

which they do not believe. This is the first objection against religion, as we have it, in the schools: that it violates the principles of justice.

Closely allied with this is the other objection, that it produces continual bickerings, and perpetuates religious distinctions. How much more happy and united we should be if our Roman Catholic friends could only be induced—not forced—to give up their Separate Schools! The same thing will apply to Protestant Separate Schools, for in parts of Ontario there are Protestant Separate Schools. But Protestant or Roman Catholic, they produce the same results: religious hostilities and the dividing of our people into opposing camps.

It is not the Province of the State to teach religious doctrines. It is the Province of the State to teach morality, ethics, good citizenship. It is not its province to teach that there is one God or that there are three Gods; that there is a heaven or is not a heaven; that Jesus Christ was a man or more than a man; that the Bible is inspired in a peculiar sense or not. These are not state functions, as we profess to understand such functions. The office of our schools is to impart secular instruction—to teach arithmetic, geography, and so on. And it is a remarkable thing that people see this truth in other matters, but not in this matter. There are national art schools: there is no doctrinal teaching in them. There are national law schools: there is no religious questions cropping up in them. There are national medical colleges: there is no question of separate schools as far as they are concerned. Why? Because in these cases the correct principle is recognized, viz.: that students attend these institutions to be instructed in law, art, medicine, not in religious doctrines. Schools should be for secular, not for religious teaching. This would cast no slur upon religion. It is no slur upon religion that there is no Bible-reading in the cases mentioned. It is no slur upon religion that a court is not opened with religious exercises, or that there are no Bible mottos in shops. It is merely that it is recognized that there is a time for everything and a place for everything, and that the school is the time and place for the study of secular subjects.

Let us see, however, what is urged upon the other side. It is said that a parent has the right to decide what shall and what shall not be taught his child. Now, this is a very nice point. It certainly seems a hard thing that a parent shall be ignored in this way. But this is simply in a line with all state control in educational and many another matter. Suppose a father does not wish his child to be taught at all, suppose he requires his child to stay at home and help him: does the State listen to his wishes? Not at all. It says, your child may not be brought up in ignorance, because it is not for the general good that this shall be the case. This is just what the State says when it takes men and makes them fight, or forces a man to serve on a jury, or compels him to be a special constable. The principle is the same: the State's rights override private considerations. But the State does not stop here; it says, your son must learn certain things and not others. He must learn arithmetic, *e.g.*, but not Spanish, although, perhaps, he may be going into something where Spanish will be peculiarly useful to him. Why is all this? Simply because the State finds it impossible to have everything taught; and it, therefore, chooses those things which it deems the best for the great majority. It were an infringement of individual liberty if the Government were to prevent a parent from having his son taught the tenets of his faith at all. But it does not do this. It simply says: If you send your son to our school, you must abide by our regulations. You may send him to another school, a private institution; but you will have to pay for that yourself; and we cannot exempt you from taxation merely because you will not avail yourself of what we offer. That is your own loss. If we deny the State this right we shall need to revise entirely our views of the general rights and duties of the state and of the individual.

Another objection is, that if the present religious exercises be abolished, the children will grow up in utter ignorance of religion. This objection has, I think, no weight. What does a child learn of Christianity from the hearing of a prayer and from the reading of a chapter of the Bible? Even if he pay any attention thereto, he cannot obtain from such scanty instruction any real knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrines as currently held. The average pupil in Ontario knows virtually nothing of scripture history and

geography, notwithstanding the Sunday Schools and the religious exercises of the public schools. Why does he know nothing? Simply because he has no lessons on these subjects that he is obliged to learn. At Sunday School he gets up his work—if there is any work—as a sort of compliment to the school or teacher; he cannot be made to learn it. In the day school there is no such work on the time-table. The only way in which children will really learn Bible history and cognate subjects is to have these subjects taught as school lessons; that is, to have a text book on the history (without any reference to the miraculous occurrences related in the Bible) of the Israelitish people. I cannot see why our children should not learn the history of the rise and fall of the Jewish nation, just as they learn the history of the rise and fall of the Athenian or of any other nation, as a mere matter of history. But whether this could be arranged or not, one thing is certain: the knowledge of Bible events obtained from hearing a few verses read each morning is so small as to amount to nothing. But, again: it is said that, if the Bible be omitted, our children will grow up without any moral instincts. This objection, also, is without weight. Morality can be taught apart from the Bible, even if the Bible were not used at home or in the church. There are multitudes of moral men who never read the Bible. The Mohammedan, the Japanese, the Parsee, they all may be—and in many cases are—moral men, without our Bible. Personally I agree with the Roman Catholic Church, that the Bible ought not to be read in its entirety by young people. Like many other good books, it contains certain parts, which, however necessary, are not suitable for children or for public reading. Any teacher who would read habitually certain chapters would be at once dismissed by his Board of Trustees. Let moral precepts be studied, if necessary, in books of ethics; it will be found that they will appeal to the better nature of the children from their innate truth, not by reason of any name or authority. But ethics and morality will be taught far more effectually than through books by the silent influence of the teacher and the general surroundings of the school. If the teacher is straightforward, honourable, gentlemanly, his influence will inevitably be felt. It is by such means, far more than by any text-books, that morality can be inculcated. It is like learning to speak. If the teacher speaks correctly, his example will affect the scholars far more than formal lessons in grammar.

There is one further objection urged. This is, that religious exercises produce a reverence for religion. The pupils, it is said, are filled with a reverence for sacred things, when day by day they listen to, or take part in, these exercises. There may be a measure of truth in this. Many persons believe that there is. I must say, however, that my experience does not bear this out. I believe that, in the majority of cases, the exercises are looked upon as perfunctory. They are like chapel attendance at college, a something to be avoided, if possible. So that in many colleges such attendance has been done away with, because it has been found that it produces no good effect. I am convinced that in these cases familiarity too often produces contempt; and the pupils feel that there is an incongruity in thus mingling religious exercises and secular studies.

Let the home, the church, and the Sunday school teach religion; surely they ought to be enough for the purpose. If our young people are not instructed in religion the fault must lie in these churches and agencies; and the little school time devoted to Bible-reading, prayers, and the Ten Commandments will not rectify the fault.

Let the churches, the Sunday schools, the other religious agencies, the homes: let these be the means of imparting religious instruction, but let the Public Schools, Collegiate Institutes, High Schools, and Universities, be free to fulfil their legitimate function, the imparting of secular knowledge.

This is the only way in which we can ever hope to induce our Roman Catholic friends and others to consent to the abolition of Separate Schools; this is the only plan which shall do away with sectarian differences in educational, and eventually in other spheres. All compromises will fail. No Bible selections or statements of belief will be satisfactory to all. If the New Testament is read, the Jews will feel aggrieved; if the Old Testament, the orthodox Christians; if the Bible in any form is read, agnostics and secularists will object. If the Douay Bible is used, Protestants will object; if the ordinary version, the Roman