

A note of deep despondency was struck by one speaker (the Rev. Mr. Sprott) when he expressed the strong conviction that 'the people of New Zealand had unmistakably shown that they did not wish that ministers of religion should take any part in the education of their children.' Here, however, the facts are happily loaded against so pessimistic a view. For, in the first place, the representatives of the people, in Parliament assembled, offered certain legal facilities to ministers of religion to take some part in the education of children in the public schools. In the second place, they (as appeared from the debates of 1877 and of later dates) desired that advantage should be taken of these facilities. In the third place, they gave the fullest freedom to ministers of religion to open schools and therein bring up the children of their various faiths in the way that the aforesaid ministers believe that such children should go. And, finally, have we not at this present hour, over a great part of New Zealand, an active movement, on the part of large sections of 'the people of New Zealand,' to drive a coach-and-four through the secular clauses of our Act, in order to afford ministers of religion fuller facilities for taking part in the education of the children? Of course, the 'facilities' afforded by the Act are hopelessly inadequate even for religious instruction, much less for religious training. And the freedom to open religious schools, to offset the hard secularism of our Education Act, is hampered with the penal disability of a compulsory double school tax. But it is, we hold, an exaggeration to state that 'the people of New Zealand had unmistakably shown that they did not wish that ministers of religion should take any part in the education of their children.' There are, however, sundry other things to which the people of New Zealand, as of other countries show an unmistakable repugnance. One of these is the severance of the connection between word and deed, between sentiment and action, by so many ministers of religion in connection with this grave question of the religious education of youth. For over thirty years 'the people of New Zealand' have been reading or listening to resolutions of ministers of religion at synods, assemblies, and conferences, affirming the need of religion in education, and failing a system of public instruction which views the life of a school child as something apart from the life of a Christian. For over thirty years 'the people of New Zealand' have been seeing these fervid resolutions carefully packed in cotton-wool by ministers of religion and laid on the shelf till the circling months brought another synod or assembly or conference around. For over thirty years 'the people of New Zealand' have been seeing the ministers of religion of every Church but one wasting in political bickerings, over paltry palliatives to the Godlessness of a school system, energies that would have been much more profitably expended if they had been permitted to follow the normal path of discharge that they have taken in the case of Catholics. 'The people of New Zealand' do not withhold their admiration for what Catholics have done and are doing for Christ's little ones in the schools. Religious prejudice—fostered, in too many cases, we fear, by ministers of religion—and the combined weight of journalistic doctrinaires and a supposed political expediency—have, thus far, prevented that admiration issuing in relief to the Catholic taxpayer. But the whole situation would be changed at a bound if even one great Protestant religious denomination in this Dominion were to translate words into deeds, turn sentiment into action, and, following the inspiring lead of their poorer Catholic neighbors, began to dot the country with educational arguments in weatherboard and brick and stone. 'The religious difficulty in education' would then speedily solve itself. But it is, after all these years, a melancholy spectacle to see the grave and reverend seigniors of the Wellington Anglican Synod wasting further breath and effort in passing inoperative and academical resolutions in favor of the New South Wales system, and mistaking for religious training, in a religious atmosphere, passing efforts at religious instruction in an atmosphere of legalised agnosticism.

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The grave and spreading evils of a secularised school system are not to be cured, nor even to any substantial extent palliated, by Morrison-pill treatment of this sort—by merely drawing for a brief space the bolts that lock Christ out from His loved little ones, and thereby emphasising in a still stronger way (if that were possible) the rank atheistic or agnostic atmosphere of the remainder of the hapless school-child's day. Our national peril is not divorce nor yet race suicide, blighting as these are. Behind all these is the deeper root of evil which the Apostle of the Gentiles struck at when he denounced those who would have no God in their knowledge, and who (as he prophesied) would therefore be given up to a reprobate sense. The rector of the Apostolic Mission House, Washington, lately told what the exclusion of religious training

from the schools has been working in America. 'America,' said he, 'was in the beginning and for a hundred years and more an essentially religious country, but what a change has come over the spirit of our life! Three generations of universal secular education that banishes God from the class room has turned out a generation of people out of whose lives God and all that He stands for has been banished. As a result all our standards of living are rapidly changing. External respectability is thought more of than internal godliness of the soul. Personal comfort and convenience are to be attained even though the eternal laws of God go down in the struggle. The gospel of clean linen is infinitely better than the gospel of clean living. The most useful man is the one who is shrewd enough not to get caught with the goods on him. The whole system of education, from the kindergarten up through the primary schools on to the college and the university, the system that has the place of honor in our American life, "has no God in its knowledge," and herein lies the appalling danger and catastrophe that we are facing as a people. The terrible recrudescence of juvenile crime in the last decade of years is opening the eyes of some, and they are raising their hands in horror and asking what will be the outcome of it all.' Our well-meaning Reformed friends have, too, a warning lesson from a region nearer home. It is told by the non-Catholic editor of the *Imperial Review* at the close of the story of the great betrayal of the cause of religious education by the Reformed denominations in the Commonwealth State of Victoria. 'No wonder,' says he in a recent issue (quoted in full by the *Melbourne Tribune* of July 3), 'Protestantism is alarmed with its own doings, and seeks new weapons. The Catholic teachers are intent, not on earning a salary, or founding a personal home, but on the sedulous performance of work in the vineyard. A man or woman inspired by religion will go very fast and very far. Possessed with this hobby, they out-distance the diligent followers of routine duty. The Melbourne result is seen in crowded Catholic churches and empty Protestant ones. Cromwell's fanatic Ironsides were invincible. The Irish Brigade at Fontenoy was resistless. The Red Cross of the Knights Templars, the Crescent Oriflamme of Mahomet, made the strength of every fighter as that of ten. Every one of the Christian Brothers and teaching nuns is a magazine of energetic achievement. The glory of spreading truth, of training the young idea to shoot into the green tree of fervent faith, of laying a brick in the monumental edifice of the Church, is an inspiration, an incitement that needs no other spur. The exceeding great reward is inward. The Victorian Protestants sowed the wind of Paganism among their young, and have reaped the whirlwind of irreligious indifference. One of their finest sample churches is the Collins Street Independent, with that lofty campanile so much admired by tourists. With accommodation for a thousand, the congregation is more like a hundred. A timber-yard of pews is the familiar thing in most Protestant churches. They who clamored for secularism to rend the Catholics asunder are equally clamant for their religious teaching to be given at the Catholic expense, but what the Catholics have done, paid, and suffered in the past has invigorated them to challenge the future.'

## Notes

### Sir Robert's Romance

Sir Robert Stout's statistical romance as to the greater criminality produced by religious schools has been blown into so many smithereens that there is hardly enough of it left to talk about. It is, however, worth while to quote the following remarks of the Rev. Mr. Harper at the Wellington Anglican Diocesan Synod on July 13 (reported in the *New Zealand Times* of the following day): The Rev. Mr. Harper said that 'he and many others had been exceedingly sorry to see that a man holding the exalted position of Chief Justice of New Zealand had in England made a statement which he (Mr. Harper) thought could not be characterised as anything else but quite extraordinary, absolutely unprovable and entirely reprehensible in every way.—(Applause.) "Of course," he went on to say, "we in this country have learned not to take Sir Robert Stout seriously in any matter.—(Applause.) Though he is Chief Justice of the country, I cannot help making this reference when he chooses to say a thing which is absolutely contrary to what many of us know to be true. It is only a few absolutely prejudiced like himself and others who would say such a thing as he did.'"

### Calvin

Several subscribers have forwarded us reports of panegyrics preached here and there in connection with the

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