

superintendent, Mr. John Caughley; such as men of such outstanding distinction in the Presbyterian Church as are Rev. Professor Hewitson, Rev. Dr. Erwin, ex-moderator Rev. A. Cameron, and large bodies of conscientious clergy and laity of various other faiths. The object of all this is quite clear: to lead League petitioners and members of your honourable House to think that this is a battle between the powers of darkness and the powers of light; between the Bible and the enemies of the Bible; between God and the enemies of God. That is one of the ways in which Christian men and women have been maligned, and earnest and trusting electors misled, by the exponents and organs of the League, into the support of a cause which they do not know.

5. In the campaign for this Bill the great demand was for "the Bible"—not for mere cuttings from the Bible. Indeed, in at least one official League publication, the term "open Bible" is used in this connection. On the other hand, Rev. Isaac Jolly (a member of the League executive) declared the whole Bible unfitted for children (*Ohinemuri Gazette*, 13th August, 1913), and the Rev. Mr. Clarkson (official League lecturer) said that it would be "insane" to put it unrestrictedly into the hands of children (*Poverty Bay Herald*, 5th June, 1913); and Bishop Averill (in an official League leaflet), and other League leaflets, demand not "the Bible," nor the "open Bible," nor "Scripture books," but mere extracts from the Bible or from Scripture books. And in a letter in the *Otago Daily Times* of the 24th May, 1913, Bishop Averill (a member of the League executive) seems willing (so long as he secures clerical right of entry) to accept from the Government even the sort of mutilated Bible lessons which he denounced in the *Christchurch Press* of the 2nd May, 1904, as an "emasculated caricature" of Scripture teaching.

6. Amidst all this discord of voices—"the Bible," "the open Bible," Bible extracts, and "emasculated caricatures" of the Bible—how is the bewildered League petitioner to know what precisely is meant (and how much Bible, or how little, or from what source) by the term "Scripture books"? Now, when the petitions have been signed, we learn (from the Referendum Bill) that the League wants not "the Bible," or "the open Bible," or "Scripture books," but only selected lessons or extracts from the Bible. But even these selections are to be kept from the public eye until the public have voted blindly upon them—unseen.

7. Two things are now luminously clear: (a.) The talk about "the Bible," the "open Bible," the "battle for the Bible," &c., was a mere party catch word, the sacred name of the sacred book being misused in this gravely misleading way for the purposes of a political campaign. "The Bible" was really at no time intended by the League to be used as a text-book in the public schools. (b.) For the same political campaign purpose the Nelson Presbytery, great numbers of God-loving Protestants, clergy and people, the whole Catholic body, Jews, &c., were held up by the League to public odium as "atheists" and enemies of God and His revealed Word.

An "Emasculated Caricature."

8. What sort of selected Scripture lessons would the Government of New Zealand be likely to provide in the event of the proposed educational changes becoming law? We can best surmise this from the uniform experience of the Australian Government Bible-extract States. In the following points all the Australian syllabuses and manuals of biblical extracts agree: (a) They are taken wholly, or almost wholly, from a sectarian version of the Bible (the Protestant Authorized Version); (b) they garble and mutilate the sacred text, flinging aside everything unacceptable to the League denominations—even the Virgin-birth of Christ being thus cast out in Queensland; and (c) they suppress the great body of narratives, texts, and incidents to which Catholics appeal in support of their religious faith and practice. By this process of mutilation, and by the introduction of sermon-headings and of prayer and praise in sectarian forms, the Australian lessons are made as sectarian as the Thirty-nine Articles or the Presbyterian Confession of faith. We might apply to each and any one of them the words that three prominent Leaguers applied to the League lessons of 1904. Rev. P. B. Fraser described them as "a garbled mutilation of the Scriptures and its teaching"; "a hash-up of the Bible"; "rip-and-tear theology"; "the only place for the text-book was the fire" (*Evening Star*, Dunedin, 2nd September, 1905; *Otago Daily Times*, 28th August and 2nd September, 1905). Archdeacon (now Bishop) Averill, a member of the League executive, said it was "an emasculated caricature" of Bible teaching (*Press*, 2nd May, 1904); and the Anglican Primate (now president of the League) described it as "making reflections upon the Almighty by rejecting parts of His teachings. A committee for the human improvement of the Bible," he added, "seems to me to be a rather improper thing for a clergyman to take part in" (*Otago Daily Times*, 25th August, 1905). And he subjoined this wholesome truth, which applies with equal force to the scheme over which he now presides: "This scheme does not seem to me to lay the duty of the religious instruction upon the right shoulders. . . . I do think that the discharge of this duty rests upon ministers of religion." So, after all, the campaign, issuing in this Bill, resolves itself into a campaign to "mutilate," "caricature," "emasculate," and dishonour God's Holy Word! How many signatures would the League have got for its petition if these facts had been frankly placed before the public?

IX. "SUPERVISING": WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The League's petition-card and the ballot-paper in the Bill state that the teacher shall "supervise" the Scripture lessons. "Supervise," as applied to teaching, has several different positive meanings. It includes every varied sort of oversight, from the mere silent hearing of an appointed lesson up to the highest reach of skilled pedagogical exposition. Parliament and the public are not informed as to which positive meaning is intended, and the elector is left to guess-work and confusion.

X. "SECTARIAN" TEACHING.

1. The League's card, and its reflex in the ballot-paper of the present Bill, forbids the teacher to give "sectarian" instruction. The League card, in addition, forbade "dogmatic" instruction