

ious and irreligious opinion is in the category of the debatable (many on *both* sides say it is not, which to my mind proves that it is;) (4) that the true policy with reference to all such questions is that of perfect liberty, for the *onus* of proving the harmfulness of opposing opinion cannot be discharged. Now let me apply these principles to the schools.

Perhaps you, reader, have been urging that certain things (apart from mere secular education) should, or should not, be taught in the schools, because, as you say, these things are right, or are wrong, although other people do not agree in your opinion of them. Perhaps you are an Imperial Federationist, and want to instil Imperial ideas into the minds of the young. Mr. Parkin has written a book for use in the schools, emphasizing his hobby. You agree with him and want his book introduced into all the schools. In other words, you want to insist that the children of people who do not agree with you are to imbibe your opinions and not those of their parents. You would send these children home to tell their parents that they are acting dishonorably in advocating a rupture of the British connection, and that (as Principal Grant has it) the suggestion of union with the United States "should crimson the faces of people who do not pretend to be fishy-blooded"—that is, the faces of their parents. I know that you are, no doubt, right, so do not tell me that; but again I would remind you that men whose opinions are entitled to as much weight as yours do not think so, and I beseech you "to think it possible you may be mistaken." I ask for liberty.

Or perhaps you believe in militarism and the inculcation of a warlike spirit, and you insist upon flags and drills and painted muskets, so that the fighting propensities (you call them the capacities for defence) may be developed. Other good people abhor the notion of war, and dread the

effect upon their boys of these appeals to their combativeness. You would have the boys tell their peace-loving fathers that they are old women, and that a fighter is the highest type of an English gentleman. You are right of course, and they wrong; but again I plead for liberty.

Or perhaps you believe that education is a vicious thing, unaccompanied by religion, and that the State is turning out "clever scoundrels" instead of worthy citizens. You insist upon religious instruction in all the schools. You quote all our old authorities, a great many of our new ones, and piles of most convincing statistics, to prove that society is held together by morality, and that there can be no morality without religion; and, so far from being shocked with the idea of setting child against parent, you would pray that "it might be the means, under Providence, of," &c., &c. Beyond, peradventure, your "little section of generation" has arrived at the "ultimate infallible credo," but, once more, let me remind you that many people, your equals in intelligence, believe that the religion you want taught is mere superstition and nonsense, which should be educated out of the parents, and not into the children. Once more, I say, let there be liberty.

Perchance Sabbatarianism is your particular hobby, and you believe that a nation which "desecrates the Sabbath" will be cursed of God. You probably, therefore, want the commandments, and particularly the fourth, learned by heart by every Canadian child. It is not enough for you to teach your own children so, but you insist upon the children of people, who think your Sabbatarianism Puritan fudge, to be taught that their parents misbehave themselves shockingly on Sunday. I repeat, let us have liberty.

Or is the abolition of alcoholism your particular ambition? Then you desire that the deplorable effects of fermented liquors should be impressed