

not be negative operation. The bank would soon find out it was a highly positive operation, which would speedily have serious practical and positive consequences. In the same way — and the metaphor is not overdrawn — I believe it to be most dangerous for the state to say: "We ignore the whole subject of religious education, and put it on one side as no affair of ours. We will look after the positive knowledge which is to fit the child for the practical affairs of life, or to give it some elements of intellectual culture." If it is dangerous for the state to take up that so-called negative attitude, and if we are to admit, as we do, that the state cannot set itself up as a propagandist in favor of one religious creed rather than another, how are we going to solve the difficulty? That is the root question lying at the bottom of all these educational difficulties. If the state is not to do it itself, the only way is to call in the co-operation of great societies like this, and to give them every facility for doing their proper work while not, of course, giving them any undue favor in that which is not their proper work. . . .

The idea that it is within the province of the House of Commons, with their united wisdom, to frame something which is to be called the common essence of all Christian creeds, and having discovered this, then to say what may be taught, and ought to be taught, in the schools of the contry, that really is a grotesque proposition. I do not believe that anybody who has thought out what it really means can possibly hold that on these lines is to be discovered a solution of the great difficulties of religious teaching. . . .

For my part. I have always looked forward to the time when it would be found possible to give in our public elementary schools that teaching to every child — or to the great majority of children, for no system can be quite perfect or complete — the religious teaching which the parents of the child desire. It is to that goal that I look forward. That is the only solution which seems to me perfectly consistent, both with our ideas of religious liberty and with that fundamental doctrine in which all in this room are agreed, namely, that it is a misfortune, the greatest misfortune of all, if it is to occur that children should be brought up without any religious training whatever. That is a solution which I hope this country will never make itself responsible for. I hope the society will continue to hold aloft the ideal of an education in which secular learning is not divorced from religious teaching; that they will hold it forth not merely to those prepared by personal or pecuniary sacrifice to help the work of this society, but they will hold that ideal up to other societies, holding, it may be, in some respects different religious views, but who share with us the common conviction that the state which deliberately divorces religion from the elementary teaching of its children is a sta-