

the foregoing it is clear that in a thorough study of comparative religion Christianity has nothing to fear; and that the Agnostic questioner, who 'wishes to be convinced one way or the other,' will find high authority on his side if he elects to stand by Christianity.

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We have devoted so much space to the second question that the third question on the list will have to be more briefly disposed of. Question 3: 'If the person Christ was such a great power in His day, and His religion spread (as the Bible says it did spread) throughout the then known world, how is it that such a historian as Josephus, the only historical writer contemporary with Christ; how is it that he did not make any more to-do about this wonderful man, than to mention in a superficial way that there was a 'prophet' of the name of Jesus alive and preaching in and around Jerusalem? How is it that he did not record these wonderful doings of Christ, or His miraculous birth and tragic death, or His more miraculous resurrection, to say nothing of His teachings? Does it not point to the probability that Josephus just took Him rationally, as one would nowadays,' etc.

Answer: In this question the Agnostic inquirer is making—to put it as mildly as possible—something of a laughing-stock of himself. (1) Josephus was *not* 'contemporary with Christ.' He was not born until two years after the death of Christ. (2) He did *not* mention—"in a superficial way" or any other way—that there was 'a prophet of the name of Jesus alive and preaching in and around Jerusalem.' Josephus did not make this statement for the very sufficient reason that when Jesus was 'alive and preaching' Josephus was as yet unborn. (3) Josephus did not 'take Jesus rationally as one would nowadays.' He did not take Him at all—for the simple reason that he never either saw or heard Him. These three statements alone are sufficient to show how little real knowledge the questioner has of the subject on which he presumes to speak with such assurance. (4) It so happens that Josephus *did* refer to the 'wonderful doings of Christ,' to His 'tragic death,' and to 'His more miraculous resurrection.' We quote the passage: 'Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he performed many wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as received the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the instigation of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him from the first did not cease to adhere to him. For he appeared to them alive again on the third day; the divine prophets having foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of the Christians, so named from him, subsists to this time' (*Antiquities of the Jews, Book xviii., chap. 3*). To meet any possible objection we may mention that this paragraph is found in all the copies of Josephus's works now extant, whether printed or manuscript; in a Hebrew translation preserved in the Vatican Library, and in an Arabic version preserved by the Maronites of Mount Libanus. It is cited by Eusebius, the most ancient of Church historians, by St. Jerome, Rufinus, Isidore of Pelusium, Sozomen, Cassiodorus, Nicephorus, and many others. So much for Josephus. The questioner 'wishes to be convinced one way or the other.' After his exhibition on this subject, if he is still convinced against Christianity, it is, we submit, not by force of fact or strength of argument that he has been 'convinced.'

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We have answered these questions merely to show that the Christian answer to the anti-Christian objections is ready, and can be given without difficulty. This applies in precisely the same degree to the questioner's remaining queries. They deal chiefly with the alleged atrocities of the Old Testament, and with the omissions and alleged contradictions in the New. The inquirer will find his queries on these heads fully and

effectively dealt with in such books as Lambert's *Notes on Ingersoll*, and in *Religious Doubts of Democracy*, edited by George Haw. They are dealt with still more fully and learnedly in hundreds of other works on Christian Apologetics; but we have mentioned these books because they are simple, popular, cheap, and easily accessible. We have dealt with this inquirer gently, notwithstanding his many and grave misstatements, because he has made a profession of sincerity in his quest for truth. If his sincerity is real, we ask him to show it by making an honest study of both sides of the question. If he does this, with a mind free from prejudice and with a single eye to the truth, we can confidently promise him that his wish 'to be convinced one way or the other' will be in a fair way to be attained.

DEAN FITCHETT'S 'REPLY' TO BISHOP CLEARY

The following letter from his Lordship Bishop Cleary appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of August 6:—

'Sir,—The Bible-in-Schools League is agitating for the "Australian" "system of religious instruction," devised by the Government, on sectarian lines, and taught compulsorily at public cost by teachers of all faiths and none. Dean Fitchett acknowledges as wrong and indefensible the Government teaching of any kind of religion. He represents the Queensland Act of 1910 (section 22a) as "expressly forbidding the State teacher to give religious instruction." The Act provides the contrary. (a) The instruction given under section 22a, by teachers as well as by clergy, is described in the official marginal summary as "provision for religious instruction in school hours." (b) The "selected Bible lessons" to be given by State teachers, under section 22a, contain a mass of mutilated religious "doctrine concerning God" and of moral obligation based upon expressed or implied religious doctrine. (c) The third clause of section 22a gives the right to withdraw children "from all religious instruction"—showing thereby that the Government Scripture lessons and the clergy's teaching are both regarded as, and intended to be, "religious instruction." (d) The "certificate of exemption of pupil from religious instruction" in schedule XVIII. of the Act applies alike to the Government religious lessons and the clergy's denominational teaching. (e) The League (as already shown) officially "describes" this Government Biblical teaching as "religious instruction."

'In the *Outlook* (Presbyterian organ) of July 22 (p. 7) Dean Fitchett will find further evidence from New South Wales inspectors that (through the teachers) the Government conducts "reverent" hymn-singing in the public schools and doctrinal religious teaching on the "divine power, wisdom and benevolence"; that "morality" is, "for five days of the week," "preached" (by the Government) in such a way that "the average bush school" "is really a church"; and that a clear distinction is several times made between Scriptural moral, and "religious instruction" and moral instruction from "other" sources. See also Tasmanian regulations 98-99, 139-140 (1910).

'On the Dean's theory, religion is not religion when you call it "unsectarian," "undenominational," "undogmatic"—in other words (as the Queensland law expresses it) when it is free from "the distinctive tenets or doctrines of any religious society or denomination." This is mere sectarian jargon, adopted by a sectarian law and system. (a) It is a sectarian misdescription of what an official League leaflet describes as "a common Christian faith beneath all our sects and churches, a common morality beneath all our doctrinal differences." This is, in reality, a new sect, an unhistorical "Christianity," a compromise to suit sections of four denominations. To formulate it, the Government flings out of the Bible everything (including the Virgin-Birth of Christ) which may be deemed objectionable to a section of the clergy who are, herein, too commonly unwilling to do their own proper duty or to induce like-minded parents in their congregations to do theirs. In this



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