

doing so. And while the churches, Protestant and Catholic, are active, there are no doubt many children and young persons not found in attendance on the Sabbath schools with which they have dotted the surface of our vast country. The scattered nature of the settlements renders attendance in these more difficult, and, in any case, the churches have no authority to enforce it, if the youth are indifferent or indisciplined. Make public education strictly secular, and it can scarcely fail to happen, that in cases not a few the youth of the province will get their arithmetic and grammar from the school, their

MORALS FROM THE STREET CORNER

or the saloon. That is not a result which any thoughtful and patriotic citizen can contemplate with satisfaction. And lastly on this point, the division of instruction into secular and sacred, with the relegation of the one to the public school and of the other to the home and the Church, which is the ideal of some who should know better, proceeds upon a radical misapprehension of the constitution of man's being, in which the intellectual and moral nature are inseparably intertwined, and in which both parts are constantly operative. It ignores the fact that man is a single and indivisible entity. It is possible to divide the branches of knowledge, but it is not possible to divide the child to whom they are to be taught. Above all it is not possible to keep the moral nature in suspense or inaction, while the intellectual is being dealt with. This is the point on which the whole question before us turns. The opinion of one who has not taken it into account is really worth very little. The child can pass from one branch of secular instruction to another. He can be taught arithmetic this hour, grammar that, and in learning the second he ceases to have anything to do with the first, but in learning the one and the other he continues to be moral; he cannot cease to be this any more than he can cease to breathe and yet live. During the whole six or seven hours daily that he is withdrawn from under the eye of the parents, who are supposed to be primarily if not exclusively responsible for his moral and religious training (for the two in any effective sense must go together) amid lessons and amid play his moral nature is operative, sometimes very actively operative, the principle and habits of a life time are being formed under the teacher's eye. Has the teacher any responsibility in the premises? Must he not hear the profane word in the play ground? Must he not observe the falsehood that is spoken in the class-room? Must he look with indifference on the display of selfish feeling as he might look upon a wart on a pupils hand? Who will say so? The very idea is abhorrent to every right mind. But if he has responsibility for the moral development of his

pupil, then there must not be denied to him the most effective instrument, if not for correcting improprieties of conduct; yet for evoking noble and virtuous action, religious truth, the truths of our common Christianity—in other words, the education must not be absolutely secular. The welfare of the child and the welfare of the State alike forbid it.

The consideration that recommends a purely secular system of education to many notwithstanding its obvious drawbacks is, if I mistake not, the belief that only through its adoption can the separate schools of the Roman Catholic church be abolished without even the shew of of injustice to their supporters. The belief is in my humble opinion a mistaken one; but even if it were not a mistaken one—even if it were a fact that separate schools could only be equitably got rid of through the entire secularization of our public school system, much as this end is to be desired, I

COULD NOT CONSENT TO PURCHASE IT

at such a cost. If the thing is wrong in principle, and likely to be pernicious in operation, is it necessary to say that a right minded man will feel that he has no liberty to employ it to accomplish any end, however desirable. Truth and right disdain the aid of such weapons. The Roman Catholic church errs, indeed, as most Protestants think, in claiming the absolute right to regulate and control the education of its youth. It is a claim which the State, if it would preserve its independence, cannot afford to concede—cannot allow to be put in operation in schools supported by public funds. But that church has hold of a great truth when it asserts everywhere and always that education should be religious, that instruction in the fundamental principles of morality should go hand-in-hand with instruction in reading and arithmetic. As a Protestant, I am unwilling that it should be left to it to be the only witness for this important truth—important alike to the State and to the Church, and that the Protestant churches, through their abandonment of it, should be to that extent placed at a disadvantage in the conflict, whether with sceptical thought or with depraved conduct. In the interests of Protestantism, therefore, as well as of the public well-being, I would venture to ask those whom my words can reach, or my opinions can influence, to think twice before they give their consent to the banishment of the Bible and religious exercises, and the fundamental truths of the Christian religion from the schools in which the youth of this Province is to be taught. If Rome desires to see Protestantism weakened, as we may presume it does, it could wish nothing better than to see it take the twin systems of agnosticism and secularism for its ally in the matter of public school education. A purely secular system of education being open to these grave objections, it is