

The Catholic Record

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SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

A note of alarm has been sounded by a number of thoughtful Protestant clergymen of the United States, arising out of the contemplation of the very small amount of religious and moral training given the children throughout the Republic. Amongst others the Rev. Dr. E. L. Stoddard, of St. John's Episcopal church, Jersey city, preached a sermon recently in which he dwelt upon this topic, declaring that in American life there are three great failures, "the marriage and divorce system, the government of our great cities and our Sunday schools."

He points out that man is composed of three parts: body, soul, and intellect, and that the imperfect cultivation of any one of these is as if we were to develop one arm or one ear, and let the other decay; and, as a matter of fact, it is the religious part of man which is commonly neglected. The prevailing system of education neglects this important part of manhood, and is thus most imperfect.

How do Christians make up for this defect in the school system? The Catholics by means of parochial schools; the Protestants by Sunday schools.

In former days Sunday schools were not a necessity, because religion was carefully taught in all schools; but when Public schools were established, in which no religion was allowed to be taught, it was absolutely necessary there should be Sunday schools, to complete in some way the education which was so imperfectly given in the Public schools; and now Mr. Stoddard and others declare that the Sunday schools have utterly failed to accomplish their work.

In round numbers, there are 15,000,000 children in the United States, of school age. Of these, 10,000,000 are enrolled in the Public schools, of whom about 750,000 are Catholics, in addition to 900,000 in attendance at the Catholic Parochial schools.

Returns from the Sunday schools show that only seven and a half millions attend them; but as the average attendance for the whole year is only 50 per cent. of the whole number, and the time devoted to their instruction about half an hour, it follows that the seven and a half million children receive each on an average but twelve hours religious instruction during the year, while the average time given to secular instruction is at least thirty times as much.

It is needless to demonstrate that the children learn very little of any religion in this short time; and the Protestant clergy are now becoming fully satisfied that this is the case. In fact, unless we are to assume that the parents who neglect entirely to send their children to the Sunday schools are the most earnest in educating their children in religion and morality, it must be admitted that one-half of them are totally uneducated in these important subjects, while the other half average only twelve hours of organized instruction in them during the year.

Doubtless the deficiency is made up in some families by home instruction; but experience teaches that such is not usually the case; so that the fact remains that in spite of the admitted importance of a religious training being given in some way, only a small proportion of the children of the United States receive any religious or moral education worthy of the name.

This deficiency is certainly not on the part of Catholic children, who for the most part attend Parochial schools; while those who attend the Public schools attend the Sunday schools as well with fair regularity, and even those who attend the Parochial schools attend the Public schools also. It thus follows that the non-Catholics have scarcely any religious teaching at all.

Dr. Stoddard, in union with many other Protestant clergymen, declares that the only remedy for this deplorable state of things is the establishment

of denominational schools with State aid; and there is no doubt that the Protestant clergy generally would urge the same view were it not for their hostility to Catholic education. They are willing to expose the rising generation to the danger of being without any religious or moral training if they could only succeed thereby in depriving Catholics of the benefits of a Catholic training. They are finding out, however, that this they cannot do. They are able, indeed, by controlling the voices and votes of a majority of the population, to deprive Catholic schools of a share in the State aid to education, but on the schools themselves they are unable to lay a finger with the purpose of destroying them, because Catholics will sustain them whether or not they obtain State aid for the purpose. They can by the power of brute force inflict the pecuniary fine upon Catholics, of making them pay a double tax as a penalty for their conscientious convictions, but they cannot close the Catholic schools; and now that they are discovering that this is the state of the case, they are gradually changing their tactics.

We have no doubt that the result of the light which is breaking in upon the most observant of Protestants in regard to this question will be, sooner or later, that denominational schools will be aided by the State, whether they be Catholic or Protestant, though as yet the people of the United States have not become generally satisfied that it is advisable to take this step.

Sufficient light has not yet been thrown upon this subject to convince the public that this is the real state of the case, but the truth is dawning upon them, and the time must come when they will be convinced, unless they become so un-Christianized by the godless school system as to desire to perpetuate infidelity.

A VAIN BOASTER.

The Rev. J. C. Madill has been recently boasting very loudly about the strength of the P. P. A. in the Local Legislature; and the Montreal Witness correspondent states from Toronto that Mr. McCallum, the first P. P. A. member of the Legislature, corroborates all that Mr. Madill has asserted. Mr. McCallum says:

"Our members are many more than Mr. Gurd and myself. Of course some of them are mixed up with the old parties, but they may join us in caucuses when we have one. Some Patrons, Tories and Grits, owe their election to the support of the P. P. A. The Mowat Cabinet may yet be surprised to find that several of their supporters will place P. P. A. principles before party."

Truly these P. P. A. politicians are easily satisfied when they can thus regale themselves on scanty rations. They would think the Barmecide's feast a royal repast. They could make themselves as happy as Mark Tapley in a graveyard.

It is not denied, and it is undeniable, that of all the candidates who offered their services to the country, on the straight P. P. A. and "Equal Rights" tickets, so-called, only two were elected; four being defeated.

It is true that notwithstanding the fact that the officers of the Patrons of Industry proclaimed officially that there could be no agreement or compact between the Patrons and the P. P. A., thirteen Patron candidates declared themselves openly or covertly to be favorable to the P. P. A. platform, which was presented to them for adoption. It is well-known that candidates for election are nearly always ready to take advantage of every sideward which they hope may favor them; and as it was supposed by some that P. P. A. would turn the scale against Mr. Mowat's administration, in the grand summing up of results, we cannot be very much surprised that there were found a considerable number who were ready to take advantage of whatever strength their pandering to that association might give them. We find, accordingly, that of fifty-one Patron candidates, thirteen were pronounced supporters of P. P. A. Aism; but the fact seems to have operated quite contrarily to what was expected, for instead of thereby securing their election ten of the P. P. A. Patrons were defeated, and three elected. The three successful ones were Mr. Macdonald of Centre Bruce, Mr. McNaughton of North Bruce, and Mr. Gamey of Centre Grey. In the three ridings of Middlesex, two of Oxford, North Grey, Monck, North Norfolk, Centre Simcoe, and North Wentworth, the Patron and P. P. A. combination was routed, as it deserved to be, by the aggregate majority of

about 2250. We are aware, however, that those defeated members were in most instances ashamed of their P. P. A. alliance, and we know that some of them pretended to the last moment that they had no connection with that association. In one instance the candidate went so far as to offer, with a limited amount of publicity, to deposit his cheque for \$1000, which he was ready to forfeit if it should appear within a year that he had any connection with P. P. A. Aism. He did not deposit the cheque, however, and the bluff did not work; and in this instance the Reform candidate, his opponent, received a larger majority than had been recorded for him four years before. If this P. P. A. Patron had gained the election, the seat would, undoubtedly, have been numbered by Mr. Madill among P. P. A. victories; but he was saved the labor and the disgrace of claiming a victory to which he and his society would in reality not be entitled. There is indeed a great falling in P. P. A. stock when the Grand President of the society was contented with such candidates as this one, whereas not long before the election the open boast of the members was that they would sweep the Province, beyond a doubt. Thus the green campaign sheet they issued under the name "The Eye Opener," laid it down as a fixed fact that Sir Oliver Mowat must be slain first, and after him, Sir John Thompson. Among the pictures on this scurrilous and lying sheet, P. P. A. Aism is represented by a man with a gun just ready to shoot Sir Oliver, and take off Sir John as his next victim. The representative of P. P. A. Aism is in the act of declaring: "First come, first served; this gun is double-barrelled."

And here it might be said that the P. P. A. would disdain to claim as their champion a candidate who would thus repudiate them. To this we are in a position to reply that the P. P. A. circulated thousands of their campaign sheet in the very constituency in which all this occurred, the purpose being to serve the defeated candidate, and the society used all its power and influence to elect him.

It was everywhere the same story. The appearance of a new party in the field, the Patrons of Industry, caused a considerable diminution in the ranks of both Reformers and Conservatives. This was to be expected. The Patrons proper are from the ranks of both parties, and it could not be otherwise than that the two old parties should suffer a diminution of numbers in the House. But if P. P. A. Aism were of any more influence than a dead dog, it would have been able to save, or at least to strengthen, the party in favor of which the whole of its influence was thrown into the scale. This it did not do, for the Conservatives, who were everywhere supported by the P. P. A., are left weaker in the House than ever they have been since Sir Oliver first accepted the Premiership of the Province, or since the confederation of the Provinces.

The Grand President and the Executive, backed by the Mail, may boast as they will of the power of their organization, but the people of Canada are not so easily hoodwinked by their noisy pretences. They are just in the position of the Chinese, who, when they were defeated by land and sea, by their hostile neighbors, the Japanese, assured the representatives of the great powers that they were quite unharmed. The severe blows inflicted had not hurt them at all!

The Rev. Mr. Madill himself let the cat out of the bag when he declared at the Orange gathering at Windsor on the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, that the P. P. A. and Orangemen need no amalgamation. They are one in principle, and one in fact; and the two societies together are not a whit stronger in political influence than was Orangism before the P. P. A. was dreamed of in the Province. The members of the P. P. A. are generally Orangemen, or, at least, sympathizers with Orangism, the predominant influence of which, as a society, has been dead for forty-six years. P. P. A. Aism is simply a desperate attempt to galvanize new life into the corpse.

Mr. Madill asserts that there are forty members in the Legislature who are prepared to support P. P. A. Aism. This is a gross exaggeration; but if it were the truth it would be of little avail. There would still be a very decisive majority there hostile to the organization; and when they could not succeed in securing a majority with the whole Conservative party on their side, they may be considered politically defunct, now that the Con-

servatives have learned that their assistance is like a millstone tied about the neck of a drowning man. Unless we are much mistaken, the Conservatives are heartily sick of their allies. Besides, it must be remembered that several of the Conservatives who have been elected never gave any public pronouncement that they would support P. P. A. measures, except the assurance that they upheld Mr. Meredith's policy; but even Mr. Meredith himself disclaims any connection with the dark organization. We must say also that our opposition to Mr. Meredith did not arise out of any suspicion, even remote, that he was or is a member of the P. P. A., but out of the anti-Catholic school policy he announced. The Reform party, on the other hand, openly denounced the P. P. A. as a dangerous and unpatriotic organization, and in several instances the successful Reform candidates declared that they wanted no P. P. A. votes or support in any form.

Truly the victory of which Mr. Madill boasts is a Pyrrhic one: "another such triumph and we are undone."

"THEOSOPHICAL" LECTURING.

We learn from Toronto papers that Mr. Claude Falls Wright, a gentleman who had been for years the secretary of Madame Blavatsky, the foundress of a new religion, or perhaps we should rather say the resuscitator of an old error, has been delivering some lectures in that city in the Toronto Theosophical hall. These lectures have for object the propagation of Madame Blavatsky's strange opinions; and it appears that there are persons in Toronto and some other large cities of America, who are really converts to the system under the name of Theosophy; and it appears that the Theosophical society holds regular meetings in Toronto.

Theosophy is a renewal of the teachings of Pythagoras and Plato in regard to metempsychosis, mixed with the Buddhism of Hindostan; and it is a curious phenomenon that at the close of this century of intelligence, when knowledge is so extensively diffused, the fanciful theories of heathen philosophers should find advocates who prefer them to Christian truth.

Mr. Wright is said to be a pleasing speaker, and well acquainted with the doctrines he advocates; but it requires something more than an agreeable manner or amiability of disposition in a speaker to commend to an intelligent audience of Christians the rejection of Christianity for the sake of the exploded theories of Paganism, even though the Pagans who maintained them be so learned as the old advocates of metempsychosis undoubtedly were. We must remember that Plato and Pythagoras had not the light of Revelation to guide them to a knowledge of the truth, and we can afford to admire the zeal with which they labored to learn and adhere to truth, or what they imagined to be the truth. But it is a settled fact that reason by itself could never have led men to any certain knowledge of the future destiny of mankind, or the end for which we were created. Without the light of Revelation, the world would still be wandering in the same darkness in which all the philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome, Egypt and India were enveloped.

This theory of Mr. Wright, which was formerly called metempsychosis, he calls re-incarnation. It means that after death, the souls of men enter into and animate other bodies. According to the old Pagan notion, these other bodies were lower animals, if the departed soul had to be punished for its misdeeds; but if it had to be rewarded for its virtues in a former state, it passed into a new, a more intellectual and nobler life. Thus a Sir Isaac Newton, or an Edison, must have been in former times some person who did good and was rewarded by being given a body in which its capabilities of usefulness were increased.

It is scarcely necessary for us to say that, altogether independently of a revelation from heaven, such fancies are entirely incapable of proof. There is not that inward consciousness within man that he ever had an existence previous to his present life, and it must always be to him impossible of proof that he had such an existence. There is not, and there never can be, any evidence that this transmigration theory is true, and it is therefore unworthy of credit, and cannot be entertained by any reasonable being.

We admit that if it were a matter revealed by Almighty God that such a theory were true, it would become

worthy of belief; but there has been no such a revelation, and it is here that Mr. Wright's lectures become most profane; for he makes an effort to show from the Bible that reincarnation is taught therein. This can be done only by a gross perversion of God's word, the only palliation possible for which would be that he unintentionally made this error. We read in the report of one of his lectures that

"He quoted the New Testament in support of his statement that the reincarnation of the soul was the common belief of the Jews, and that if nothing can be found in the teaching of Jesus in its support, at least He had said nothing against it. He quoted, as an example, Jesus' question to His disciples, asking who people thought He was, asserting that their reply that some said he was Elias, plainly suggested reincarnation."

The Jews believed in the power of God to raise the dead to life, and that the prophets of God, though passed out of this life, were in a more sublime life wherein they could still perform such miracles as they had wrought on earth, and even greater. Hence, when they beheld the miracles which Christ did, they believed that Christ was one of the prophets risen again. Some thought he was John the Baptist; others, Jeremiah; others, Elias. (St. Matt. xvi, 14.) Thus also "Herod the Tetrarch heard the fame of Jesus; and he said to his servants: 'This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works show forth themselves in Him.'" (St. Matt. xvi.)

As regards Elias, there was another reason for the supposition that Jesus might be this great prophet returned to earth. Christ's great zeal reminded them of Elias, who did not die, but was taken from this world in a chariot of fire; and in Malachias we read: "Behold I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (iv, 5.) Consequently the Jews expected, and still expect, that at some time before the last day Elias will come to the world to aid in converting souls to God. It will be seen that the passage referred to does not at all justify Mr. Wright's conclusions, either to the effect that the Jews were Pythagoreans or that Christ tacitly approved the Pythagorean theory. The Jews regarded all such heathen theories with abhorrence. They spoke of God as "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob," not as if the souls of these patriarchs had passed into the bodies of new men, but because they were still living in their own personality, and enjoying the reward of their virtuous lives.

The lecturer quoted also the question asked by Christ's disciples with regard to the man blind from his birth, whether it was because the parents of the man had sinned, or because he had sinned himself, that he was born blind. He asserts that here also "reincarnation was plainly meant."

The disciples were not as yet fully instructed in Christian truth, and on this occasion they erred and were corrected by Christ, being told that neither of these causes had been the reason of his blindness, but that it was intended that the power of God should be made manifest in him. If the Pythagorean philosophy were true, the cause should have been the man's own sins in a former life on earth.

It is not at all probable, however, that the disciples had any thought of the Pythagorean doctrine when they asked their question, for that doctrine was not a doctrine of the Jews. They supposed that the blind man was punished for the sins of his parents, or from the knowledge of God that he would be a sinner. They were not yet aware that God does not punish for future sin, but only for sin which has actually been committed. They also erred in supposing that the infirmities and tribulations of life are always a punishment for sin. They said that the G. A. R. could not hold services at the grave if he did so, but the local officers insisted on holding their service when the minister was through. The A. P. A. have endeavored to make it a telling point against Catholics because they do not make the church a usual place for purely national demonstrations, and the ex-Indian Superintendent Morgan made a great hubbub in one of his recent lectures before the A. P. A. because the authorities of the Indian Catholic schools of the West paid more attention to the instruction of the Indian children than to the erection of national flags upon their school-houses. The inference intended to be suggested was that Catholics are disloyal to the United States, though really they were only doing what is usually done

in all parts of the world. The errors into which Mr. Wright falls are evidently the fruit of rejection of the authority of the Catholic Church in the interpretation of Holy Scripture. Into such errors men will naturally continue to fall when they assume to themselves that infallibility which Christ granted only to His Church, which He promised to guide into all truth through the continual presence of the Holy Ghost with the body of the pastors of His Church, and especially with her divinely constituted Supreme Pastor.

It is proper to add here, concerning Madame Blavatsky herself, that her familiarity with the writings of ancient Hindu philosophers and pseudo-revelations has been before now proved to be a mere pretence, as Hindu scholars who have examined the Hindu books with which she pretended to be conversant have declared that she knew absolutely nothing about them.

A couple of amusing incidents are related by the Rev. Galen W. Seller in a letter to the Toronto Globe, which appeared in last Thursday's issue of our enterprising contemporary. They are worth repeating in this connection.

Madame Blavatsky's avowed purpose was to crush out Christianity and to substitute Theosophism in its place. She denied Christian miracles, and pretended that she had wrought numerous petty miracles through her Theosophic powers. These were strikingly like the tricks of spiritualistic mediums which have been so thoroughly exposed.

In reference to these Mr. Seller states that

"We often heard of wonderful 'occult phenomena' being manifested at their headquarters. Letters fell from invisible sources, and there were the usual manifestations of spiritism wrought by Himalaya 'Mahatmas.' At last an expert was sent out by the London Society for Psychical Research to investigate these phenomena, and he had hardly brought to light hidden wires, trap-doors, etc., before Madame Blavatsky sailed from Madras for Europe, never to return."

The other incident is that when Rev. Mr. Seller called upon Madame Blavatsky in Bombay to ascertain her purpose, the lady informed him that she had imported a lady's glove from Europe to India through her psychological powers. Thereupon a Hindu missionary present rather nonplussed her by naively asking "why she had not imported her baggage to India in the same inexpensive way." Col. Colcott, one of the lady's assistants, was very angry because such a question was asked.

All this reminds us powerfully of Mrs. Dis Debar's New York spiritualistic tricks which were practiced at the expense of Lawyer Marsh.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

IT DOES NOT become a prominent daily like the Toronto Mail to be engaged in a continuous snarling at the Catholic Church, its hierarchy and its institutions. It betrays as much childishness as spitefulness. Can it be possible that the editor of the British Canadian—Mrs Margaret Shepherd—has been given a chair in the editorial room? It would seem like it. Mrs. Shepherd, at all events, takes quite an interest in the Mail.

THE A. P. A. of the United States has something to think about in the attitude of the Lutheran minister of Cheboygan, Wisconsin, the Rev. Mr. Wolbrechts, pastor of the Lutheran church, who last week refused to allow the local post of the Grand Army of the Republic to enter his church at the funeral of a deceased comrade. The funeral was held from the house of Gottlieb Seurheide, the dead soldier, because of the minister's refusal to allow them to enter as a body or carry the United States flag into the church. He claims it is a rule of his church not to allow any society to enter. He also said that the G. A. R. could not hold services at the grave if he did so, but the local officers insisted on holding their service when the minister was through. The A. P. A. have endeavored to make it a telling point against Catholics because they do not make the church a usual place for purely national demonstrations, and the ex-Indian Superintendent Morgan made a great hubbub in one of his recent lectures before the A. P. A. because the authorities of the Indian Catholic schools of the West paid more attention to the instruction of the Indian children than to the erection of national flags upon their school-houses. The inference intended to be suggested was that Catholics are disloyal to the United States, though really they were only doing what is usually done

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