

Current Thought on Secular Education.

Secular education is not helpful to morality. Such is the conclusion educationists are compelled to admit. The great teachers' convention in the United States gave that to be their opinion and that convention reached a turning point in the history of education. If moral training must be religious and if denominations alone can give that, then let us have denominational schools. Scholarship is not the first end of education. Character must rest on religion and a belief in the supernatural. Let our council of public instruction banish from its curriculum books on pedagogy that undermine authority, and let reading books be used which mention the name of God. Let human reason take its rightful place. Let the highest causes be first recognized, and character will have a foundation to rest upon. Secular education offers none.—*Archbishop O'Brien, Halifax.*

Every school exercise should make a better man, physically, mentally and morally, and if a better man then a better citizen. Feeling is at the basis of all successful teaching, and the chief incentive to noble deeds in public and private life. School premises should be well kept; in doors and out it should form a model. Good manners should be taught, proper respect for parents, the aged and unfortunate. Self-control is the grandest achievement, the greatest glory of an education.—*Dr. J. B. Hall, Truro.*

There is a difference between religion and the denominational expression of religion. Religion is a conscious recognition of the Divine Being. Prayer is its essence. Prayer is casting ones-self on God. Creeds are to be taught later in life than in primary schools. What is done in our schools in teaching religion? Religion comes through persons. Christ is a person. The biggest factor in our religious life is the person of the teachers. They carry their religion into the schools and the pupils receive through them. The vast majority of teachers are religious. Let them use their efforts to cultivate religious life. Our schools help the morals, for they train to seek truth. The Bible should be read in school for its religious value, without note or comment. It tells about Christ. To take Christ out of school is to take the source and spring of moral power. Prayer should be offered every morning, the Lord's Prayer, or some commendable form.—*Rev. Dr. Falconer, Pine Hill College, Halifax.*

Our education cannot be called secular as opposed to religious. We need not be too much alarmed about religion in our schools. We live under the shadow of Christianity. The state, the home and the church around us are always teaching us religion. Nature reminds us of God. Children do not come into our schools as pagans. Moreover, the teaching of the school is religious. Who can study botany without recognizing God? Mind is the basis of the flower and of the universe. There is a sequence in history, a providence in the rise of nations which tell us of God. Language itself reveals Him. The secular and religious must go together by necessity.—*Rev. Dr. Kierstead, Acadia College, Wolfville.*

The *status quo* at present is the only alternative for denominational schools, at least in communities financially unable to maintain the latter. Even against this present procedure, according to which religious exercises may be held in school, subject to withdrawal of those not conscientiously able to participate, some objections are urged; e. g., that the public funds thereby provide religious instruction and worship for the majority but not for the conscientious minority. In deference to this argument and in absolute justice to the minority, some school-sections have discontinued the Bible-reading and prayer permitted by law. Again, the "conscience" clause, wherever the exercises are held, involves the objectionable practice of marking differences of creed among pupils—objectionable not only to parents and pupils but even more so to teachers of wide sympathies, whose religious teaching would preferably be such as might tend to a disregard of differences and an emphasis of matters of faith common to all.

Insistence upon form of religious exercises in school even though these be limited to Bible-reading and the Lord's prayer, will excite disaffection, and perhaps precipitate a conflict; for history and living witness show the impossibility of people of diverse faith joining in acts of public worship.

To the teacher the situation has regrettable features. Still, the school whose individual personal elements are religious, whose vital principle is drawn from family altar and from church, and whose practice under both law and tradition is that of a religious teacher, cannot fail in this great duty; for it is fitting to expect that the school shall express in word and deed the highest principles of religion, practise the young in religious virtues, inculcate and encourage fidelity to the faith received of God, supplementing the discipline of the church and implementing its training.—*Principal Sloan, N. S. Normal School.*

"B. O. W. C."

To the Editor of the Educational Review:

DEAR SIR,—You have mistaken the meaning of the letters B. O. W. C. in DeMille's series of boys' books. The letters stand for BRETHREN OF THE ORDER OF THE WHITE CROSS. You will find an amusing account of the organization of this order, and of how Old Solomon, the colored cook, was elevated to the dignity of *Perpetual Grand Panjandrum* in the first chapter of the B. O. W. C.—the first book of the series.
J. L.

Halifax, August 29, 1903.

How would it do to follow the civil-service examination rule in testing the children in written spelling? The applicant is required to write a list of addresses correctly in a given time. Let so many minutes be allowed for the spelling of a selected list of words; then, let every slate or tablet be handed in. An exercise of this kind will teach speed as well as accuracy.