

may certainly say that, in scientific circles, belief in the miraculous is visibly less from year to year. What are you to do in that case—those of you, I mean of course, to whom this applies? The answer is obvious: you must choose between violating your convictions and vacating your situations. Perhaps you, or some of you, are believers in evolution: would you be allowed to graft that theory on the Bible lessons you are required to give? How could you give certain Bible lessons without going directly counter to the fundamental principle of evolution? But if your belief in evolution, or your non-belief in the miraculous, is to disqualify you for the performance of a public function, is not the principle of religious liberty violated? The practical effect of making religious instruction an integral and obligatory part of public school education, and of insisting on its being administered by the teachers, is simply to throw the teaching profession into the hands of those who find no difficulty in pronouncing the ecclesiastical shibboleth—in other words, to place a distinct premium upon the holding of certain religious opinions. Can this be called religious liberty? It surely is not religious equality.

But the same principle is also invaded in the persons of those tax-paying parents who dissent from the prevalent religious beliefs. Of course I am here met by the statement that children whose parents object to their receiving religious instruction may absent themselves while it is being given. But is it nothing that public taxation should be applied to the propagation of religious opinions from which a minority of the people dissent? To all intents and purposes the religion of the majority is *established*, when the machinery of any department of the Government—and the school system is virtually a department of the Government—is

applied to its propagation. To show how the matter stands exactly, let us suppose the minority asking that, after the teacher had expounded, in the absence of their children, the ethics and evidences (if the latter chanced to be thrown in) of Christianity, he should then be required to turn to and expound, in the absence of the other children, the ethics and evidences of evolution. Imagine the indignation such a request would arouse! The audacity of the proposition—that *our* children should leave the school-room while a handful were being taught the gospel according to Herbert Spencer! Yes, a terrible outrage that the same measure should be meted out to majority and minority. Yet, let me observe that when the law—the State—cannot mete out the same measure to majority and minority in religious matters—when the majority has legal advantages that the minority is deprived of—there is no true religious liberty.

But it is maintained by the Rev. Dr. Sutherland that, unless you are prepared to teach on distinctly Christian lines, you cannot do anything to build up the moral character of your pupils. You must be prepared to show “God’s finger in the destinies of the nations.” You must be able to hear, and make others hear, “His footfall in the march of the centuries.” If you teach astronomy you must be prepared, not only to impart the laws of that science, but to show how “the heavens declare the glory of God.” If you teach biology, you must make a point of showing that the human frame was made on a pre-ordained plan, and that it is full of examples of the designed adaptation of means to ends. It is quite true that the point of view which you are thus required to occupy in teaching every subject is not taken in the ordinary text books: that does not mat-