

## GOD OR NO-GOD IN THE SCHOOLS?

## THE DISCUSSION: A CRITICAL SUMMARY

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## PART III.

'THOSE THAT FLY MAY FIGHT AGAIN.'

## II.—THE 'EVENING POST'S' 'DEFENCE' OF THE SECULAR SYSTEM

(Continued from last issue.)

## III.—MISQUOTATIONS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS.

*As Bishop and Archbishop.*—As Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Temple preferred Gladstone's Education Bill of 1870 'in its original form'—that is, in its more distinctively religious and denominational form. And in a speech at Exeter Hall in April, 1870, 'he thought for himself that the thing that was most worth fighting for was that religious instruction should be given by the teachers—that was in reality the distinction between a religious and a secular school.' When Bishop Temple left Exeter the Anglican religious schools in the diocese 'were stronger and more numerous than when he came to it'; and 'the force of his utterances' and his 'dogged pertinacity' in this matter brought home to clergy and laity the conviction 'that in maintaining Church schools they were not contending for a sectional cause, but were supporting religion itself.' In later years he came to 'modify his policy,' to 'change his details'; and this chiefly because of the difficulties of 'a religious settlement under the conditions of party Government; he protested indeed against the party handling of the education question from the very first, but the system was too strong for him, and he has been heard to sigh in old age because some of his earlier visions could not practically be realised. But he did not change in principle. If he seemed to change, it was because the position of the combatants had been reversed. . . . To the very last he held to the essentials of his early faith. Still to the very last he was true to the purpose which he had set before his own Grammar School at Exeter. . . . "We are bound to aim high. We are bound to think of the school, not as the place where the understanding is to be cultivated, but as a place where the principles on which the life shall be hereafter regulated are to be stamped upon the soul." All of which is sound Catholic doctrine. But neither as Education Office employee, nor as headmaster of Rugby, nor as Bishop of Exeter, nor as Bishop of London, nor as Archbishop of Canterbury, can Dr. Temple be cited as an 'authority' to 'fortify' the *Evening Post* in its advocacy of the absolute exclusion of religion from its immemorial and prescriptive place in the school-time preparation of children for the duties and responsibilities of life.

'A specific charge of misrepresentation is never to be passed over lightly.' So says the *Evening Post* of March 29, 1911 (p. 38 of this publication). Many, besides the present writer, will be curious to see how the *Evening Post* will deal with this proven and 'specific charge of misrepresentation'—which will be duly brought under its notice.

But (as pointed out on p. 32) even if 'Archbishop' Temple were proved to be the foe—as he was ever the friend—of religion in the schools, such a circumstance would not in the smallest degree affect the real issues of the present controversy. And these have been stated and re-stated with what the *Post* calls 'wearisome reiteration.' The *Post* has had no excuse for shirking them as it did.

## III.—DR. PARKER MISQUOTED.

In its issue of March 16, 1911, the *Evening Post* said. 'Dr. Parker was not an atheist.' And then it professed to quote from him the extract which appears on

page 28 of this publication, and which will be found hereunder, with sundry garbled portions restored.

Here, once more, we have the two familiar and most regrettable controversial resorts of the *Evening Post*. (1) It plainly suggests to its readers that, somehow, I have made out Dr. Parker to be an atheist. Such an idea, of course, never entered into so much as a solitary cell of my brain. (2) The *Post* makes a great show of *denying what was never asserted by me*—of defending the honor of a clergyman whose honor I never dreamt of impeaching, of setting me wrong in order to reap the momentary controversial advantage of setting me right.

3. The *Post* cites Dr. Parker as an 'authority' whose quoted words furnish a 'philosophy of life' which fundamentally justifies the utter exclusion of religion from the schools, by legislative enactment, in New Zealand (pp. 28-29, 52). The true, plain, and obvious surface meaning of the words actually quoted (at second-hand) from the noted Nonconformist minister of the City Temple (London) is set forth on page 49; and this has not been, at any point, met or set aside by the *Post*. Having now the full text of Dr. Parker's statement before me, it will be worth while to fill in some of the matter which was suppressed therefrom, for the controversial purpose of making him appear to be the foe of religion in the school-training of the 'little ones' of Christ.

The *Post*, as usual, gave (p. 28) no reference to enable the present writer to test the textual and contextual accuracy of its alleged quotation from Dr. Parker. In the last sentences of its last article—when further comment in its columns was precluded—it admitted that it did not really quote from Dr. Parker, but (as I had already suspected) from its usual argumentative magazine, the 'valuable pamphlet' of Professor Mackenzie. In the pamphlet, the Parker extract is credited to the (London) *Times* of October 18, 1894. The Rev. Doctor's pronouncement (a letter to the Editor) really appeared in the *Times* of October 11, 1894. Dr. Parker said that his letter was written 'in view of the impending election' of members of the London School Board, which took place on November 22, 1894. A fierce whirl of excitement eddied around that election, on account of what was termed the 'School Board compromise.' Dr. Parker's view of the compromise is sufficiently expressed in the letter quoted hereunder. It likewise found a voice at a 'crowded meeting of Nonconformists' presided over by him in the City Temple in the previous June. He then declared that 'he objected to its (the Bible's) being read, let alone interpreted, *at the public expense*.' A resolution passed on the occasion protested 'against the sectarian and pernicious policy of the majority of the London School Board, who, under the guise of economy and religious education, have sought to destroy the compromise of 1871, to defeat the purpose of the Education Acts, and to discredit the School Board system in the interests of sacerdotal teaching.' But the compromise of 1871 did not include the utter legislative ejection of religion from the schools, as in the New Zealand system. Dr. Parker's letter of October 11, 1894—quoted in a small fragment (at second-hand) by the *Evening Post*—was headed 'Board Schools and Religion.' It is too long for full insertion here. Let it, therefore, suffice to reproduce a number of important passages (comprising by far the greater part of the letter) that were suppressed in the garbled extract published by the *Evening Post* (the underlinings throughout are mine):—

' . . . As a Nonconformist, I believe that no education can be complete which does not include thorough religious training; but I am a citizen as well as a Nonconformist, and, as a citizen, I deny that it is the business of the State to furnish a complete education. That is a distinction which I hold to be vital. . . . In such a matter as education it should be the business of the State not to see how far it can go, but how soon it can stop, and for one I venture to think that the State might very well stop when it has paid for a thorough knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Thus, *I would not exclude religion*; I simply would not include it. Why?

\* Bishop Cleary's latest work, of which the above is an instalment, is procurable at all Catholic booksellers.