

More "Success."

9. There is, unhappily, abundant evidence of another kind having reference to the alleged "success" of the New South Wales system which in substance is embodied in the "referendum" Bill. We have there the same dire clamour of League-denomination voices as here lamenting the widespread decay of vital religion among the people trained in the oldest League-type schools. Let a few brief samples of the available evidence hereon suffice for the present: (a.) A New South Wales Presbyterian clergyman (Rev. David J. Albert) declares in a letter to the *Outlook* (Dunedin) of the 28th October, 1913, that in New South Wales the Bible "has been cast out of the modern home." (b.) The *Auckland Star* of the 1st November, 1913, reports in part as follows a sermon by Canon Bathurst in the Anglican Cathedral, Bathurst, New South Wales: "He" (Canon Bathurst) "added that, after making the fullest possible allowance, the fact remained that the bulk of their people, who could with perfect ease or a little self-sacrifice get to church, simply did not do so. They had no time for religion. The census showed that an average of only two-thirds of a person in every Anglican household attended church. It was his deep-rooted conviction that the seat of the cancer which was to-day eating the root of all Christian zeal and effort was to be found in the homes of the people, in their so-called Christian life."

10. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of the 6th May, 1914, reports a deputation to the New South Wales Minister of Public Instruction, Mr. Carmichael. The deputation was introduced by Archdeacon Irvine (Anglican). According to the *Morning Herald* report he said that, "as citizens of New South Wales, the members of the committee saw the danger of the country becoming to a large extent materialistic. A headmaster of a certain school had told him that he had frequently received letters from parents telling him they did not desire that their boys should be taught anything that would not pay, and that subjects that would do nothing more than mould the boys' characters did not matter at all." The following further "proof" of the "success" of the New South Wales system is taken from a sermon recently preached in the Anglican Cathedral, Sydney, by the Rev. G. A. Chambers, M.A. (Rector of Dulwich and Warden of Trinity Grammar School), quoted in the *Catholic Press* of the 23rd July, 1914: "The teachers," he said, "are neglecting to impart Scripture knowledge, or allowing it to be crowded out altogether." He quotes "the testimony of a first-class teacher of twenty years standing, who declares that the system in actual practice is worked in such a way that it means the lowering of national ideals, the serious diminution of Church membership in the future, with a consequent slackening of moral fibre in the whole community." "Already," says the Rev. G. Chambers, "we are beginning to notice the effect of the past thirty-four years under the present system of State education. The sanctions of religion are losing their hold over the people generally. Agnosticism and practical atheism are increasing, and men and women are becoming more and more indifferent to claims of Christ and the Church. Our boys are drifting from the Church. . . . An enormous reduction of Church members threaten us in the future by our present system of State education, with its inadequate facilities for religious instruction and its tendency to blot out religion altogether. The Church is face to face with the prospect of being a very small body in the future by its apathy in the matter of education, and by its failure to perceive that the future life of the Church depends on the children being efficiently taught the principles of the Christian faith." Is this any wonder after nearly fifty years of persistent "mutilating," "emasculating," and "caricaturing" of the Word of God—after nearly fifty years' training of youth under legislation which has been teaching them that religion and conscience are mere straws to be blown about by the gusty winds of election day?

11. These are mere samples of the testimony which, on demand, I am prepared to lay before your Committee as to the failure of the State religion in New South Wales. I offer just one consideration more. For over a quarter of a century I have interested myself in the manifestation of a curious phase of human folly—namely, that of organized political and politico-religious fanaticism. During nearly all that period I have perused the journals devoted to those strange movements in various parts of Australasia. For size, output, and unredeemed ferocity those of New South Wales easily take the palm in these southern lands. I do not assert that the education system there has either created or intensified this lamentable condition of things, but I want to know what it has done to mitigate it. And in every case we, who have hitherto been so happily free from the venom of sectarian rancour in our social and political life, would do well to take warning from New South Wales. We would likewise take warning from the deplorable efforts made during the past two years to foment sectarian distrust among fellow-citizens here. Above all, Parliament should give short shrift to a measure which would rend the population of this Dominion into opposing interests along lines of cleavage in religious belief. That way lies ruin. I speak now as a citizen that loves his adopted land as he loves that which gave him birth.

TUESDAY, 4TH AUGUST, 1914.

Right Rev. Bishop CLEARY examined. (No. 2.)

1. *Canon Garland.*] Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask if the Bishop would be good enough to state the outlines of the method by which Roman Catholics would joyfully aid their Protestant fellow-citizens to secure biblical and religious instruction for their children in the public schools? —Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that I have already indicated the lines on which we would be prepared to meet other parties interested in conference on this matter of the introduction of religious instruction into the State schools. Over and over again I have, as I said in my evidence, in the Press and upon the platform intimated the willingness of the Catholic leaders to meet all other interested parties in conference upon this subject, with only one proviso, the