

they leave a child to learn its arithmetic in the same way? A foundation had to be laid on which the child could build his religion. It was said that they should teach a child only what people were not prepared to contradict. Was there anything that somebody was not prepared to contradict? Religious education was something greater than religious knowledge. It was not learning whether this or that Gospel was authentic or not, but it was the application of a certain point of view. It was not only a definite religious lesson in a class room, but the permeating and moulding of the child's character through the influence of the teacher and the religious code under which the latter worked.'

Most of the ideas to which expression has been given above, have been for ages among the common-places of Catholic educational theory and practice. But, in these countries, at least, they are so rarely heard from the Protestant pulpit or platform as to excite and deserve more than passing note. There is, however, one circumstance in connection with this published utterance of the Right Rev. Dr. Neligan that puzzles us somewhat. It seems to us passing strange that, with such ideals, he could ever have coquetted with the Bible-in-schools League. May we venture the hope that he may take steps—as the local Catholic Bishops have so thoroughly done—to put his ideals of religious education into immediate and daily practice among the children of his faith within the boundaries of his jurisdiction?

'Every chapter of human history,' says a co-religionist of Dr. Neligan, 'is full of warning as to the inevitable effects which purely material studies and material absorption have upon a nation's life.' The ignoring of religious instincts, and the cessation of the cultivation of religious feelings have ever led to national decay and death. But the righteousness which exalteth a nation is not to be acquired by a mere mental attitude towards religion. It does not consist merely in a study of the Sacred Narrative—although this, too, is a matter of the utmost importance. It is to know God, to have a living faith in Him, to hold communion with Him, to obey and serve Him. This is life. And the chief business of the school is to equip the child for the duties of life—to train the mind, to mould the heart, to form the character. To succeed in this, sacred subjects must be dealt with by competent persons, of high character, in a thorough and definite and intelligent manner, and in a suitable religious atmosphere. But this forms no part of the scheme or series of schemes advocated from time to time by Dr. Neligan's friends of the Bible-in-schools League. They would reduce the 'Christianity' of the schools to a mere lifeless philosophy. They wrap up their minimum doses of perfunctory 'religion' (if we may so call it) in an atmosphere of studied vagueness and foginess and unreality. In the realm of religion, explanation and guidance are absolutely indispensable. In the programme of the new public-school Unitarianism, inquiry is neither courted nor allowed. Secular subjects are treated in our schools as tangible realities. In the teaching of geography, grammar, and arithmetic intelligent methods are adopted. In religion alone—in the highest and deepest things that can engage the human mind—folly is to sit at the desk in cap and bells, there is to be no training of the intellectual faculties, rational curiosity, or thirst for knowledge is to be suppressed as an impertinence, and the whole subject is to be handled as a vague and dangerous unreality. Such superficial and despicably taught religious vacuities would leave no permanent impression on the minds of children, and their effect—if any—upon their lives would be as transient as 'the froth of penny beer.'

Notes

The Test of Sincerity

In a recent issue of the 'Irish Catholic,' Mr. M. Nolan (Christchurch) gives Home readers some idea of the great sacrifices that our co-religionists in New Zealand are making for the cause of religious education. 'The annual capitation grant,' says he, 'for the children in the State schools is £5, but it is well known that this sum is utterly inadequate unless in very large schools or in populous districts. At the present time there are, roughly speaking, 11,000 children attending the Catholic schools of the Colony. And the present system was established in 1877, as I have said, 28 years ago. Now if, for the sake of avoiding exaggeration, we strike an average, and put down the number of Catholic children attending our schools at 8000, this number, multiplied by five, the number of pounds, would give a sum of £40,000 a year, which the Catholics of New Zealand are absolutely saving to the State by educating their own children. If we multiply this sum by 28, the number of years the secular system is in vogue, we get the immense sum of £1,120,000. But this is not all, for the £5 capitation grant does not provide for the erection of school buildings, nor for school requisites. If we take an average of one hundred children to each school, it will work out at 110 schools for 11,000 children, which, with the cost of sites, buildings, and school requisites, would amount, at the lowest estimate, to £600 for each building, thds making a total, for sites, buildings, and requisites, of £66,000, which, if added to the previous sum, totals £1,186,000, which the Catholics, practically, have already put into the pockets of the Protestant ratepayers of the Colony; and the thing continues and grows in its cruelty worse and worse every year.'

In this connection we might recall the striking comparison recently offered by the Rev. Henry Van Rensselaer, S.J., in a speech to the Knights of Columbus in Carnegie Hall, New York. 'A great capitalist,' said he, 'is praised for giving 10,000,000 dollars (£2,000,000) to education. The Church has given 300,000,000 dollars (£60,000,000) for school buildings and 40,000,000 dollars (£8,000,000) more to pay the teachers, in building up the parish school system. We are called un-American,' said Father Van Rensselaer, 'because we will not worship the public school, an idol of which the upper part is gold and the feet are clay.' Only one result of these sacrifices was touched upon by the speaker, but the figures he gave are sufficiently significant. 'There are,' said he, '60,000 divorces in this country (the United States) in one year, and I ask where these people got their moral education. A Judge in this city (New York) said that fifty-six cases were on his calendar on one day, and only one was between Catholics—probably for a separation.'

A 'Race Suicide' Fallacy

A mischievous book published some time ago in New Zealand defended the crime known as 'race suicide' by the fallacious contention that it is better to have one or two children carefully nurtured than to have a quiver-ful of little arrows dragged up anyhow. The 'Southern Messenger' easily disposes of such an attempt to palliate sin and crime. 'This plausible theory,' says our American contemporary, 'does not commend itself to experienced educators, who know that the worst type of children is usually found in a small family. Said the rector of a Catholic college in England recently: "I always fear when I hear of an only child coming to St. Bede's, because I know it has been treated softly and had all its own way. Give me the boy who has had his head punched by his bigger bro-

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