

their highest interests through the laxity of school boards, and wide-spread indifference among the people themselves, it is their duty, forthwith, to resume their proper functions, and link the Bible in the schools with the authority of positive law. The authority thus given to the State to prescribe in the matters of religion is really of a very despotic character. The same conscience clause indeed is appended to the proposed measure as to the law now in force, but it has a very different significance in the one connection from what it has in the other. As connected with the present law, that clause is a frank acknowledgment of the people's right to judge for themselves in the domain of conscience. The responsibility already thrown, as far as possible, on the people, is still further devolved on the individual. But in connection with the proposed measure, it is a mere concession, as if to ignorance or weakness, on the part of one deemed competent to judge what is for the best interests of the children, and responsible for the maintenance of their rights. If, for instance, the majority of the people should at any time urge that the rights of the children of the minority for religious instruction were being ignorantly, wantonly or perversely sacrificed, and that there was need for interference, the proposed measure could suggest no other reason than that of expediency, why, as in connection with other branches of education, compulsory legislation should not be resorted to.

It will thus appear that, though the change proposed seems at first sight a very small matter, it really proposes an action, on the part of the Government,