shirked and evaded. As the Ven. Archdeacon Cowie, a leader of the local League, admitted, on the logical side of the matter Bishop Cleary had the League advocate completely 'tangled up.' 'The Bishop's questions,' said the Archdeacon, 'ran on one line and the lecturer's replies on another, and the two lines never met.' It was an instructive and decisive exposure of the weakness of the League's position, and one from which the public can be safely left to draw its own conclusion.

Notes

Dissident Anglicans

It would appear that even Anglicans themselves are by no means unanimous in their support of the Bible in State Schools League's scheme. 'During the past fortnight,' says the *Tairi Advocate*, 'the annual meetings in connection with the Tairi Anglican Churches were held. . . . Motions in favor of the Bible in State Schools movement were passed at Allanton and Outram, but lost by one vote at Mosgiel, the men only in each instance voting.'

A Kindly Act

The spirit of genuine and spontaneous charity is still far from dead amongst us. After reading our remarks in a recent issue regarding the work of the Little Sisters of the Poor—which were not, of course, in the least intended as an appeal—an anonymous subscriber at once sent us, unsolicited, a donation of 10s to 'go towards paying' the newly levied rates. He signs himself, modestly but truly, 'A Friend.'

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

A novena to the Holy Ghost was begun in St. Joseph's Cathedral on Friday of last week.

On Sunday, the Feast of Pentecost, there will be Pontifical High Mass at 11 o'clock at St. Joseph's Cathedral.

We have received 10s from 'A Friend' for the Little Sisters of the Poor, as a contribution towards paying the rates to which they were held liable by a recent judgment of the Supreme Court.

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday from the last Mass until after Vespers. In the evening there was the usual procession, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The new convent at Wrey's Bush was blessed and opened on Sunday by his Lordship Bishop Verdon. Very Rev. Dean Burke, V.F., celebrated Mass, and

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