

perty for other folk's benefit; you make me pay tax on my own industry and skill, which is like a premium on other people's indolence and stupidity. I am willing to educate my own family, but not other people's. Now the force of the argument has been seriously felt in many country districts, when the aged, who have brought up their families, have been heavily taxed for the building of new school-houses and getting the new educational machinery in motion. We reply in reference to the principle, however, that the sins of parents should not be visited on the children. Bad parents or poverty may be their misfortune. It should not exclude them from a participation in the benefits of a system which would tend to make them members of society. Education will help to prevent the ignorant from becoming a burden on the state as criminals and paupers. It is better to keep people in school than in the poor-house: it is better to pay taxes for education than the punishment of crime. But let us look at the matter in another light. The poor children and parents of a community pay their proportion of the educational taxes in the price of the article they consume. They, in this way pay, say ten or twenty dollars of the indirect tax which the teacher draws from the treasury. Now, if you were to exclude them from school, you would be taking \$10 or \$20 of their money to educate your children. If schools are to be exclusive, then in all justice there should be no indirect taxation for their support, else you will rob the poor customer to educate the children of the wealthy proprietor.

But it is in the name of conscience that the fiercest opposition to our school system is presented. They tell us that it is "irreligious," "godless," "atheistical." It aggrieves their conscience they say, because it does not provide the theological instruction for their children. Now it is needless to say that our school system is chargeable with this negative offence which is its chief excellence. It does not teach any theological system of religion. It aims at being unsectarian—at interfering with no religious belief. Men of all creeds may take advantage of its benefits. The system teaches reading, writing, arithmetic and such like useful branches, and it inculcates by the example of teachers and precepts of recognized text books the fear of God and the necessity of a life of morality. "But this," cry the adversaries, is not enough. It should teach our peculiar religious beliefs. We do not say the food you supply is poisonous in itself, but it is not wholesome unless served up with our theological sauce. The system should provide for paying the cook for making and serving up this sauce whenever it is required—no matter if three-fourths of the Province believe that it is soul destroying poison. The seed you sow is not weeds, but it is not good unless mixed with the seed from our religious sowing sheet and the system should provide for paying the sower who mixed his seed with the grain found in our theological granary—no matter tho' three-fourths of the people believe that grain to be the seeds of deadly error. The charge against the system is not that it teaches positive error, but that it teaches no religion. It is condemned for what it does not do. It does not provide the means of paying teachers to propagate certain definite theological tenets. The objectors are left perfectly free to disseminate their own religious views but they pretend to be aggrieved because the government does not undertake to do it for them, through the educational system. Now, supposing a community of Chinese settled in our country. They wish to bring up their children in the faith of Buddhism. They say to the officers of the law, we cannot conscientiously send our children to your school because in it they do not teach the tenets of our religion. Now, we claim the right of getting a teacher for ourselves, a man after our own heart, setting up an idol in our school-houses and teaching our children the practices and doctrines of our idolatrous worship. We will teach reading, writing and arithmetic along with it, but Buddhism we must have taught or we will have nothing. Suppose in these circumstances the teacher draws all his grants from the treasury, would the government and the people who countenance the

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