

commendation that the Bible should be read in all schools. This introduces a question of great difficulty, especially at the present time. We are living in the midst of religious as well as political revolution; indeed, the political revolution may be said to be the consequence and the sign of the religious, which is the deeper unrest. I was for some time in Paris, and it was almost appalling to see the fury with which the struggle was being carried on between the assailants and the defenders of religion. This, in truth, is the real French Revolution. The first Revolution was comparatively superficial; it did not affect the fundamental beliefs, and thus Napoleon was able with great ease, to restore not only the monarchical institutions, but the Church of the old *régime*. But now the fundamental beliefs and ideas are the objects of attack. Now, the party hostile to religion is not content with liberty and toleration; it seeks to drive religion out of government, out of education, out of the whole life of the people. I went into an anti-clerical book store and found there things exceeding in atheistic violence anything published at the time of the first Revolution. We, happily, have to cope with the difficulty in a milder form, but still we have to cope with it. My own convictions would lead me to sympathise with the desire to see a religious element introduced into the education of a child. But if you make any general law upon the subject, you will have to encounter objections from more than one quarter. For my part, I should be inclined to adhere to the principle of local self-government, and allow the matter still to be settled in each case by the Board of School Trustees, subject to two safeguards—a conscience clause, enabling parents to withdraw their children if they please from the religious exercises; and a power vested in some higher

and thoroughly impartial authority of putting a veto upon anything really sectarian. If you make a general law, you will, among other consequences, render more difficult than ever the completion of the unity of our system by the abolition of Separate Schools. Otherwise the change may be hoped for in time. Very likely, in the first instance, the concession of Separate Schools was a wise act of statesmanship. There had been fierce struggles between Protestants and Catholics; the contest about Catholic emancipation was comparatively fresh in memory, and a Catholic might not unreasonably apprehend aggression upon the faith of his child. He cannot reasonably apprehend aggression now. In districts where there are not Catholics enough to maintain Separate Schools, Catholic children do go to the Common Schools, and I have not heard that there are any complaints of insidious attacks upon the child's religion. The State is bound to respect conviction, but it is not bound to pay attention to groundless suspicion, or to mould its institutions for the purpose of preserving any special influence, clerical or political.

I noticed also, in the report first read, the expression of an opinion that education should be entirely separated from politics. In that opinion I concur so heartily that I used always in England to advocate the abolition of the representation of the universities in Parliament, because it seemed to me, by connecting us with political party, to bring down from their high and proper ground of impartiality the places of national education. Places of national education have to do with politics only as they produce good and enlightened citizens, which they will not do if they are under party influence. I have sometimes thought it not unlikely that the province might in time be led to consider the expe-