

"My dear Challis, if you want to make your son's education a text for a sermon against worldliness and hypocrisy, do so by all means. We have weak joints enough in our armour, God knows, for you to shoot your arrows into. But let me finish finding fault with you first."

Challis slipped his arm into the Rector's. "Go on finding fault," he said. "Don't finish too soon."

"I won't. It seems to me, my dear friend, that under cover of a complete confession you have contrived to raise issues which have nothing to do with the question before the House, which I take to be—what is a father's conscientious duty towards the child for whose existence he is partly responsible? I want to keep you to the point."

"I'm a slippery customer, I know. Go on."

"Do you, or do you not, think a parent is bound to supply a child with a religious faith? Failing the parent, is it the duty of the guardian—of the State? That seems to me to lie at the root of all questions of religious education. But our question is about the parent's duty when one exists. *Exempli gratia*, yourself and Master Bob! It seems to me that your policy was one of evasion, and that the devolution of responsibility upon your wife was a rather cowardly evasion. Especially as her responsibility could only be for her own children!"

Challis's hand pressed the arm he held a little more warmly. There was certainly no offence. "You are perfectly right, Rector," said he. "I took a mean advantage of a little local patch of obscurantism to get my boy inoculated in his youth with a popular form of Christianity, in order that his father's heretical ideas should not stand in the way of his advancement. But I lay this unction to my soul, that if ever he sees his way to a bishopric, nothing I have ever said to him need stand in his way. . . . Oh no!—there is no idea at present of his entering the Church. The Army is engaging his attention at this moment—and phonographs. . . . But go on pitching into me about cowardly evasions."

"I am afraid you are incorrigible, Challis. I can't help laughing sometimes. But for all that, I think you were wrong. You were wrong towards your wife, because, in-