

32. The Bishop has drawn a picture of the unfortunate teacher with six or seven children falling before his spiritual director and being given a certain choice; but is the Bishop aware that teachers do not enter the service with six or seven children? The usual rule is to enter in youth!—I am more and more puzzled with the attitude of Canon Garland upon this matter. What is he driving at? Is he defending this sort of law which will compel people either to keep out of the Public Service or to violate their conscience? Is he defending a law which practically scores up “No Popery” over every school in the country, or “Papists not wanted here”? Is he defending that? If he is, let him speak out and say so. Or is he defending what St. Paul declares to be a grievous sin—that is, for a man to do that which he knows to be morally wrong? Is he defending that? He asks, Why do Catholic teachers enter the Public Service? Why did Captain Scott and his companions go to the South Pole? Why do men go into all sorts of hazardous undertakings—exploring, facing peril of wild beasts, and so on? Why are the volunteer soldiers of England ready to go far away and expose their lives for 4d. a day? The fact is just as I have stated, that if you hold out a bribe to men to be unfaithful to principle and conscience you will find plenty of men and plenty of women who will accept the bribe and compound with their conscience as best they can. The greater number, so far as I understand, of those Catholic teachers who go into the State schools in New South Wales are young girls, and it is in the heart of all such young girls that after a year or two they will be living in a cottage with roses around the windows. It is love’s young dream. Very few of these probably expect that the time will come when they will have to decide between conscience and cash. They hope that, being merely assistant teachers and so on, they will be able to escape this hated duty of teaching an emasculated caricature of the Bible which the League wants. They hope also that if the time comes when they must teach they will be able to compound with their conscience, either by giving a silent lesson or by giving a perfunctory lesson or some other lesson, but always compounding with conscience; or they hope to escape, as the man who goes into battle hopes to escape; or if they come to the direct peril they hope to get around it and not face it squarely.

33. Will the Bishop tell me if he has ever heard of a Roman Catholic Archbishop saying that he saw no objection to the Roman Catholic teachers giving these lessons without implying that Archbishop’s approval?—Will the Rev. Canon be good enough to quote the exact words of that Roman Catholic Bishop and give me the reference to them?

34. I cannot quote his exact words, but I believe that Archbishop Duhig, of Brisbane, when the system was introduced there, while protesting against it, gave something in the nature of a formal permission to Roman Catholic teachers to give these lessons to show that he accepted the situation, but not because he thereby approved of it?—I will only say that any Catholic Bishop dispensing a Catholic teacher to teach so-called unsectarian religious lessons would consciously or unconsciously display a double mind.

35. He is too good a man to do that?—And, being a good man, then he presumably did not do just that which I believe he would be incapable of doing. I had some time ago a communication from Archbishop Duhig, and I know that he was one of the few men who put up a determined fight against this scheme, which was carried in Queensland, not by a 75 per cent. majority of votes, but by about 26 per cent. of the voters. I know that he is still a determined opponent of it, and I know that the position of Catholic truths, and Catholic rights, and Catholic principles, and Catholic laws bearing upon so-called “unsectarian” religion remains even if a whole episcopate were to fail herein. I know that it is not in the power of any Bishop to set aside these laws of his Church; it is not in the power of any Bishop to give a dispensation to any man to teach this wretched “unsectarian” religion. It is not in the power of any Bishop in the Church to give such permission, and any such permission given is void and of no effect. There is a higher power in the Church—a higher power than a whole bench of Bishops. The higher power resides elsewhere, and our principles hereon are the same all the world over. We believe that God does not go backward in revealing himself but rather goes forward, and that the true faith is not to be discovered by hacking, and cutting, and flinging out of the Bible points upon which this or that or the other denomination are not agreed. We accept the whole Bible, and not this sectarian “unsectarian” compromise on it. I personally do not believe that Archbishop Duhig gave this permission, and before night falls I shall probably have a communication from him.

36. The Bishop spoke of the Roman Catholic clergy in New South Wales paying something like nine hundred visits last year, or in some recent year, and taking children out to neighbouring houses. May I ask him if he considers that our League is doing an unjust act towards his Church in obtaining a privilege which would allow nine hundred visits to be paid by his clergy to take the children out of school to give them their own religious instruction?—When I spoke of the injustice of the League’s scheme I left entirely out of consideration this question of right of entry. At the same time I pointed out in my principal evidence here that this right of entry does not give, as alleged by the League, “equal opportunities to all.” It gives a marked advantage to the creeds that have most money and most men.

37. I was only asking if we were doing an injustice to the Roman Catholic Church in New Zealand by seeking to obtain for it, in common with others, a privilege by which it could go nine hundred times to the State schools and take its own children out for religious instruction?—In dealing with the question of injustice I did not touch at all upon that, except as showing that it does not give equal opportunities. I did not at any time, and I do not now, say that that is an injustice. Much less did I say what was attributed to me by Canon Garland in a League leaflet that I regarded this right of entry in New South Wales as a revival of the penal code. That was Canon Garland’s statement, not mine.