

should be excluded from office and from the meetings of the Federation. The definition of 'politician,' for the purposes of the Australian resolution, extended only to members of Parliament. The object of the provision was, presumably, to prevent ambitious or self-seeking individuals from capturing the Federation and making use of it merely as a stepping-stone for their own advancement. If that be so, the resolution was obviously inadequate. For to shut out sitting members of Parliament, and at the same time to admit non-sitting candidates to membership and office, was practically offering a premium to the latter to use the Federation for the purpose objected to. The suggestion that New Zealand should follow the Australian precedent will doubtless be considered at the forthcoming meeting; but so far as we can see the feeling in the Dominion is strongly against the proposal. To exclude only sitting members of Parliament is, as we have said, an inadequate provision, and fails to attain the object aimed at. The only way to compass the desired end—so far as methods of regulating the membership are concerned—would be to place a ban upon all candidates, both political and municipal; and this would be to deprive the Federation of some of the very best material to be found within its ranks. For ourselves, we are satisfied that the Catholic laity are as quick as any other people would be to see when their organisation is being made use of, and we are confident that they will be found quite capable of dealing with self-seekers of the sort. In a word, the price to be paid for the deprivation involved in such a regulation as that suggested is out of all proportion to the gain that might be expected to accrue.

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In regard to the general relation of the Federation to politics, the position is made perfectly clear in the existing constitution, which says: 'The Federation is not a political party organisation, and does not seek to influence the political views of its members, nor to touch politics except where politics touch religion. It stands for the Christian life of the nation: for the Christian education of youth; for the repression of intemperance; for the sanctity and indissolubility of Christian marriage; for the safeguarding of the Christian home, and of Catholic institutions; and for the suppression of indecent, objectionable, and anti-Catholic literature, pictures, films, theatricals, and advertisements.' Wherever politics touch any of these or kindred questions, the Federation is bound to make its influence felt. Outside of questions affecting religion, morality, or Catholic principles, participation in mere party politics is definitely excluded. For this position we have direct authority from the Holy See itself. In rules laid down long ago for Catholic Associations, the late Holy Father, Leo XIII., set forth our guiding principles in the following admirable words: 'We deem these Associations peculiarly fitted as auxiliary forces intended to support the interests of the Catholic religion; and We approve, therefore, their object and the energy they display; We ardently desire that they may increase in number and in zeal, and that from day to day their fruits may be more abundant. But since the object of such societies is the defence and encouragement of Catholic interests, and as it is the Bishops who, each in their proper diocese, have to watch over those interests, it naturally follows that they should be controlled by their Bishops, and should set great value on their authority and commands. In the next place, they should with equal care apply themselves to preserve union, first, because on the agreement of men's wills all the power and influence of any human society depends, and next, because in the societies of which we speak that mutual charity should especially be found, which necessarily accompanies good works, and is the characteristic mark of those whom Christian discipline has moulded. Now as it may easily happen that the members may differ in politics, they should recall to themselves the aim of all Catholic Associations, and thereby prevent party feeling from disturbing their cordial unity. In their discussions they ought to be so penetrated by the purpose for which they

meet as to seem of no party, remembering the words of the Apostle, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Thus by the exclusion of party rivalries, all will be enlisted in the service of the one cause, the highest and noblest, about which no disagreement can exist among Catholics worthy of the name.'

### The 'Literature' and 'Morals' Theory

'When is religion not religion?' is the query naturally suggested by the tortuous tactics of the Bible in State Schools League. And the answer would seem to be that religion is not religion whenever a League apologist chooses to say that it is not. In the early stages of the present agitation in New Zealand an official League pamphlet, written by the Rev. A. Don, in answering the question, 'Is the "general" instruction (provided by the New South Wales system) worth while?' was frank enough to declare: 'As for the "general religious instruction," that given by the school teachers, the writer will never ask the question again. With trained teachers, able to command absolute obedience, and having a clear vision of their high calling, there seems hardly any limit to the possibility for good.' Finding, however, that this candid admission as to the existence of a State-established, State-endowed, and State-taught creed has left the League open to very deadly and unanswerable attack, its apologists calmly turn round and now brazenly declare that the teachers do not give any religious instruction at all, but that the Bible lessons are taught merely as 'literature' or as 'morals.' The obvious absurdity of the pretence that a teacher who administers lessons which are set before the child as part of the inspired Word of God, and which embody such facts and doctrines as the Atonement, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, and the necessity of union with Him, is not teaching religion, has been more than once exposed both in these columns and in those of the daily press. Owing to considerations of space and to the exigencies of controversy, however, the work has had to be done more or less piecemeal and disjointedly. In the letter which appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of Friday last, and which is reproduced on page 23 of this issue, Bishop Cleary has gathered up into a compact, comprehensive, and exceedingly handy form the crushing evidence available on this point; and we recommend readers to cut the matter out as furnishing a ready reply whenever the 'literature' or 'morals' theory has again to be combatted.

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As amplifying and rounding off the treatment of this question of the nature of the 'religious teaching' given to the children under the League's scheme we quote the following extract in point from the lecture delivered by Bishop Cleary in Dunedin some weeks ago, and which may also with advantage be pigeon-holed. 'What,' asked the lecturer, 'is the type or character of this "religious teaching"?' The question is soon answered. (1) The Government manuals of "religious instruction" are taken mainly or altogether from a sectarian version of the Bible (the Authorised Version). (2) The Scripture lessons are explained or interpreted on the sectarian principle known as 'the right of private judgment'—a principle which is honestly and conscientiously rejected by Catholic and other taxpayers in this Dominion. The Government thus officially takes sides in a doctrinal dispute which has divided Western Christianity for over three hundred years. (3)

'Within one Book each seeks to read  
The tenets of his private creed.'

If you are allowed to hack and mutilate the Holy Scriptures, and interpret them at your own sweet private will, you may (as we well know from history) evolve therefrom almost any type of religion or irreligion. Well, here are two sets of Government Scripture lessons, as used in the public schools of Queensland and New South Wales. Both have been hacked and