

be made text-books of instruction, and it could be alleged that religious instruction was not being given in school by the teachers. This, however, is a quibble, for the question is, What is the instruction being conveyed in the name of the State to the mind; of the children entrusted to its care? The primary question is, not what the teachers believe, but what the children are taught or mistaught to believe; and what they are taught to believe will be found in the text-book in their hands, whether it be, as I have always contended for, 'the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible' ('the religion of Protestants'), or Bible 'selections' or catechism.

To say that the Victorian text-book foisted without examination on the church is not a religious and theological text-book, is to contradict every line of its contents. I have it before me, and it is the product, as it says, of a Royal Commission on 'Religious Instruction in Schools.' The compilers say that they have prepared a manual designed to give an 'elementary knowledge of the religious truth.' Now the question is, what precisely is the

'Religious Truth'

to be conveyed to the minds of the children by this manual? Has the Presbyterian Assembly inquired, and have the Bible-in-schools advocates, who wax eloquent on Bible-in-schools in your columns? The compilers declare that they have not attempted to introduce any theological system, and controversial doctrine has been carefully avoided. But, obviously, if Scylla is on one side, Charybdis is on the other. And while it is true that the compilers have extruded from the Bible everything that has made it a power in the world, and every system of truth for which the churches clamored for the introduction of this text-book profess to stand, it is not true that they have not inserted a system of their own. Their text-book is as theological as any other formulary of religion; but it could not well be otherwise. And it is constructed on the lines of the most advanced evolutionary higher criticism; and I defy any competent theologian to show that, as a net result, its teaching is not practically identical with Unitarianism. It has neither distinctively Christian doctrine nor distinctively Christian 'morals' in it. While it would be difficult to say what it really is intended to teach, it certainly denies both the fall of man and the redemption of man. And yet you have Bible-in-schools advocates attacking me in your columns and elsewhere because I have been almost the solitary voice raised to protest against this shameful betrayal of the Christian religion, and this attempt, by an ecclesiastical conspiracy, to capture the schools for a religious text-book which, whatever the personal opinions or intentions of the compilers may be, betrays the Divine Saviour of men once more with a kiss—I am, etc.,

P. B. FRASER.

Lovell's Flat, July 25.

P.S.—The referendum questions:—

1. Are you in favor of preserving the existing system of education?
2. Are you in favor of departing from the existing system by introducing into the schools religious instruction by a compilation of Bible lessons?
3. A previous question for Parliament: Who shall make that compilation, on what lines, and when will it be ready?

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

July 29.

A series of sermons on Christian Doctrine is being delivered every Sunday evening in the various parishes of the city.

A meeting was held on Tuesday evening to consider arrangements for a monster social in aid of the schools of Te Aro parish. It is likely that the Town Hall will be secured for the occasion.

During the week Mr. S. J. Moran, LL.B., was admitted as barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand, on the motion of Mr. A. H. Casey, before his Honor Mr. Justice Cooper. Mr. Moran left on Tuesday for Stratford, to enter the firm of Messrs. Malone, McVeagh, and Anderson. He carries with him the best wishes of a large circle of friends for success in the profession he has chosen.

On Sunday, August 6., the new organ at the Sacred Heart Basilica will be formally opened. The services of Mr. Cyril Towsey have been secured for the occasion,

and a fine sacred concert has been arranged for the evening, when a special discourse on music will be delivered by his Grace the Archbishop. The organ is the finest of its kind here. It is constructed on the most modern improved tubular pneumatic principle. The contract price for the erection of the organ, together with the electric motor and generators, was £1100. The authorities in the Thorndon parish are to be commended for this undertaking, and the parishioners are to be congratulated on their good fortune in having such a splendid organ. On Sunday week next the people will have an opportunity of judging for themselves, and it is of course likely that the accommodation of the Basilica will be found wanting on the occasion.

The members of the Catholic Young Men's Literary and Debating Society entertained the executive of the Wellington Debating Societies' Union in St. Patrick's Hall on Monday evening. The visitors were welcomed by Mr. A. H. Casey, who presided, in the absence of the Rev. Father Kimbell, S.M. The first part of the evening was devoted to a discussion as to the advisability of women entering parliament. The affirmative side of the question was opened by Mr. J. Quinlan, supported by Messrs. W. Healy and H. McKeown. The opposition was led by Mr. C. Gamble, who had with him Messrs. J. P. McGowan and Dixon. The debate was responsible for a great deal of amusement, and the speakers concerned are to be congratulated on the manner in which they dealt with the subject. On the vote of the audience it was decided that women should not enter parliament. At the conclusion of the debate a musical programme was provided, to which items were contributed by Messrs. E. J. Healy, R. Sievers, T. F. Leihy, J. O'Sullivan, A. McDonald, and C. Gamble. The accompaniments in each case were tastefully played by Miss Lawless. An interesting exhibition of sleight-of-hand tricks was given by Mr. Raymond. During the evening Mr. H. P. Richmond, a vice-president of the Union, delivered a short address on the objects sought by a union of the various city societies, and the benefits conferred by such societies. The members of the committee thoughtfully provided refreshments, and a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close, shortly before eleven o'clock. Mr. Morgan, of St. Peter's Club, briefly expressed the thanks of the executive of the Union for the pleasing entertainment afforded in their honor.

It is surprisingly easy for some people to remain ignorant of matters of common knowledge. An instance of this was furnished by the Rev. Mr. Blamires at the last meeting of the self-styled Council of Churches. The reverend gentleman informed the Council that he had heard from a reliable source that the Catholic children of a certain suburb were carried on the railway free of charge to school, while Protestant children were refused such a concession. As this matter has been made the subject of a question by Mr. Fisher in the House, it may be well to see what the real position is. The explanation of the matter is to be found on page 131 of the ordinary Railway Time Table for August, published for public information. Regulation No. 17 is as follows:—

'Free School Season Tickets.

'17. Free second-class quarterly tickets may be issued to school-children not over fifteen years of age,—

'(a) To those attending the Government primary schools, from railway-stations where there is no primary school in the vicinity, and only to the station in the vicinity of the nearest primary school;

'(b) To those attending private schools for primary education.'

Under the heading 'b' come our Catholic scholars. Supposing for sake of example that a Catholic child resided at Kaiwarra. Such child in the absence of a Catholic school at Kaiwarra would under the regulation be entitled to a free pass to the Catholic schools in Wellington. This concession would also apply to a child of a Protestant, desirous of attending a private school, but would not be extended to one desirous of attending a public school in the city. The regulation has been in existence for many years, but our friends, who comprise the Council of Churches, are rather eager in their desire to stir up religious feeling. More careful enquiry beforehand would prevent many discomfitures such as have befallen the reverend gentleman on this occasion.

DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH

(From our own correspondent.)

July 31.

The Very Rev. Father Graham, S.M., who has been in temporary charge at Hawarden, returned last week to Wellington. The district is to be meanwhile worked by the Rev. Father Hyland from Rangiora.