

work of Frederic Ozanam (C.T.S. of Ireland), price 1d; and from the Australian Catholic Truth Society the following publications:—*The Church*, by the Rev. Dr. Keane, O.P.; *The Vision of Peace*, by Rev. M. Forrest, M.S.H.; *On Ghosts in General*, or the necessity for refuting calumnies, by the Rev. P. C. Yorke, D.D.; *Spiritualism and Christianity*, by Rev. P. J. Manly, and *Adventures in Papua With the Catholic Mission*, by Beatrice Grimshaw, which we propose to reproduce in full in the *N.Z. Tablet*.

DEAN FITCHETT'S 'REPLY' TO BISHOP CLEARY

The following letter from his Lordship Bishop Cleary appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of August 4:—

'Sir,—In its membership card and elsewhere the Bible-in-Schools League officially demands "the system of religious instruction in State schools prevailing in Australia." The first part of that "system of religious instruction" is officially "described" by the League as non-denominational lessons "from Scripture books provided by the Education Department." Under this "system" the Government devises and establishes an "unsectarian" State religion to suit some sects only, and coerces conscientiously-objecting State officials to impart it, and conscientiously-objecting taxpayers to endow it. In these days of disestablishment, even Dean Fitchett condemns a Government-taught religion.

'1. New South Wales, West Australian, and Queensland laws (quoted by me) expressly state that the Government (through the teachers) shall impart (non-denominational) "religious instruction" and "general religious teaching." Dean Fitchett privately interprets this to mean that the Government shall not impart "religious instruction" or "general religious teaching" of any kind whatsoever. He is flatly contradicted by the provisions of the law; by the departmental regulations, syllabuses, reports, and circulars; and a hundred times or more by Ministers, inspectors, State teachers, and leaguers in some eight official League publications. Against this mass of testimony (already cited in your columns) the worthy Dean advances only his own unsupported private gloss or interpretation, making lawmakers, departmental officials, and the League enter into a conspiracy to mean "non-religious teaching" wherever they say "religious teaching."

'The Dean declares (2) that, under the "Australian" system demanded by the League, the Government gives what it terms "moral instruction" or "moral teaching" as a Government subject; but (3) that this "moral teaching" rigidly excludes, in law and fact, all "religion," "religious instruction," "religious teaching," or religious doctrine. Statement (2) is true; statement (3) is ludicrously against fact. Under the 'Australian system,' demanded by the League, the Government imparts (a) "moral teaching," "moral instruction and hygiene," etc., on a purely secular and non-religious basis; also (b) "moral instruction" and "moral lessons," grounded upon mutilated Biblical religious doctrines and principles, as part and parcel of the Government "religious instruction" and "general religious teaching." The Government treats these two kinds of "moralities" as distinct subjects. The Dean has (doubtless in good faith) confounded them.

'2. The Government non-religious "moral instruction" deals with "good conduct," "good manners," temperance and health. Regulation 33 under the New South Wales Act has, for this non-religious moral teaching, provisions distinct from those for the Government Biblical lessons. The report of the Western Australian Education Department for 1911 (page 59) makes a sharp distinction between this "moral instruction" and "Scripture." The Western Australian Ministerial Education Circular for January, 1913 (pages 314-315), also emphasises the distinction when it says that "moral instruction is not to be confined to the Scripture lessons only," and that the Biblical lessons are "sacred," containing specified doc-

trines and duties concerning God. (Examples of non-religious "moral instruction" are given on p. 315). The preface to the syllabus under the Queensland Act states that, "in teaching morals, the instruction must be wholly secular"; while the official margin of section 22a, the regulations, and schedule XVIII., describe the Government Biblical lessons as "religious instruction." This non-religious "moral instruction" in conduct, manners, and health is, then, something distinct from the Biblical lessons; it is based upon purely natural and this-worldly motives, such as self-interest, vague humanitarian or social sentiment, or the fear of the policeman. Such motives are also utilised in Catholic schools. They help, no doubt, in some measure, but are not accepted by Christians as adequate bases of moral conduct.

'3. There is absolutely no foundation for the following assertions:—(a) That the "Australian" law binds Government to limit the Scripture lessons to "moral teaching," and (b) that this "moral teaching" must utterly exclude religious teaching or application. Here again we require something vastly more cogent than the Dean's desperate private interpretation to prove that law makers, departmental officials, inspectors, teachers, and the league have conspired to mean "non-religious instruction" whenever they say "religious instruction."

'The "Australian" Government religious manuals or syllabuses are (as shown by me) mere "emasculated caricatures" of the Bible. But they teach children—substantially as the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist catechisms do—(a) sundry things "to believe concerning God," and (b) "duty" towards God. These are the "two parts" of "our whole duty to God" which the Methodist second catechism defines as "religion." These Government religious manuals also emphasise "duty to God" by sundry biographical and historical examples and warnings. God, for instance, is presented doctrinally in the "Australian" Government religion as creator, revealer, lawgiver (Ten Commandments, etc.), conversing with men, appeased by prayer, performing miracles. Queensland (like our so-called "Bible" organisation of 1904) flings aside the Virgin-Birth and makes Christ a sort of super-man. All the Bible-in-Schools Governments present Christ doctrinally as having wrought miracles, instituted a commemorative supper, founded a boiled-down compromise styled "unsectarian" Christianity, died, risen again, and ascended into heaven. On such expressed or implied religious "beliefs concerning God" Government builds up religious "duties" towards God. Among these are praise, prayer, worship (in sectarian forms), including a sectarian version of the "Lord's Prayer." Even this maimed and unhistorical Christianity is as much "religion" and "religious teaching"—of its kind—as if imparted in church or Sunday school. It is correctly described as "religious teaching" in the already cited laws and departmental and League publications. The New South Wales Scripture lessons are described in the preface as moral and "religious instruction"; the official League pamphlet, *Notes on the Australian System*, gives numerous examples of doctrinal and moral "religious instruction given by the teachers"; and an official League leaflet (by the Bishop of Waiapu) dogmatically declares that the Government Scripture lessons have "inspiration" and are part of "the record of God's revelation to man."

'Will Dean Fitchett now abandon a League which makes Government invent, teach, and endow a sectional religion, with each succeeding Prime Minister its Supreme Head or Grand Panjandrum? And all this to accommodate groups of clergymen and parents who have neglected their God-ordained duties.

'I ask leave to deal briefly in another letter with two strange statements of the Verv Rev. Dean and with his letter on the Irish proselytising conscience clause.—I am, etc.,

* HENRY W. CLEARY, D.D.,

Bishop of Auckland.

'July 29.'

When shopping with our advertisers, say 'I saw your advertisement in the Tablet.'

R. V. C. Harris

SURGEON DENTIST

Moderate Charges.

Painless Extractions.

PHONE 486.

HASTINGS STREET, NAPIER.