

only what we might expect, to find it condemned more or less strongly by the various Christian bodies. Our own church has testified during recent years with increasing unanimity and force, to the importance of the religious element in the instruction given in the public school, and to the desirability of its being enlarged rather than reduced and far less eliminated. And in this respect it has only reflected the trend of opinion among thoughtful Christian people in general. Accordingly corresponding action has been taken by the courts of the other churches. A voice may have been raised here and there in favor of a purely secular system, under the idea that it is demanded by the principle of the separation of Church and State, but the prevailing opinion has been and is unmistakably against it or any approach to it. The truth is, it is not difficult to observe the existence throughout the country, of a deepening conviction of the danger to the State and to public morals, without which the State can have no stability, of a system of education in which religion has no place. As it is in our country, so is it elsewhere. In some of the Australian colonies, where the system has been for some time established, it encounters only a fiercer opposition from the Christian bodies as its results became more apparent.

It is not easy to state with exactness

WHAT THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN

of the purely secular system of education, where it has been introduced, how far it is responsible for the greater prevalence of certain forms of crime in our day. It is easy to state, what, reasoning from general principles, we would expect the results to be; but it takes time, not one year but many to develop fully the consequences of such an experiment. I could not help, however, being struck with a paragraph in the Edinburgh Scotsman for September 21st. In Scotland, if I mistake not, the question of religious instruction is left with the school board of each locality. At the time when the system was introduced great opposition was offered in a certain stirring and somewhat radical border-town of Scotland, to any form of religious instruction in the public school. Now, in the paragraph referred to, the provost of that town is reported as saying, "Matters were getting so bad that he thought the magistrates would have to meet and appoint a public whipper. They were reluctant to send boys of such tender years either to prison or the reformatory and he thought the appointment of a public whipper was the only way of successfully coping with such misconduct. Not only parents, but teachers were greatly to blame for the reprehensible conduct of the youth of the town who did not seem to be getting the right kind of tuition at school." Is the alternative, then, the Bible in the school, or the whipping post at the police court?

And if so, who would hesitate which to choose?

With these words I pass from the consideration of the purely secular system of public education. I do not know for certain that it is the intention of the government, or of any member of it to propose its introduction into Manitoba. Hints, indeed something like assurances to this effect, have found their way into the public press. Should this prove well-founded, and the attempt be made to institute a system of public school instruction, in which religion shall be recognized only by its exclusion, I find it difficult to believe that the present House, numbering many thoughtful, Christian men, when it is fully seized of the question, will give to such a measure its sanction. In resisting the attempt, if it is made, members may count on the hearty approval and support of many whose voices are seldom heard, perhaps too seldom, on public questions. The hope may be entertained that a bill seating secularism pure and naked in the public schools, will not be suffered to obtain a place on the statute book of this fair province. If the considerations adduced in this lecture have any force, it should encounter the opposition, not only of Christian men, but of thoughtful and patriotic citizens. In my humble opinion, and I trust it is the opinion also of many whom I address, a system of public school instruction, which makes no provision for the recognition of God, which does not even allow such recognition, in which the Bible shall be a sealed book, and the name of the Saviour of mankind may not be spoken, and in which the highest sanctions of morality and the most powerful persuasions to right conduct—those I mean which religion and religion alone supplies—are not allowed to be employed—such a system

COULD SCARCELY FAIL TO BE PREJUDICIAL to the State, as it ought to be intolerable to the conscience of a Christian people.

At the opposite extreme, there is the system of separate or denominational schools, such as to some extent now obtains in this Province, a system under which not only is religious instruction given, but the distinctive doctrines and practices of individual churches are taught. Does the continuance and extension of this system promise a solution of the educational difficulty? By no means. Less injurious probably in its operation, it is even more indefensible in principle than the one which has been so freely criticized.

First, it is in direct violation of the principle of the separation of Church and State. It is unnecessary, indeed it would be quite irrelevant, to argue this principle here. It is that on which, rightly or wrongly, the State with us is constituted. I do not understand it to mean that the State may not have regard to religious considerations, such as it shows, when it enforces the observance of the Sabbath