

bigotry may libel our public schools as Godless, I have no hesitation in saying that in all the external forms of morality and religious reverence they will bear honourable comparison with the best governed families and the most austere of the churches.

But it is the absence of method in the moral training of the pupils which chiefly marks school government. Systems of literary and scientific training are assuming form and permanency. If you take arithmetic or grammar, for example, you will find every teacher in the land following very similar methods, and these, improved by experience, produce the best results. There is system, and little is left to the waywardness of fancy or the uncertainties of temperament. But examine how any two teachers secure diligence in study, respect for authority, truthfulness, courtesy, and manliness of character, and you will find that all that lies outside of intellectual training, and all that lies in the province of morality and religion is uncertain and dependent on the views and character of the teacher. He may be in character and practice an Arnold, and regard the moral and spiritual training of his pupils as his highest responsibility. But the probability is that the claims of mental culture under the pressure of competition, whether in high or public school, will be supreme, and that the moral discipline generally amounts to nothing beyond occasional counsels and rebukes, hastily given, often under irritation, and that corporal punishment is regarded as the quickest and best remedy for all moral disease.

Probably the grand mistake, in many instances, is to believe that the moral culture of the pupil means suppression, not development. That is the principle that guides jail discipline, and it cannot be denied that as it is apparently the easiest method it too often marks the school discipline. It is the

easiest and quickest mode of getting rid of the difficulty. It owes its success to the fear of pain; and because it is the quickest way to put down disorder or misconduct of any kind, it is always in favour with teachers who have no high conception of the moral culture of their pupils, or who are only anxious for success in the intellectual contests.

The school discipline is the preparation for the future life of the pupil; and in many respects it is the most important discipline which he can receive. The home discipline is uncertain and incompetent. The discipline and teachings of the Church in a human point of view can do little beyond the creation and maintenance of religious habits: and the habits are in danger of lapsing into mere formalism, because the judgment is not ripe to appreciate them. The Sabbath-school is a better agency for moral culture; but there the attendance of pupils is uncertain, the influence of the teacher comparatively weak, and the time given to instruction bears no comparison with that of the day-school. It is however urged in behalf of the Church and the Sabbath-school that their ministrations and teachings are sacred and blessed of God. But why may we not claim for the day-school all that is claimed for the Church and the Sabbath-school? The culture of an immortal being—body, mind, and soul—is its final purpose, and this culture in its moral and spiritual aspects—outside the limits of denominational theology—is sacred and susceptible to divine influences, and equally subject to divine regard. It is herein I apprehend that the great mistake is made. Parents and teachers have been so impressed by this view: that the Church and the Sabbath-school were sufficient for moral and spiritual culture, and the day-school had no other vocation than that of fitting the pupil for the material business