

sacred,' to 'things relating to temporal as distinguished from eternal interests.' (I quote from the voluminous 'Encyclopaedic Dictionary' and from 'Webster's International Dictionary').

Now, our Christian civilisation is based upon the bed-rock of faith in God and His revealed truth. We do not, indeed, always consciously act from direct and specific motives known to us by faith. But such motives are never consciously excluded and antagonised, unless when we sin. Christian views of life, Christian principles and ideals, dominate our civilisation; they enter into our legislation; they touch and penetrate our lives at ten thousand different points—in fact there is no part or phase of our lives, social or commercial or otherwise, which has not a relation with them. In the Railway and Postal and Prison and other Public Departments superiors may (if they choose) appeal to the religious beliefs and instincts of refractory cadets. God is nowhere excluded by Act of Parliament, from public or private life—except from the schools. These are lowered clean away out of our Christian civilisation. Inside the school and its working hours, (1) there is no God; (2) there is no moral responsibility to God; (3) there is no undying soul and no future life; (4) there is nothing but facts and interests and pursuits 'pertaining to the present world.' These are the only views of life, these the only ideals, which a legislature 'friendly' to religion permits to be set before youth in our public schools. Christ said: 'Suffer little children to come to Me, and forbid them not.' The 'friendly' forbid Him to come to the 'little ones' in the school. They 'sterilise' the system against His teaching and influence; and if He enters during its working hours, He does so, like a burglar, or an 'undesirable alien,' or a bubonic rat.

'Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me down stairs?'

This State philosophy, this public school creed, represents one well defined form of atheism—the negative form—forced upon the pupils by positive legislative enactment. The personal beliefs of the framers of our secular system are no concern of mine or yours. Neither you nor I are under any obligation to suppose that politicians act at all times consistently with their inward views of life and duty; and events of not infrequent occurrence in the legal world prove that they at times fail to realise the drift and import and true content of measures which they place upon the statute book. In the circumstances, even the intelligent 'plain man' may well be excused if he, in considerable numbers, failed to grasp the logical foundation, the true inwardness, the real trend and effect of the exclusion of religion from the public schools. I am in no way concerned here with the intimate beliefs of legislators, but wholly and solely with the principles contained and implied in the system which they have forced upon the schools, and for which I am compelled to pay.

The fundamental principles of our secular system are not one whit altered by the fact that our legislators did not—as did those of France and Victoria—perpetrate the stupid and inartistic literary fraud of obliterating the name of God from the text-books used in the schools. Those precious wisecracks did not know that the printed letters 'G. O. D.' are only a symbol. A word is one thing. An idea is quite another thing. And God is not a mere word or symbol. Our legislation has not defined or expounded the thought or idea that it attaches to the word or symbol 'God.' On the contrary, it has rendered illegal all such definition or teaching or exposition in the schools. Our secular system has no God. So far as it is concerned the printed term or symbol 'God' may mean a Baal, or Mumbo-jumbo, a Something-in-general and Nothing-in-particular, or the empty fiction of atheistic philosophy, as M. Ferrouillat declared (February 4, 1886) it meant to him and his friends before it was blotted out of the text-books of the 'neutral' and 'impartial' schools of France. Our State school creed is in law and fact, what the French system is likewise in law and fact and (as I can show) in the admission of its highest officials: *sans Dieu*—that is, Godless.

Such is the system which its Christian supporters (with whom alone I am at present dealing) have to justify—if they can. You, or they, can defend it only in one way—by an appeal to, and justification of, nothing less than the principles, ideals, and views of life which are implied or involved in it. To this I have challenged you. You have declined my challenge—wisely, perhaps; for a defence of such principles is a particularly ugly proposition for a professing believer in God and revealed religion. Once more, I ask you: 'Do you object to religion in the State-subsidised system on some principle of life-philosophy or of child-training (pedagogy)?' You may possibly plead that religion has no rightful place, or at least no necessary place, in school life. (a). If so, on what particular principles do you base such a plea? (b). Do these principles also require the banishment of religion from the upbringing of children in the home? . . . If they do not, on what principles of life-philosophy or of education do you favor religion as a factor in the home-training of the child, and condemn religion in his school-training? Why subject youth to opposite influences in the home and in the school? And if you black-ball religion in the school on what principle do you retain it in any relation of life?

The burden of proof is upon you. It is now high time for you to set forth the groundwork principles on which you are to build up your defence of the exclusion of religion from the schools. When you do so, you will at once—out of your own mouth, and from your own presumably Christian standpoint—determine practically the whole controversy between us. You will answer, among others, the following questions:—

1. Is the banishment of God and religion from the schools an act 'friendly' or 'neutral' or 'impartial' to God and religion. You are not entitled to assume all this; you must prove it. On the face of it the system is the very reverse of neutral. And I happen to have followed the supporters of the same system in France from clamorous protestations of 'friendliness,' 'neutrality,' 'impartiality,' and 'respect for religious beliefs,' down through their various steps to the logical issue of the system in aggressive atheism. It is a terrible story, with, at times, a luridly blasphemous documentation. But it needs to be told.

2. Is our secular system 'dogmatic,' 'sectarian,' and 'denominational' I hold that it is, on the face of it, and if you have the courage to accept my challenge, you yourself will furnish the further justification of my belief.

3. Your statement of principles will likewise answer the questions: Are Catholics and others justified in the opposition to the secular system? Is the Catholic claim in education based on justice?

And now for a protest: Why do you persistently assume, without an atom of proof, that the State has a moral right to bundle God and religion, under penalties, out of any system of education. I absolutely deny such a right, until it is clearly established. And why do you as persistently assume—again without proof—that, unless the State itself directly teaches religion in the schools, there is no possibility of such teaching being imparted there at all? Are you not aware of (for instance) the peaceful wedded union of religion and education in Germany and Scandinavia—countries that lead the world by the incomparable excellence of their school systems.—Yours, etc.,

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Bishop of Auckland.

March 13.

THE SECULARISTS AND EDUCATION

(From the "N.Z. Tablet", June 14, 1873)

Politicians must know very little about education, if we may judge them by their perpetual attempts at legislation on the subject. Every session of our Parliament, and almost every session of the several Provincial Councils behold new Education Bills. Men are at sea and seem utterly bewildered. One would fancy from what is said and done, that up to the present time there had been no schools, no learning, no education in the world. If a man from the moon, unacquainted with our mundane concerns, were to come amongst us and pay exclusive attention to the education agitation, he must irresistibly come to the conclusion that all ages, and the nations of former days, had utterly neglected the education of the people. The teaching and experience of other times and places are ignored; and go where we may, we encounter turmoil, confusion, and uncertainty. Education Bills, education amendment Bills, secular education Bills, anti-denominational Bills—such is the burden of *Gazettes*, Governors' messages, Ministers' speeches. One would imagine that the world had arisen from the slumber of ages, during which there were neither schools nor colleges, nor school-masters.

And why is all this hubbub, childishness, and turmoil? Simply because a most intolerant and tyrannical sect, called secularists, has lately arisen, and succeeded for a time in throwing Christendom into confusion. This sect is, indeed, numerically small, but by its audacity, and an adroit manipulation of the prejudices of all the adversaries of the Catholic Church, it makes up for its inherent weakness. According to the new light, religion should hold no place in man's education in public schools; and it is quite a proper thing to compel Christians to pay taxes for the purpose of making their children infidels. The secularist sect does not believe in Christianity, and therefore no one must teach it in schools! We are not speaking of individuals; for there are many men very much better than their principles, but of the sect as such; and its principles logically amount to this. . . . Then we are told these schools are not denominational. How can this be? Are they not secular at least in name, and are not secularists a denomination?

Our lady friends in Wanganui and district will find some charming and artistic ornaments, especially hatpins in enamel and sterling silver, at Drew's, Victoria Avenue, Wanganui....