

suaded that the number is very small of those who would object to the teaching of the Bible in the schools. Here let me explain:—To the reading of the Bible in the schools and to the giving of moral instruction more or less founded thereon, I would personally make but slight objection, were it not for the domineering and tyrannical spirit in which the *right of the majority* to have such readings and teachings has been insisted on by some. The part that I have taken in this discussion has been inspired not by hostility to the Bible, but by hostility to tyranny and intolerance. I feel that this is a case in which the minority has rights no less sacred than those of the majority; and as a matter of *right* I cannot concede that the majority should claim to lay hold of the machinery of the State for the propagation of their special theological views. As to what proportion of the Public School teachers hold in a general way to "advanced" opinions, I can perhaps help the Rev. Mr. Macdonell to an estimate: he says he supposes them to be extremely few. Eleven years ago there was formed in the city in which I reside a society which gave itself the name of the "Progressive Society." It was formed entirely on free-thought lines, and out of the dozen at the most of persons who constituted the original membership four were Public School teachers. Two ex-teachers subsequently joined and are still on the roll of members. At least two other teachers of the city have expressed themselves to me as being in general accord with the views of the society, and not long ago I received a letter from an ex teacher (High School master I think) stating that he had better opportunities than most for knowing the views of the teaching body, and that he could assure me that, in the present controversy, a very large proportion of them

were on my side. The Rev. Mr. Macdonell says, at one moment, that perhaps there might be a conscience clause for teachers as well as for scholars; but as he goes on at once to say that a man who holds non-Christian opinions cannot reasonably hope for employment as a teacher in a Christian community, it is a little hard to know just what he means on this point.

Let me first answer one question put by my respected opponent, and I have done. He wants to know whether I would approve of any religious element in the education given in the Public Schools. My answer shall be brief:—I don't believe that one human being can instruct another human being about God. The man who undertakes to demonstrate God, in any sense of the verb "demonstrate," undertakes more than he can accomplish. We recognize physical laws as operative in the universe of matter, and moral laws as operative in human society; and it is doubtless natural to the great majority of minds to refer such laws to God as their author. But all that is open to our study is the orderly succession of cause and effect in the universe. In this direction we can make unceasing progress; and my idea is that the most religious education of all would be one in which a constant effort would be made to unfold the laws of the universe, and to deduce therefrom the highest lessons they are adapted to teach, with a view to keeping alive and vigorous the correspondence between outward law and inward obligation. Under such an education I believe that whatever thoughts of God were of a nature to elevate the mind and purify the heart would spontaneously suggest themselves. We should then have done with incantations, and all progress in knowledge would be progress towards the perfecting of human nature.