

mutilated, on an obvious sectarian plan, for a sectarian use and purpose. In these manuals, for instance, the Government suppresses, for a sufficient manifest reason, practically the whole of the following great body of New Testament texts and incidents to which Catholics notoriously appeal in support of doctrines and practices of their faith: Matter relating to the constitution of the Church—its unity, authority, perpetuity, inerrancy; its relation to the written and unwritten Word of God; the Petrine texts; the Eucharistic doctrine, as set forth at length (and, to Catholics, so luminously) in John VI. and in I. Cor., XI.; the several texts relating to fasting and to the power of forgiving sins in the Church; the texts relating to the anointing of the sick with oil (James, V.); and the praise of the celibate state in I. Cor., VII. . . . But there is an even more deplorable story of the sectarian mutilation of the Bible for use in the public schools. The Queensland Government manuals of 'religious instruction' have been lauded by League leaders. Well, in these manuals the Government has flung aside the narrative of the Virgin Birth of Christ; it has practiced a gross deceit upon the hapless little ones in the public schools by giving to them an Ebionite Christ, not the Christ of the Gospels. Yet so ardent a Leaguer as Rev. Dr. Youngman stated in the Wellington *Evening Post* of February 12, 1913, that these manuals have 'met with the approval of the Protestant Churches'! God forgive the Protestant Churches that "approve" of this shocking mutilation of the life of the Saviour of the world! But that is not all. The Victorian Bible-in-schools League of 1900 flung aside the Virgin-Birth of Christ. The New Zealand Bible-in-schools organisation, in 1904, flung aside the Virgin-Birth of Christ from the manuals which they selected for use in the public schools of this Dominion. And Bishop Averill (now a vice-president of the League) indignantly described their textbook as 'an emasculated caricature of the Bible.' I mention these deplorable matters just to give you some idea of the amazing lengths to which the misnamed "Bible"-in-schools party—both in Australia and New Zealand—is prepared to go in mutilating and caricaturing the Bible, for sectarian purposes, at the cost of the public purse.'

Ashburton

(From our own correspondent.)

The weather in this district still continues spring-like, and in the opinion of many old residents it is the mildest winter experienced for many years.

At the invitation of the Ladies' Catholic Club a large number of friends and members assembled in the clubrooms on Thursday evening, July 10, the occasion being an 'At home.' Mr. W. J. Cunningham presided. Progressive euchre made up the first part of the entertainment, the prizes for the same being won by Mr. D. Fitzgerald and Miss N. Harman. At the conclusion of the euchre tournament musical items were given, and highly appreciated. To Mrs. D. McCormick (president), Miss Nellie Bradley (secretary), and the young ladies who assisted in handing round light refreshments every praise is due for the successful carrying through of what proved a most enjoyable entertainment.

Before a large attendance of members of the Catholic Young Men's Club and invited friends, on Tuesday evening last, the Very Rev. Dean O'Donnell delivered a lecture entitled 'The Church and Liberty.' The Dean's address was of forty minutes' duration, during which time he handled his subjects in his usual masterly manner, keeping his audience deeply interested throughout, and on concluding he was warmly applauded. Mr. M. J. Moriarty (chairman) briefly thanked Dean O'Donnell for his interesting lecture, and on his motion the vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

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DEAN FITCHETT'S 'REPLY' TO BISHOP CLEARY

The following letter from his Lordship Bishop Cleary appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of July 18:—

'Sir,—The Bible-in-Schools League officially demands "the system of religious instruction" in operation in New South Wales and certain other States of Australia. Under that system the Government sets up, in law and in fact, as a teacher of religion. Among Anglicans, Presbyterians, and other Reformed denominations, as well as outside them—and especially among the State teachers—there is a deep and widespread objection to the Government thus usurping, in part, sacred duties which the Almighty, in clear Scripture terms, imposes only on parents and the Church. Herein some Leaguers, and even some League publications, have two voices in clamorous variance with each other. Some of them try to disarm this dangerous objection by alleging that, under the "Australian" system demanded by the League, the Government (through the teachers) treats the Government Scripture lessons merely as "literature," utterly excluding any religious instruction or application. This is the position taken up by Dean Fitchett in his alleged "reply" to Bishop Cleary. What, in this connection, are the facts of the "Australian" system demanded by the League?

'1. On the question of fact, the learned Dean's most obvious reply would have been this: Accept the oft-published challenge and quote the texts of the laws of New South Wales, Queensland, etc., which declare that the Government Biblical lessons shall on no account be imparted as "religious instruction," but purely and solely as "literature." This has not been done, for the simplest of all reasons: there are no such laws to quote.

'2. It is Dean Fitchett's awkward duty to reconcile his "literature" statement—if he can—with the following facts of the "Australian" system, which were set forth summarily or in detail in the lecture to which he professed to "reply":—

'(a) Section 7 of the New South Wales Education Act expressly provides that Government officials (teachers) shall impart "general religious teaching" to the pupils as a Government subject in the Government schools. Section 20 of the West Australian Act (57 Vict., No. 16) contains the very same provision. Section 22a of the Queensland Act of 1910 requires the teacher to impart "religious instruction" as a Government subject in the Government schools. On October 6, 1910, Mr. Kidston, formerly Premier of Queensland (who placed this Act upon the Queensland Statute Book), declared in Parliament that the Government teacher "should give a lesson on a religious subject." A statement similar in import was made by the leader of the Queensland Legislative Council (Hon. Mr. Barlow, and ardent Leaguer) on November 10, 1910. Is all this treating the Government Scripture lessons purely as "literature," to the utter exclusion of all religious instruction or application?

'(b) The report of the Minister of Public Instruction of New South Wales for 1909 (p. 38) expressly states that "general religion" forms part of the course of instruction; that it is "a good foundation" for "further religious instruction," and that "to many children" the State school teacher is "the only guide" to "religious knowledge." No. 152 of the departmental regulations of Western Australia (p. 78) describes the State teacher's work as "general religious instruction" and "religious teaching." Another Western Australian regulation refers to schools where (on account of the non-attendance of the clergy) "all the religious teaching is left to the regular teacher"—that is, to the State school teacher. Is this treating the Government Scripture lessons merely as "literature," devoid of all religious instruction or application? And would it not be a degradation of the Sacred Text to treat it with no more religious respect than one would show to *Robinson Crusoe* or *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.



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