

out any reference to teaching by the Churches. The Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Anglicans, and some others of the Christian bodies had attained a large measure of unanimity on the question. Since then, however, there has been a growing feeling that the portion of the New South Wales system which we were not asking for is too important to leave out, namely, the opportunity provided under which Ministers of religion can claim to teach the children of their own churches during school hours. If, then, this feeling should become general,

WHAT WE SHOULD ASK FOR NOW

is the New South Wales system in both its great principles. In the pamphlet I wrote nine years ago, I advocated only the partial adoption of the New South Wales system. I have since become convinced that we should do much better to adopt both its great principles—lessons by the teachers and lessons by the Churches—which would be equivalent to adopting the system as a whole. In our adopting anything as a whole which is giving general satisfaction elsewhere, we can reasonably hope for a like result here; whereas it might be otherwise if our adoption were only a partial one. The fact, moreover, that three out of five of the other States of the Commonwealth, namely, West Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland, as well as the Community of Norfolk Island, have adopted the system as a whole, should have some weight with us in New Zealand. Then, again, is not the thought of

AN AUSTRALASIAN SCHEME

of religious instruction in the schools a fine ideal to keep before us? New Zealand loves to do great things, and it is well nigh already in the power of New Zealand to make this ideal a reality. And it is only New Zealand that could do it. All the other States together could only make the scheme Australian, but New Zealand can make it Australasian, if she will. There would, moreover, be a special fitness in all the Australasian Dominions following the lead for good of the oldest State in Australia. In this connection it is worthy of note also that

PUBLIC OPINION IN VICTORIA

is rapidly tending in the same direction. The following is from an Australian newspaper:—"As illustrating

a growth of public opinion for a uniform system of religious instruction, Victoria as well as Queensland is now agitating in this direction. In Victoria the Churches have in like manner to Queensland agreed upon the same system for introduction there; and in a deputation to the Victorian Minister of Education representing their views, received a reply from him to the effect that he could not see that what worked well in other places in Australia should not work equally well in Victoria, and that he would submit it to the Cabinet for consideration." But

IS NEW ZEALAND READY FOR THE CHANGE?

Or, rather, are the people of New Zealand quite ready for a vote on the New South Wales system? It must be admitted they are not. The New South Wales system as a whole has not yet received the formal approval of the Supreme Governing Body, neither of the Presbyterian Church or of the Methodist, both of which bodies had supported the effort of nine years ago. Nor has any other Christian body that I am aware of, except the Anglican, yet formally declared itself. * This being so, we must be content for the present to bend all our efforts towards attaining unity amongst ourselves. And can we not unite for so great a gain? Christianity and religion and the Bible are now virtually shut out of the schools, and a great proportion of the population are growing up without them, and the next generation cannot help being pagans unless we unite to come to their help. How different things might be under the changed condition. Let me quote again from an Australian paper the experience of a teacher in one of the States.

AN AUSTRALIAN PICTURE.

"I have had 27 years' experience in our State schools. At my present school nearly 200 children attend of all denominations. Teachers have no difficulty in giving their Bible lessons. No friction between teachers and clergymen visiting occurs. We like and value their visits. They are beneficial in all respects. Instead of causing sectarian strife they rather tend to break down sectarianism. The

whole system is admirable, and in my opinion the best solution yet devised of a difficult question. I have Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist clergymen visit my school and take their own children. There is never the slightest objectionable consequence. Such is simple fact of my long experience. Certainly it tends to raise the standard of the morals and conduct in and out of our schools."

LET ME SUM UP THE POSITION.

I have endeavoured to show in this pamphlet that a knowledge of the Bible is of supreme importance to the people generally, that the State virtually destroyed the machinery which at one time existed for Bible teaching in the schools and has since put nothing in its place, that a vast number of the children of the Dominion are growing up without any adequate knowledge of the Bible, that the only sure way to provide that all shall have an opportunity of knowing the Bible is to restore it to the schools, that there would be great gain in having a Bible foundation laid by the school teachers in every school in the land, that an opportunity to follow up this teaching during school hours should be given to clergy and Churches wherever it could be used; and that moreover there is no difficulty, for the like is being done in many parts of Australasia, and has been done without opposition or offence for over forty years in New South Wales.

ALL THAT IS NEEDED NOW

is for the friends of Bible teaching in New Zealand to unite and work for the same thing. I would conclude with an appeal for such agreement. I would appeal to all the Christian people of the Dominion—to the presiding members of the various Christian bodies and all other ministers of the same in the first instance; but also to every elector of the Dominion who may read this statement of the case for Bible teaching in the schools, to every man and every woman who loves God, his neighbour and his country—to take their individual parts in this great movement for God's glory and His people's good.

LET US SINK MINOR DIFFERENCES

for the common welfare and agree to ask for this well-tried system. Let us pray for success and work for success, and success will crown our efforts. Let us form a new Referendum

* This was written before the pronouncements of the Presbyterian General Assembly and Wesleyan Synod in favour of the adoption of the New South Wales' system.—Ed.]