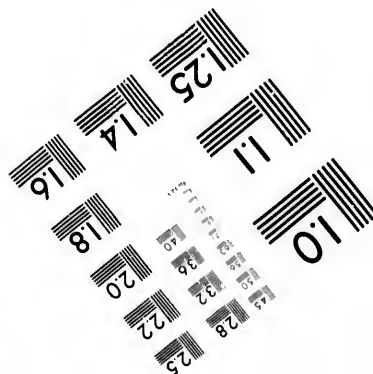
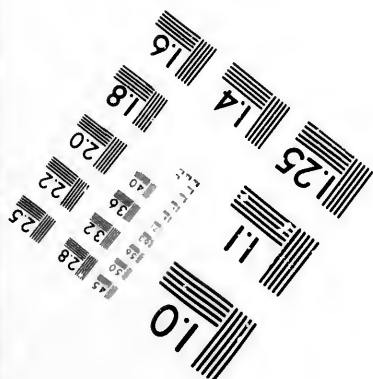
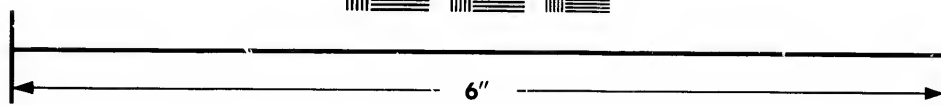
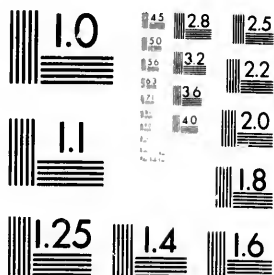


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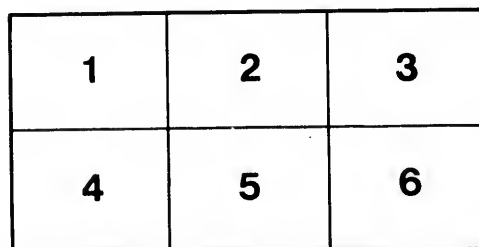
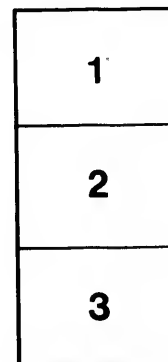
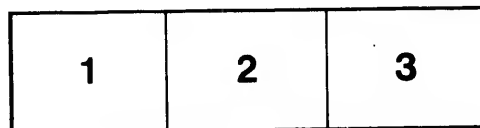
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EDUCATION:

NOT SECULAR NOR SECTARIAN,

— BUT —

RELIGIOUS.

BY THE REV. J. M. KING, D. D.

A Lecture delivered at the Opening of the Theological Department
of Manitoba College, Winnipeg, Oct. 29, 1889.

The subject of common school education is one which is likely to engage in the near future the public mind in this province to an extent which it has not hitherto done. Important changes are foreshadowed as in contemplation. An attempt is to be made, it appears, to terminate a system which, however accordant with the views of a section of the inhabitants, can never, and especially as it has been wrought, be other than unacceptable to the great majority. The best thanks of the country are due, one need not hesitate to say, to any government which makes an honest endeavor to remedy the existing evils and place the matter of public school education on a more satisfactory basis.

The subject is confessedly one of more than ordinary difficulty, even as it is one of the very last importance. It has not indeed, any very close or obvious connection with the work with which, whether as arts or theological students, we are to be engaged. It is neither a question of philosophy nor of theology, strictly speaking; yet it has claims upon our attention at this moment as one of the colleges of the province, which only a few questions, whether of philosophy or theology, possess. It is at least a live question and may soon become a burning one. The present lecture is given, not as an adequate or exhaustive discussion of the subject, but as a humble aid to its better understanding by the people of this province, with whom, it is to be hoped, its ultimate settlement within the limits of Manitoba will be found to rest.

Numerous questions are raised when we direct our minds to the consideration of this subject. What form should public school education assume; education, that is, the details of which are determined and its cost met in part at least by the State? Should it be restricted to the elementary branches, or

should it embrace the higher branches also? Should it be entirely free or only partially so? In particular,

SHOULD IT BE PURELY SECULAR?

or should it be at the same time religious, and if religious, in what form is the religious element to find place? What I have to say this evening will have reference to the last only of these questions, which, however, is also by far the most important.

A purely secular system of education: one, that is, in which there should be no attempt to combine religious instruction or religious influence with the teaching of reading, grammar and other such branches, has some strong and obvious recommendations, especially in the present divided state of religious opinion. First, it is in strict accord with what appears to be the modern view of the function of the State. According to this view, it is no part of this function to teach religious truth. That lies wholly within the domain of conscience, a domain which a power wielding the sword may not enter. Civil government, it is claimed, has been instituted for quite other purposes than that of propagating religious opinions, however true and however important. To use its resources for this end is to misuse them, and in doing so even to render a doubtful service to the truth which it has espoused. Again the purely secular system of education escapes numberless difficulties which are apt to arise, when religious teaching is made to form an integral part of the system. There is no longer any question of what kind and amount of Christian instruction should be imparted. There is no more any room for the jealousies of rival denominations, so far as the school system is concerned. No branch of the Church, Protestant or Catholic, can feel that another is getting the advantage of it, when all are treated alike, the religious

opinions of all being equally ignored. Within one domain, at least, there is absolute freedom from ecclesiastical quarrels, the bitterest of all quarrels as our legislators are accustomed to say, with that happy blindness to the character of their own contentions which is so common. Now, even admitting that the statement proceeds on a somewhat exaggerated estimate of the danger to peace and good feeling arising from religious instruction finding a place in the public school, it is an obvious gain to have in its exclusion the door shut against one element of jealousy and discord. It may be added as another advantage, that with religious teaching relegated to the home and to the church, so much more time is left for those secular branches which all admit ought to form the staple of public school instruction, and which in our day have become numerous enough to tax the brain and the time both of teachers and pupils. In the light of such considerations as these, it is not, perhaps, astonishing that a purely secular system of public school instruction, should present itself to many persons as the best, or if not the absolutely best, yet the best practicable in a community where such diversities of religious opinion exist as exists among ourselves. Is it the best, then, or even the best practicable? Is it good at all? I do not think so, and it will be my aim in the first part of this lecture to support this opinion in the calmest and most dispassionate manner in my power. First, then, I ask you to notice, that, when the purely secular system of education is supported on the plea that it is no part of the function of the State to teach religious truth, consistency demands

THE EXCLUSION OF ALL RELIGIOUS IDEAS from the authorized text books, even to that of the Divine existence, which is not only a religious truth, but the fundamental truth of religion. If there must not be religious instruction in the public school, if the reading of the Bible even must form no part of the exercises, because the State, which sustains the school, transcends its legitimate and proper sphere, when it undertakes to teach religious truth, then, on the same ground, any literature which expresses religious opinions or appeals to religious sentiments or enforces religious obligations, must be excluded from the books used in the classroom, or these must be purged of the obtrusive if not obnoxious element, prior to their admission. The principles of morality, if enforced at all by the teacher, must be enforced by considerations altogether distinct from the authority, the character or the will of the Creator. The Ten Commandments, giving the summary of the Divine will in relation to man and the basis for over three thousand years of human morals, cannot be taught. Such are the conclusions which we are compelled by a resistless logic to accept, if we adopt the fundamental principle of secularism,

viz., that the State oversteps its proper sphere when it undertakes to teach religious truth, and on that principle argue for the exclusion of the reading of the Bible or any definite religious instruction from the exercises of the public school. And some have not hesitated to accept them in their entirety. France, logical, if anything, has done so. It has not, indeed, adopted the blasphemous atheistic catechisms which have been long current among a certain class of the population, but it has, if I am rightly informed, with an unhappy consistency, entirely removed the name of God and the whole group of ideas connected therewith from the text-books which it puts into the hands of its youth. An Australian colony, too, has not hesitated, in conformity with the secularistic principle, which it has adopted, to excise from a passage of Longfellow the lines expressive of religious sentiment, before giving it a place in the book of lessons. The people of Manitoba, I feel sure, are not prepared for any such course in the matter of public school education. And in rejecting it—in regarding it with instinctive revulsion—they must be viewed as at the same time repudiating the purely secular view of the State and its functions on which it is based and of which it is the logical outcome.

So far, however, the conclusion is a purely negative one. Religious instruction in the public schools is not ruled out by the character of the State as a civil institution. But even if admissible, is it expedient? Is it requisite? The answer to this question, which is one of the very highest importance, can only come from a consideration of the end contemplated in public school education. What, then, is the aim of the State in instituting and maintaining public schools? There will probably be very general accord on this point. The aim surely is, or at least ought to be

TO MAKE GOOD CITIZENS,

as far as education can be supposed to make such; citizens who, by their intelligence, their industry, their self-control, their respect for law, will tend to build up a strong and prosperous State; citizens whose instructed minds, whose trained powers, whose steadfast principles will serve to promote the public welfare. This, and neither more nor less, must be the aim of the public school in the view of the State, and as far as supported by it; not more,—it overshoots the mark when it seeks to develop the purely spiritual qualities, the graces of a religious life, except as these are subservient to the origination and growth of civic virtues; and not less, it falls as far short of the mark when it is viewed as designed simply to give instruction in reading, arithmetic and other such branches, and thereby to promote intelligence and to train intellect. The idea of the institution is most defective, so defective as to be virtually

misleading, which makes the school simply a place for imparting knowledge, or in addition, an intellectual gymnasium. It should be beyond question, that the State, in undertaking the work of education, can only find an aim at once adequate and consistent in the preparation of the youth, so far as public education can prepare them, for the parts they have to play in civil life. In a single word, the aim of the public school is to make good citizens, or to train the youth of the State, that they shall become good citizens. But to make good citizens, the school must make good men. Character is at least as requisite as intelligence, virtuous habits as trained intellect, to the proper equipment for life. The prosperity, whether of the individual or of the State, rests on a treacherous basis, which does not rest on integrity and self-control. It is often the precursor of ruin. Against that ruin, learning whether of the school or of the college, is but a feeble barrier. Nay, learning divorced from morals, disciplined intellect disengaged from the control of virtuous principle may only make that ruin more speedy and more complete, may have no other result than to give us more skillful swindlers, or more expert thieves. In this way, the school instructing the mind and cultivating the intellectual facilities while disregarding the moral nature, constitutes a real danger and may become a positive injury both to the individual and to society. In any case it must be obvious that the good man is necessary to constitute the good citizen, and the education therefore, which is to promote the society and welfare of the state must be capable of forming good men—it must at least aim at doing so.

But to make good men there must be moral teaching and moral training; that is, there must be both instruction in the principles of morality and the effort to see that these principles are acted out by those in attendance on the school. The virtues of truthfulness, purity, gentleness, self-control—the virtues which go to make good men—if in any sense native to the soil of our fallen nature, find much in it to retard their growth. They need to be cultivated. The opposite vices, falsehood, selfishness, angry passion, will shew themselves more or less in every school room, and every play ground. They will need to be wisely but firmly repressed. The school, if its aim be to make not simply expert arithmeticians, correct grammarians, but truthful and upright men, pure minded and gentle women, cannot disregard the workings of the moral nature, as these come out from day to day within it, nor on their better side, nor on their worse. The better must be fostered and encouraged, the worse checked and in some cases punished. The conscience must be appealed to. The sense of duty must be cultivated. The habit of obedience must be taught. It is true that the public school is

NOT PRIMARILY A SCHOOL OF MORALITY

any more than it is primarily a school of religion, but a teacher charged with the oversight of children for five or six hours a day during the most formative period of life, may not ignore the moral nature, as it reveals itself every hour in his presence. He must rebuke or punish indolence, falsehood, rudeness, malice, even as he must encourage diligence, truthfulness, purity and gentleness. For him to be indifferent or neutral in the conflict between good and evil, which goes on in the school-room and the play-ground as really as in the business mart or the legislative hall, of which the heart of the youngest child is the seat, as undeniably as that of the busiest adult, is virtually to betray the cause of right; and in mercy at once to the child and to society, he must make his sympathy with goodness, with right character and right conduct, clearly and decisively felt. At any rate, if the public school is to be the seed-plot of noble character, of generous virtues, and not simply of scholastic attainments, if it is to furnish society with good citizens, and not simply with smart arithmeticians or possibly with apt criminals, there must be found in it, not only methodical instruction and careful intellectual drill, but amid all else, as the occasion offers or requires, moral teaching and moral influence. The presiding genius in every school, a genius which may be often silent but which should never sleep, ought to be a lofty and generous morality.

But (and this forms the last link in the argument against a purely secular system of education) moral teaching, to be effective in the highest degree, or in any degree near to the highest, must lean on religion and be enforced by its considerations. It is this, position especially that the apologist for a purely secular system refuses to accept. It is claimed that it is possible to teach morality, and morality of a high kind, without introducing the religious element in any form. Everything turns here on what is meant by the teaching of morality. If by this is meant simply, pointing out in words what is proper and dutiful in human conduct, defining the duties which men owe to each other, then it is possible. The summaries of morals which are found in the agnostic literature of the period, not the less excellent that they are, in good part, borrowed without acknowledgement from the Bible, demonstrate its possibility. But to how little purpose are duties pointed out in the school-room, or anywhere else, if there are no considerations presented, enforcing their performance, no sanctions of a high and sacred kind to secure them against neglect or violation. The whole end contemplated in the teaching of morality, is TO BRING THE TEACHING INTO PRACTICE, to have the precept translated into action. And the main difficulty in the attainment of this end, as everyone knows, has al-

ways been in connection, not with the rule, but with the motive; it has always been, not to point out the direction in which the life should move, but to cause it to take this direction, in spite of the deflecting force at work. The failure of Pagan systems of morality was far more due to defective sanctions, than to wrong rules of conduct, and the vice and crime which are found in every Christian country to-day are in only a small degree the result of ignorance of what is right. They are mainly due to sinful dispositions, some of them inherited, to unbridled appetites, and to the force of bad example. Now the problem is, to find and to bring into play a motive or a cluster of motives powerful enough to overcome these forces of evil, and to carry the life in spite of them towards what is good. In the absence of religion, with that sphere closed, where is the public school to find such a motive? Denied access to those which religion supplies, by what considerations is it to enforce obedience to the moral rules which it lays down? There are, of course, considerations of expediency, of self-respect, of the authority of the teacher, and the fear in extreme cases of the rod which he wields, to which appeal can be made, but who would expect noble and generous character or action as the result? It is undeniable that the highest and most powerful motives of right conduct lie within the religious sphere. Even if it does not require the idea of God to render the conception of duty intelligible—to ground it—as many think it does, it is certain that the being and character and moral government of God give to the word duty a new force, and invest the whole details of duty with a new sacredness, presenting them as the embodiment of the Creator's will. It is not less certain, that added hatefulness and terror gather round falsehood, selfishness, injustice, all that is undutiful and wrong, when it is viewed as the object of His displeasure "in Whom we live and move and have our being;" while a whole circle of moral excellencies, patience, meekness, gentleness, considerate regard for others, self-denial, do not so much gain added charms, as they almost come first into distinct sight, when they are enjoined in the words and displayed in the life of the Saviour of mankind. There may be a select few—persons of philosophical thought, who can dispense with these sanctions of morality or who think they can; whose observance of duty rests on some other grounds, but to the great bulk of mankind, and very specially to children, they furnish the strongest and most appreciable motives to virtuous action—they are the indispensable supports of right conduct. To me, therefore, it is as certain as any moral truth can be that to shut out religion from the public school, and thus to refuse to the teacher the employment of these sanctions, is to render the moral teaching

weak and ineffective and therefore to defeat the very end which alone justifies the State in maintaining the school, the training of good citizens, or at the very least, to make the attainment of that end far less complete than it might be. Even Huxley says "My belief is that no human being and that no society composed of human beings ever did or ever will come to much unless their conduct was governed and guided by the love of an ethical idea, viz., religion. Undoubtedly your gutter child may be converted by mere intellectual drill into the 'subtlet of all the beasts of the field,' but we know what has become of the original of that description and there is no need to increase the number."

THE NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH

to effective moral teaching would be admitted by some, not by all, of the advocates of a purely secular system of public education. It would be more or less fully admitted by most of them who are professedly Christian men. But the ground is taken, that while the knowledge of religious truth is desirable, even indispensable, it is best, especially in the divided state of opinion on religious questions, that religious instruction should be communicated by the parent and by the Church, and that the school should confine itself to instruction in the secular branches. This is plausible; it is no more. I believe the position to be essentially unsound. For, first, if moral teaching, enforced by religious considerations, is requisite in order to make good, law-abiding citizens, that is, in order to promote the security and the well-being of society, the State ought to be able itself to furnish it, and ought to furnish it in the schools which it maintains. It is not denied for a moment, that there is a kind and amount of religious instruction which is more competent to the parent and to the Church, that there are aspects of religious truth, as for example, the nature and the necessity of regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit, with which perhaps these alone should be expected to deal, but the more general truths of religion, as the existence, the character and the moral government of God—such truths as, we have seen, add to the sanctions of virtue and strengthen the sense of duty—these it must be competent for the State to teach, otherwise it does not possess the means for its own preservation and for the protection of its own well-being. Second, the restriction of the school to purely secular instruction with the relegation of religious instruction and even moral on its religious side, to the home and the Church gives no security that the latter will be supplied at all in many cases. There are not a few parents, even in our favored land, who are too indifferent to impart moral and religious teaching to their children, not a few whose own character and habits render them quite incapable of effectively

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

only what we might expect, to find it condemned more or less strongly by the various Christian bodies. Our own church has testified during recent years with increasing unanimity and force, to the importance of the religious element in the instruction given in the public school, and to the desirability of its being enlarged rather than reduced and far less eliminated. And in this respect it has only reflected the trend of opinion among thoughtful Christian people in general. Accordingly corresponding action has been taken by the courts of the other churches. A voice may have been raised here and there in favor of a purely secular system, under the idea that it is demanded by the principle of the separation of Church and State, but the prevailing opinion has been and is unmistakably against it or any approach to it. The truth is, it is not difficult to observe the existence throughout the country, of a deepening conviction of the danger to the State and to public morals, without which the State can have no stability, of a system of education in which religion has no place. As it is in our country, so is it elsewhere. In some of the Australian colonies, where the system has been for some time established, it encounters only a fiercer opposition from the Christian bodies as its results became more apparent.

It is not easy to state with exactness WHAT THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN

of the purely secular system of education, where it has been introduced, how far it is responsible for the greater prevalence of certain forms of crime in our day. It is easy to state, what, reasoning from general principles, we would expect the results to be; but it takes time, not one year but many to develop fully the consequences of such an experiment. I could not help, however, being struck with a paragraph in the Edinburgh Scotsman for September 21st. In Scotland, if I mistake not, the question of religious instruction is left with the school board of each locality. At the time when the system was introduced great opposition was offered in a certain stirring and somewhat radical border-town of Scotland, to any form of religious instruction in the public school. Now, in the paragraph referred to, the provost of that town is reported as saying, "Matters were getting so bad that he thought the magistrates would have to meet and appoint a public whipper. They were reluctant to send boys of such tender years either to prison or the reformatory and he thought the appointment of a public whipper was the only way of successfully coping with such misconduct. Not only parents, but teachers were greatly to blame for the reprehensible conduct of the youth of the town who did not seem to be getting the right kind of tuition at school." Is the alternative, then, the Bible in the school, or the whipping post at the police court?

And if so, who would hesitate which to choose?

With these words I pass from the consideration of the purely secular system of public education. I do not know for certain that it is the intention of the government, or of any member of it to propose its introduction into Manitoba. Hints, indeed something like assurances to this effect, have found their way into the public press. Should this prove well-founded, and the attempt be made to institute a system of public school instruction, in which religion shall be recognized only by its exclusion, I find it difficult to believe that the present House, numbering many thoughtful, Christian men, when it is fully seized of the question, will give to such a measure its sanction. In resiating the attempt, if it is made, members may count on the hearty approval and support of many whose voices are seldom heard, perhaps too seldom, on public questions. The hope may be entertained that a bill seating secularism pure and naked in the public schools, will not be suffered to obtain a place on the statute book of this fair province. If the considerations adduced in this lecture have any force, it should encounter the opposition, not only of Christian men, but of thoughtful and patriotic citizens. In my humble opinion, and I trust it is the opinion also of many whom I address, a system of public school instruction, which makes no provision for the recognition of God, which does not even allow such recognition, in which the Bible shall be a sealed book, and the name of the Saviour of mankind may not be spoken, and in which the highest sanctions of morality and the most powerful persuasions to right conduct—those I mean which religion and religion alone supplies—are not allowed to be employed—such a system

COULD SCARCELY FAIL TO BE PREJUDICIAL to the State, as it ought to be intolerable to the conscience of a Christian people.

At the opposite extreme, there is the system of separate or denominational schools, such as to some extent now obtains in this Province, a system under which not only is religious instruction given, but the distinctive doctrines and practices of individual churches are taught. Does the continuance and extension of this system promise a solution of the educational difficulty? By no means. Less injurious probably in its operation, it is even more indefensible in principle than the one which has been so freely criticized.

First, it is in direct violation of the principle of the separation of Church and State. It is unnecessary, indeed it would be quite irrelevant, to argue this principle here. It is that on which, rightly or wrongly, the State with us is constituted. I do not understand it to mean that the State may not have regard to religious considerations, such as it shows, when it enforces the observance of the Sabbath

rest, or, that it may not employ religious sanctions, as it does when in its courts of law it administers an oath in the name of God; but I do understand it to mean that the State is neither to give material aid to the operations of the Church in any of its branches, nor to interfere with its liberties. Each, while necessarily influencing the other, has its own distinct sphere, and must bear all the responsibilities of action within that sphere. Now when the right of taxation, and in addition grants of money are given by the State to schools, in which the distinctive doctrines and rites of any church, whether Protestant or Catholic, are taught, schools which, while giving instruction in secular branches, are used at the same time to extend the influence, if not to increase the membership of that church, then the principle of the separation of church and State is violated almost as much as if the officiating minister or priest were taken into the pay of the State, and the violation (I say it with all frankness, but without any feeling of hostility to any class), is not more easily borne, that it is mainly in the interest of a single section of the Church. The public school is surely meant to be the school of the State by which it is supported. It does not exist to initiate the youth of the Province into the details of Christian doctrine, or to prepare them for communion. Its main, if not indeed its sole aim, is to make good citizens; intelligent, capable, law-abiding citizens. But under our present system, schools exist and are maintained by the State which are church schools in everything but in name, which are in fact proselytising agencies. Their establishment in the early history of the Province is an inconsistency which it is not, perhaps, difficult to explain, but their perpetuation can scarcely fail to be felt by the majority of the inhabitants, as a misappropriation of public funds and an injustice to a large section of the community.

Second, the system of separate, or sectarian schools, operates injuriously on the well-being of the State. However useful it may be to the church or churches adopting it, enabling them to keep their youth well in hand and to preserve them from any danger to faith or morals which might result from daily contact with those of a different creed, it is in that measure hurtful to the unity and therefore to the strength of the State. It occasions

A LINE OF CLEAVAGE IN SOCIETY,

the highest interests of which demand that it should, as far as possible, be one. It perpetuates distinctions and almost necessarily gives rise to sentiments which are at once a reproach and a peril. I do not think the religious differences between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches, small or unimportant. As a Protestant, sincerely and firmly believing our faith to be more scriptural, I could not wish these difference to be thought of

little account, but surely it is possible for the one party and the other to maintain steadfastly their respective beliefs without cherishing sentiments of distrust and hostility to the manifest injury of the public weal. And yet they are the almost necessary result of a sectarian system of education. The youth of the country, its future citizens, are separated in the school and in the playground. Separation results in mutual ignorance, and ignorance begets indifference, misconception, sometimes even contempt. This is no fancy picture. One has only to listen to the language and mark the countenance of the children of Winnipeg to-day, when reference is made to those of the other faith, in order to see how much ignorant scorn exists, which could not exist did children of all faiths meet in the same school and associate in the same playground. Surely the State should not, unless compelled to do so, lend the authority of law, and the support of public moneys, to a system of education which so injuriously affects its unity and therefore its stability and well-being.

I do not know whether the Province has the power to change the existing system. That is a question of law with which I feel myself incompetent to deal, and which in any case could not be suitably discussed on an occasion like this. One may certainly wish that it may be found to possess the power, or if not, that it may receive it. The system, itself, of separate or sectarian schools appears to be incapable of justification on any ground of right principle or even of wise expediency. I do not expect to see any permanent contentment in relation to the question while the system is maintained. The conviction will continue to be deeply and generally cherished, that the equities of the situation have been disregarded and that the interests of the State have been sacrificed to meet the requirements of the Church of Rome.

But if a purely secular system of education is deemed in the highest degree objectionable, and a denominational, or sectarian system only less objectionable, what is it proposed to establish in their place? I answer, a system of public, unsectarian, but not non-religious schools. It is admitted on all hands that the main work of the school ought to be instruction in the various secular branches. Its primary aim is to fit those in attendance for the active duties of life. But as not inconsistent with this aim, rather as in a high degree subservient to its attainment, it is desired that the religious element should have a definite place assigned to it in the life of the school; that it should be recognized to this extent at least, that the school should be opened and closed with prayer, that the Bible, or selections from it,

SHOULD BE READ DAILY,

either in the common, or in the Douay

version, as the trustees may direct, that the morality inculcated should be Christian morality and that the teacher should be at liberty to enforce it, and should be encouraged to enforce it, by those considerations at once solemn and tender, which are embraced in the common belief of Christendom. A system of public education of this kind, in which religion has a definite but at the same time strictly guarded place assigned to it, ought to be acceptable to the great majority of the people of this Province. It has certainly much to recommend it. It has no sectarian features and yet it is not godless. Religion is recognized in it in such form and degree as to make it possible to give a high tone to the life of the school, as to secure more or less familiarity with the contents of Scripture on the part of every child, and as to make available for the teacher those lofty and sacred sanctions which have in all ages been found the most effective instruments in the enforcement of morality.

I can understand it to be objectionable to agnostics and Jews, possibly also, though one would desire not, to the Roman Catholic church. But with a conscience clause, such as would be properly included, excusing attendance on the religious exercises, where so desired by the parents, there would be no just complaint in the case of the former. The number of people in the Province, who do not accept the New Testament, even with the addition of those who accept neither the Old nor the New, who do not believe in God, is not large, it may be hoped, will never be large; it cannot be reasonably claimed that the Bible should on their account be excluded from the public school. It would be a travesty alike of justice and of popular government that a mere fraction of the community should virtually dictate the form which public education is to assume, contrary to the wishes of the great majority. The people of the Province as a whole abide by the Christian faith. The statistics of the several Christian bodies, the amount of money contributed within the Province for religious purposes, shows the keen and general interest which the inhabitants take in the matter. Well, the schools are theirs, are sustained by their money. Surely they have the uncontested right to give a place in them to their common Christian beliefs, especially where these are seen to be in a high degree helpful, if not indeed indispensable, to the ends for which the schools exist.

The system, while so far meeting the views of Roman Catholics, as it is distinctly religious,

WILL POSSIBLY BE OBJECTIONABLE TO THEM

as a body, though certainly not to all, as not going far enough. They would desire that the public schools should be free to teach, not only the great common beliefs of Christendom,

though these surely embrace, if not all that is most vital, yet enough to enforce the highest morality, but also the distinctive doctrines and rites of the Roman Catholic church. The teacher, while sustained by public funds, must be free not only to read the Holy Scriptures in the version most approved by the parents, but to read out of them, or to read into them, the worship of the Virgin Mary, the invocation of saints and whatever is held by the Church of Rome. Now, I would not willingly be a party to inflicting injustice in any section of the community, and there are special reasons why the claims of our French-speaking Roman Catholic brethren should be fairly and, if possible, even generously considered. They were early in this western land. They have done much, and at great cost—cost not of money only, but of toll and suffering for the native races. But this claim—the claim to teach the distinctive doctrines and rites of their Church in schools sustained by public moneys—is one, I have no hesitation in saying, and as entertaining much regard for some among us by whom it is made, I say it with regret, which the State ought not to concede, should not feel itself at liberty to concede. It is a privilege, which under the system proposed, is not granted to any other church. No one desires to have the opportunity to teach the distinctive doctrines of Presbyterianism, or Methodism, or even of Protestantism in the public school, or if any cherish such a wish it would be very properly denied them. There is no room, therefore, to speak of injustice to a class who happen to be in the minority, when exactly the same privileges are granted to them which are granted to other classes of the community. If it is a matter of conscience with the Roman Catholic church (it is obviously not with all its members) that the whole body of the faith, as held by it, should be taught even to the youth in attendance on school and in the day school. I see nothing else for it than that they should establish and support from voluntary contributions the schools in which such teaching is to be given. But it were surely far better that our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens should unite with us in securing a distinct recognition of our common Christianity within the public school, leaving what is distinctive, and what many on the one side and on the other feel to be very important to be taught to the children in the Sabbath school, or in the church, or, better still, in the home.

The statement is sometimes made—it has been made more than once of late in our city—that the ground now taken implies a denial of right to the Roman Catholic minority in the province, one as real as if the privilege of separate schools were withdrawn from the Protestant minority in Quebec. But the schools of the majority in Quebec are, as we might expect—distinctively Roman Catholic. The cate-

chisms and formularies of the Church of Rome are taught in them. It is surely to presume on our ignorance to institute in these circumstances a comparison between the position of the minority in our own province and that of the minority in the Province of Quebec. It is to trifle with our intelligence to affirm that the denial of separate schools in the one case would be on a par with its denial in the other. The two cases are really essentially different. No well instructed and impartial mind can put them on a level.

The attempt will no doubt be made to belittle in various ways the importance of such recognition of religion in our public schools, as has been advocated.

It will be said, as it has been recently said by a journal published in another province, but with special reference to the situation in this one, that little importance is to be attached to

RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF A GENERAL CHARACTER.

teaching, that is, from which the distinctive doctrines of the several Christian bodies have been eliminated. For such an assertion there is no good ground whatever. The reverse of it would be nearer the truth. All the most powerful motives to good conduct, all the most effective supports of morality, are found within the common creed of Christendom. They are not the exclusive property of any of the churches. If the unsectarian teaching, therefore, of the public school would not be influential and influential for good, it would be due rather to the lack of skill or of earnestness on the teacher's part, than to the poverty of the resources from which he was privileged to draw.

It is also said that the opening and closing of the school with prayer and the reading of the Bible, is too small a matter attached to it, one way or another. It certainly does not bulk largely in the general exercises. But that settles nothing as to its importance or non-importance. Our national flag is a small thing—a piece of bunting which can be bought for a dime or two. Nevertheless, as it floats over our homes, it represents the power of England. And even so, the divine name invoked in the opening exercises, the open Bible on the desk, holds up to teacher and scholar alike, the presence and the majesty of God. It is true, the exercise may be in some cases little more than a seemly form, just as the exercise of private or domestic worship may be only a form, under cover of which the worshipper dismisses himself only the more securely to a day of unrelieved worldliness. But this possibility is not supposed to constitute a valid reason for discontinuing the exercise in the latter case; nor should it be in the former. It is a reason why school trustees should have more regard to Christian character than they often have, in the choice of persons to be the

moral as well as intellectual guides of our youth.

This suggests another objection which is sometimes raised. How few public school teachers, it is said, are really fit persons to conduct the religious exercises referred to? My acquaintance with the teachers of the province is not sufficiently large to enable me to answer this question. Some of them, I know, are among the best, the most consistent and earnest members of the several churches, and if others are of a different character—if the religious principles or the habits of any of them are of such a kind as to make the conduct of public prayer by them, or even the public reading of the Bible, an incongruity, something like a farce, then in any case, whether there are religious exercises or not, they are obviously not fit persons to superintend the intellectual and moral training of the youth of this or of any other province.

It is not the least important consideration connected with this question, though it is often one lost sight of, that the mode of its settlement must have a very marked influence on the character of the public school teachers as a class. Eliminate the religious element entirely, make the relation of the teacher to his pupil, just such as that of the tradesman to his apprentice, only that the one teaches reading, writing and arithmetic, the other a trade or handicraft and the general character of those in the profession will be lowered. There will still be those engaged in it of high moral and religious principle, but the prospect of exercising the profession and the actual exercise of it will no longer furnish the same incentive to the cultivation of such principle. Almost the reverse. Religion will be a sort of disqualification, or at least inconvenience, inasmuch as the teacher's mouth must be shut within the school, not only on all which he holds most sacred, but on all which he has found most helpful to his own goodness. Now the real attainment may fall below the standard, will often fall below it in this imperfect world. It will seldom rise above it. With the standard changed, with the position of the teacher lowered by the elimination of the religious element from his sphere, the character of the profession as a whole will be in time lowered also to the inevitable injury of the youth and, therefore, of the country.

THE FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE QUESTION,

which is now agitating the community, may be remote. It is possible it may be the work of years. Let us cherish the hope, that, when it is reached, it may be one which will not signalize the triumph of any political or ecclesiastical party, but one in which good men of all parties can take pride, and as the result of which the care and training of our youth shall become an object of greater solicitude to the people of the province, and the profession

of the teacher, accordingly rise in general estimation. Gentlemen of the college—whether in the theological or in the arts course, be prepared to contribute your part in accomplishing such a settlement. Your experience in this institution may perhaps throw valuable light on the question to you, as it has helped, if not to shape, yet to strengthen, my convictions on the subject. On the benches of this college there have sat during the six years of my connection with it, as there sit to-day, representatives of almost all the religious denominations in the province, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, Roman Catholic, and, of course, Presbyterian. The Bible has been read every morning and its teachings have been enforced, as occasion offered or seemed to require. In addition you have been led in prayer by the members of the staff in turn. No one, so far as I know, has taken offence. No one has asked to be excused at-

tendance at the religious exercises on conscientious grounds. We have all, I am sure, been helped by these exercises. The tone of the college life has been assuredly raised thereby. Why take away then altogether from the public school that which we have found at once so inoffensive and so useful. Let the politician give us some better answer than this, that the Roman Catholic church or her priests at least, demand that we shall either tolerate her sectarian schools or expel the Bible—their Bible as well as ours, from the public schools, and expel it from the public schools with what result? To make it possible for them to recommend or even sanction the support of these schools by their people? Not at all; their avowed principles would forbid it; but to give them obviously and undeniably the godless character which will go far to justify their condemnation and rejection of them.

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