

universal Pyrerhonism. In anominally Christian State, it seems clear that there should be some recognition of christianity in the education which is under its care. It may seem an innocent fallacy to hold that the State is a non-religious institution, but that negative creed involves logical consequences of a most positive order, unless, indeed, it is a loose way of saying that the State ought not to be turned by mere ecclesiastical machinery. But this is a very different thing. It would be a reproach if the State ever fell under the domination of any hierarchy; and there are Popes of various kinds all over the world who differ from His Holiness at Rome in the fact that their infallibility has been thrust upon them not by the decrees of councils, but by their own intolerable conceit. It is not a thing to be alarmed about that thoughtful men decline to wear the fetters of clerical thraldom, that they will not accept the stone of superstition in lieu of the bread of truth, nor despise the inalienable right of private judgment and the exercise of religious liberty. As long as this revolt is sincere and reverent, "christianity" may lose, but Christianity will gain by it. Sometimes, no doubt, an exaggerated individualism has precipitated dissent, and sometimes, too, the attack upon the church has veiled a hatred of the religion which, in spite of all the church's imperfections, it is its avowed mission to keep alive among mankind. The significance of the radical cry depends altogether upon the tone and spirit in which it is uttered. Savonarola, Luther, John Knox were, in a certain sense, radicals. So, too, were the barbarian hordes who overthrew the shrines of the divinities; so, too, was the Parisian populace who worshipped *La Guillotine*; so, too, was the brutal Judæan mob who released Barabbas, and crucified the Son of God. On

both sides you might say that the cry was against religion; but in one case it was the cry of freedom, in the other the cry of death.

If, then, we say that it is outside the province of the State to consider the matter of religious instruction, we have virtually declared that it may assume an attitude of practical Atheism, for, on a question of so much importance, it is impossible to observe a mere neutrality. The State has a will and an intelligence, and cannot be shielded behind the impersonal "it." And though it is quite true that the formal acknowledgment of religious principles will not make a truly Christian people, we have to consider what the result would be if our youth were taught to regard religion as quite outside the general current of life, a sort of elective study for those who felt a taste for it, relegated exclusively to the church and Sunday, but of no practical consequence in the actual conduct of life. I cheerfully admit that there are instances of exemplary living on the part of men who do not believe in God, or who say they do not believe in God, which is not always quite the same thing. The scruples of this minority should have all due consideration. But the fact remains that if we wish to have a moral system of education—and no one, I imagine, contends for an immoral one—a system which shall help to preserve us from impurity and viciousness, and the peril either of anarchy or despotism, the basis of ethics must be sought not in utilitarian maxims, nor in the caprice of human opinion, but in the revealed will of God.

In as far, then, as our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens insist upon some religious knowledge as an integral part of every youth's education, Canadians of sober thought ought not to find it hard to agree with them. I have yet to learn that it is