

pulsory, and these three qualities are now used as a kind of sacred phrase and their subject is 'tabooed,' must not be touched, especially by the Catholic Federation. First of all I strike out the word free. The system of education in New Zealand is not free. The word free is a shibboleth. One would imagine that the Minister of Education merely waved a magic wand or rubbed a lamp, and schools would spring up magically. There is, as there should be, ample taxation for education, and you Catholics have good reason to know it. The word is merely dust thrown in the eyes of the people; it is a delusion and a myth, and any system that relies on such a prop for its support has not much to commend it. So it would be just as well to drop this word from the magic phrase.

2. Secular, which being translated means godless. It means that the future citizens of New Zealand are not to know God. What does that mean? It means, says Ernest Renan the infidel, 'that the peasant without religion is the ugliest of brutes, no longer possessing the distinctive notion of religion.' (*L'Avenir de la Religion*, p. 487.)

The instruction of the intellect alone has no moralising tendency. It may turn crime into different channels and render it more difficult to detect, but it will not change a man's natural propensities or his desire to gratify them at the expense of others. Physical science, literature, art, may refine the judgment and elevate the taste, but here their power ends. Knowledge of these is a power and nothing else. Its practical effect is to make the good man more powerful for good and the bad man more powerful for evil. And that is all it does or can do. You will often hear it said that 'some person should have known better than commit such a crime,' showing the belief that knowledge alone should make a man good—a belief which, as Herbert Spencer points out in his *Study of Sociology*, 'is flatly contradicted by facts.' Criminal statistics exhibit more crime amongst skilled than unskilled laborers. Now listen to a very apt and powerful statement by the great John Milton: 'To make the people fittest to choose, and the chosen fittest to govern will be to mend our corrupt and faulty education, to teach the people faith, not without virtue, temperance, modesty, sobriety, parsimony, and justice' (The ready way to establish a Free Commonwealth). Our teaching in this matter commends itself to all right-thinking men, and amongst them John Ruskin, who makes this strong remark: 'Nevertheless it is open to serious question which I leave to the reader's pondering, whether among national manufactures that of souls of a good quality may not at least turn out quite a leadingly lucrative one. (Ruskin, *Unto This Last*.)

The secularised state for all its undenominational character should esteem and reverence what we call "the religious idea." If we have learned anything we have learned that society will not hold together except by moral ties, in addition to material ties, and no moral ties are really effective that have not the sanction of conscience and religious conviction. The State for its own safety and well being must be Christian and should be proud to call itself Christian, and should mould its legislation according to Christian ideas.'

An argument frequently brought forward by supporters of the secular system—politicians, teachers, and others—is this: 'It brings peace, it prevents friction.' This must be denied. It does not produce peace. We are not satisfied with it, neither do I believe the Anglicans and Presbyterians are satisfied with it. Moreover peace at that price would be too dear; and the Catholic Church, bearing in mind her divine commission to 'teach all mankind,' will never submit to any system which will exclude the knowledge of God, the love of God from the hearts of her little children. We can turn the argument on to the politician. Are there no disagreements in political life? Are these disagreements productive of nothing but evil? When politicians have sunk all party opposition they will have some standing then to preach peace to others. The secular system of suppression has nothing to recommend it. It is not a settlement, but an evasion. Let me

give you a fact which for a Christian is an overwhelming as well as a sorrowful proof. Fifty years ago the American people were a religious people from a Protestant point of view; to-day there are, after half a century of education, without a religion, sixty million Americans who have no religious belief whatever. Sixty million people, sons and daughters of parents who professed belief in the Divinity of Christ, have dropped that Faith because they never acquired any interest in it.

Let me also draw the attention of all those who have the welfare of the nation at heart to this remarkable statement published by the *Gazette de France*: In 1882 the so-called 'neutral' system—i.e., a system of education absolutely without religion, was established. Between 1883 and 1893 the number of child criminals increased by 25 per cent., the population remaining stationary. Between 1893 and 1897 the seven millions of children between seven and sixteen years of age, produced almost twice the number of crimes committed by the twenty million adults and others over sixteen.' It is a striking fact that 'in Paris, of 100 children prosecuted, scarce two come from religious schools, 98 are from the neutral schools.' These figures furnish a warrant for that exclamation of the Socialist deputy who is quoted as saying that 'by killing God we have destroyed morality.'

Time forbids me to pursue and develop this question any further. To sum up, let it be said and published far and wide, that we as Catholics are irrevocably opposed to secular education. We oppose it not for any selfish reason, but we oppose it because it is a national evil, for it will banish from the lives of people the one great thought, the only thought of life, the thought that will strengthen them in good, form in them true and noble characters, make them a power in the world—the thought of God and His Holy Law.

Now we come to the third note, that of compulsion. The State system is a compulsory system. The first explosive which we will hurl at it is that it is undemocratic. The first duty of democracy is to safeguard minorities, yet in this compulsory system minorities are crushed, brushed aside, and consequently the system becomes autocratic and despotic. It is, moreover, a wholesale method of working, and whatever is handed out to all alike must necessarily fail to meet requirements with anything like exactness. Look at it in this way. Suppose an army contractor supplies boots of all one size. Some of the soldiers complain that the boots do not fit, or do not suit them. 'Very well,' says the general, 'go without or buy them yourselves.' A nice way to treat an army. Such treatment would not produce a very good spirit. You would very soon have an army of cripples. And you are not going to form a great nation by a wholesale system of education. Every minority must be safeguarded, treated with justice and satisfaction. It may be said that the Government allows any dissatisfied minority like the Catholics to build their own schools. Yes, and many thanks for the permission, which is for the Government a great saving, but extra taxation for the poor minority. This is not freedom but another burden. We are compelled to pay for the compulsory system—the Government schools—then we are excluded from them. To compel payment and to exclude from participation is political injustice, and to offer participation upon conditions known beforehand to be of impossible acceptance is wilful and deliberate exclusion.'

John Stuart Mill, in his *Principles of Political Economy*, lays down the following principle: 'A Government is justified in requiring from all the people that they shall possess instruction in certain things, but not in prescribing to them how, or from whom, they shall obtain it.' And he expands the principle by saying that the whole of education should not be in the hands of the State, for a general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly alike one another, and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power (or Director of Education) it leads to despotism over the mind and body. An education established and con-