

able and representative committee the following passage occurs: 'There is general agreement among experienced teachers that direct moral instruction, when given at the right time and in the right way, is a valuable element in moral education.' These utterances, as might be expected, do not go so far as Catholic principles and the Catholic position necessarily carry us, but they are all in the right direction, and they go to show that, at bottom, teachers have little love for the hard secularism which is made such a fetish of in our New Zealand system.

## THE SECULAR PHASE OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

### A DISCUSSION

(By the Editor of the *New Zealand Tablet*.)

The following article on the above subject—the eighth of the series—appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of February 27:—

#### VIII.—'WHO FIRED DOWN THE FLAG OF RELIGION IN OUR SCHOOLS?' PART I: BISHOP MORAN AND THE OTAGO PROVINCIAL SYSTEM.

Anonymous accusation has its temptations, its perils, and at times its penalties. Its besetting temptation was described by Cardinal Manning when he said that it is extremely difficult for a man to avoid saying behind a mask what he would not say with open face. This is, I believe, true in regard to the anonymous author ('R.W.') of the bitter articles on 'The Religious Difficulty in Education,' which have stung and nagged through several issues of the *Otago Daily Times*. Sundry circumstances (including the indiscretion of his friends) have revealed his identity to many, and in a short space the pen-name 'R.W.' will be little better than a bit of journalistic make-believe. I may state that these initials ('R.W.') do not, as some suppose, here stand for the name of a well-known Dunedin City (South Ward) pastor, whose cultivated graces of mind and heart have won him the warm esteem of people of every creed in this community.

The sub-heading of the first of 'R.W.'s' articles ran thus: 'Who Fired Down the Flag of Religion in our Schools?' It recalls the mock queries of Dean Swift, which included the following: 'Who fills the butchers' shops with large blue flies?' The answer was, 'The Papists, of course.' This, too, is the answer given to his own question by the man in the 'domino noir.' His accusation resolves itself into two heads. The first refers to the Provincial District and Government of Otago; the second to the passing of what is called our national system of 'free, secular, and compulsory' public instruction. Each of these will require a separate article.

Catholics, we are told (February 2), 'declared war against' the flag of Christ on the Otago schools; 'they fired at it time and again; they made persistent attempts to drag it down.' Who was the leader in the act of war against the "flag of Christ flying upon the schools" in Otago in those old provincial days? . . . The leader in this war was the late Rev. Patrick Moran, D.D., Roman Catholic Bishop of Dunedin. Let us consider (1) the nature of these accusations and their inherent probability or improbability; (2) the evidence (if any) tendered in support of them; and (3) how far such evidence squares with the actual facts of the case.

1. 'Firing at,' committing an 'act of war,' and so on, against Christ in the schools of Otago—all these expressions necessarily imply knowing, deliberate, formal attacks, having for their direct and immediate purpose the banishment of Christ and Christian teaching from the Otago schools, and (as the context further shows) the secularising of the system of education in these same schools. If true, these accusations would reveal riddles of human inconsistency compared with which the Aelia Laelia Crispis is as plain as poster print. (a) It represents Catholics as carrying on a bitter campaign for the direct purpose of excluding religion from the schools. (b) Next, in point of actual fact, we find these same Catholics protesting in the same breath, and evermore protesting, against the exclusion of religion from the schools—nay, even practically advocating, on conditions, the turning of the public schools into something like Protestant Sunday schools. (c) We find these same Catholics carrying their protest to such extremes that they refuse (unless where forced by circumstances) to send their children to schools from which religion is excluded. And, finally (d) we find these very same Catholics crowning this protest by creating, at enormous and continual sacrifices, a great rival system of education, having Christ as its very life and soul and inspiration. The whole religious history of New Zealand presents

no such impressive example of zeal and self-sacrifice. All this throws an air of wild *a-priori* improbability about the anonymous tale. Only evidence of supreme cogency would justify its acceptance.

2. What evidence has been tendered in support of this extraordinary tale. Not a rag, scrap, or atom—merely the bare assertion of a man in cloak and mask. Of this, more anon. Here, for the sake of clearness, let me explain that New Zealand became a self-governing colony in 1852. Each Province had its separate Legislature and the control of education within its borders. Most of the Provinces subsidised denominational schools. Otago did not, but the reading of the Bible was (with a sort of conscience clause) made obligatory in the public schools by the Education Ordinance of 1864. The Provincial Councils were abolished by the Acts of 1875-6, and one of the early measures of the centralised New Zealand Government was to abolish aid to denominational schools and to introduce the system known as 'free, secular, and compulsory.'

Here is 'R.W.'s' substitute for evidence regarding the Catholic war upon Christ in the schools of Otago (in which the Protestant version of the Bible was daily taught):—'In public speech and by petition to the Provincial Council he (Bishop Moran) attacked the system. He objected to the "appointments of teachers," to the "school books used," and to the "religious instruction" authorised. The system thus, according to Dr. Moran, had hardly one redeeming feature. The Provincial Council met Dr. Moran's attack. A Select Committee was appointed, with Mr. E. B. Cargill as chairman, to consider the bishop's charges. In July, 1871, that committee presented its report to the council, and upheld the national system as satisfactory, and declared against the denominationalism demanded by the respected Bishop of the Church of Rome. The story of these attacks on the "flag of Christ" flying upon our Otago schools is fully and fairly told by the Rev. C. S. Ross in his book, *Education and Educationists in Otago*, published in Dunedin in 1890.'

That is all the 'evidence' adduced so far as the Otago provincial system is concerned. The reader is requested to note the following points:—(a) There is nothing in all the adduced 'evidence' that even charges Bishop Moran with carrying on a campaign to secularise the schools of Otago and drive Christ and religion therefrom. (b) Not a scrap of evidence is tendered in support of such a charge. (c) The reader is, instead, assured—on the unerring word of a masked accuser—that proof of the charges against Bishop Moran is set forth 'fully and fairly' in the Rev. Mr. Ross's book—no other witness is named. But that proof is not given by 'R.W.' This is, in all reason, a very mysterious circumstance. There is another still more mysterious: The Rev. Mr. Ross's little book, to which the reader is thus gaily referred for proof, has been long out of print; only a limited number of copies of it were printed; and it is not to be found in any public library in Dunedin. The present writer succeeded, with the greatest difficulty, in securing possession of a second-hand copy. Then the mystery of 'R.W.'s' reticence was cleared. *His reference is a bogus one.* The Rev. Mr. Ross's book does not make, or even hint, against Bishop Moran the accusation of which it is credited with containing—the 'fully and fairly-told' evidence. It will become my very painful duty to expose, in another article, other tricks and ruses of reference and quotation that are even more unworthy of 'R.W.'s' calling. Meantime, let it suffice to say that the Rev. Mr. Ross's only account of Bishop Moran's conflict with the Otago provincial system is contained on pp. 22-24 of his *Education and Educationists in Otago*. And one thing more: I hereby offer a reward to the literary insight of 'R.W.' if, by himself or by his representative, he shows that any part of the Rev. C. S. Ross's book, *Education and Educationists in Otago*, either makes or proves the charge (as stated above) that Bishop Moran led a campaign to secularise the provincial school system of Otago and drive therefrom Christ and Christian teaching; the matter to be decided by a jury of experts in evidence to be jointly chosen by us.

3. The grievances of Catholics against the Otago provincial system of education are to be found in the provincial Blue Books, entitled—*The Province of Otago, New Zealand: Votes and Proceedings of the Provincial Council* (Session XXIX., 1871. Dunedin, 1871, pp. 49, 98, 110, 124), and in *Appendix to Votes and Proceedings* (Session XXIX., 1871, pp. 79-108). The appendix contains, among other things, 'Report of the Proceedings of the Select Committee on the Petitions of Roman Catholic Inhabitants of the Province,' July 13, 1871 (pp. 79-81). Included therein are the 'Petition of the Roman Catholic Inhabitants of Otago,' June 22, 1871, and a list of nine other petitions 'of the same purport and to the same effect' (p. 81): 'Minutes' (pp. 82-3); 'Evidence' (pp. 83-6); 'Answers to Questions forwarded to certain of the Petitioners' (pp. 86-8); and 'Answers to Questions forwarded to

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