

appear to be quite beyond dispute. Presbyterians as a body are much too downright in their own beliefs to be willing to stoop to a policy of proselytism by deception; and when the circumstances become widely known we cannot but believe that there will be a strong and general repudiation of such unworthy tactics.

## RELIGION AND EDUCATION

### BISHOP CLEARY ON THE SECULAR SYSTEM

Considerable interest (says the *Auckland Star* of February 11) attaches to the statement which emanated on February 9 from the Hon. G. Fowlds, respecting the policy of the Education Department, of which he is Minister in charge. Mr. Fowlds declared that he had always stood unequivocally for the maintenance of the present system of free, secular, and compulsory education, and would go out of public life to-morrow rather than be a party to any fundamental change, or go back to the dangerous by-paths of denominationalism.

This morning a representative of the *Star* waited upon the Right Rev. Dr. Cleary, Bishop of Auckland, intent upon eliciting his views upon the pronouncement made by Mr. Fowlds.

'Yes,' said the Bishop in reply to a remark of our representative. 'I have read the reports of the discourse delivered by the Hon. the Minister of Education at Grey Lynn. I gladly place on record my conviction that the Hon. Mr. Fowlds spoke absolute truth when he declared that he had always avoided anything in the nature of political partisanship in the administration of his Department. The period of his administration has, too, been marked by a decided advancement in the status and the salaries of the teachers, and by praiseworthy efforts to render the methods of instruction more efficient, and, generally speaking, to improve, all along the line, the conditions of the teaching, the teachers, and the taught. For all these things I have only words of commendation for the Minister.'

What the Grievances Are.

'Would you mind stating, then, where your grievance lies?'

'Our grievance,' the Bishop replied, 'lies not with the Ministers, nor with their Departments, nor with the teachers of the State system. Many of these latter I know, and I have found them to be, so far as my acquaintance with them goes, men and women of culture, and enthusiasts in the work of instruction. Our grievance is against the system—not as a free system, for that we fully approve; not as a compulsory system, for that, too, has our hearty approval. The feature of our system of public instruction, which we can never accept, is its secular phase—the provision of the Education Act of 1877, which requires that during school hours "the teaching shall be entirely of a secular character." That is the head and front of our objection to the State system. It excludes religion from the school training of the child, centring itself solely on things "pertaining to the present world or to things not spiritual," and on things "disassociated from religion or religious teaching"; for such is the plain and customary meaning of the term "secular,"' added the Bishop, quoting from a big volume of the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, which he took down from a bookcase.

In reply to a further remark by our representative, Dr. Cleary continued: 'Yes; it is well that this vital matter of education should be discussed, and discussed frequently, by the right persons, and in a calm and reasoning way. Unfortunately, in many cases, the discussion evolves more heat than light. And, again, unfortunately, it has, thus far, been practically impossible for the many Catholic and Protestant friends of religious education to induce the champions of the purely secular system to defend that system by an appeal to the only arguments by which it can be properly upheld—namely, by an appeal to a philosophy of life and to the principles of pedagogy (that is, of the science of teaching). We hear a good deal of the argument of political expediency, which, at best, is only of conditional value or relevancy; we hear much of the plea of a public feeling, which is not necessarily a well-instructed or enduring one; we hear the doctrine of "accomplished facts" pushed, in this matter, further than pressmen or politicians are prepared to push it in other things. And so on. But we have yet to see the divorce of religion from education defended on pedagogical grounds by persons believing in God and revealed religion. All true education is a vital and continuous process; it involves the training of all the faculties of the child—of the conscience and the will as well as of the intelligence. And those three chief agencies of education—the home, the school, and the church—should display unity and harmony in their pedagogical or child-forming action. All that is best in the domestic and social and religious life of the child should be introduced, as a matter of course, into his school life. Religion should thus enter into all the processes of education.'

'Would not that imply the continuous teaching and practice of religion?'

'Not at all,' replied Dr. Cleary; 'it implies a thing on which Catholics set much store—namely, the "religious atmosphere"; and this, in turn, means that the training of the child must be permeated by religious principles. If religion is good and necessary in the home, on what pedagogical principle can it be useless or mischievous in the school? Why treat the school life of a Christian child as something apart from its life as a Christian? Why take the child at its most impressionable years, and keep it during its school hours utterly apart from the knowledge of God, from the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, and from the love of Him, which is its end? On what pedagogical principle do we sweep out of our schools those doctrines and principles of Christianity which are so intimately bound up with our ideas of right and wrong? The divorce of religion from education has been one of the means adopted ever since the eighteenth century by the various schools of anti-Christian philosophy to draw Christian children into scepticism and unbelief. I gladly acknowledge that no such motive has actuated the initiation or continuance of the secular system of public instruction in New Zealand. But I should like to ask the Christian supporters of that system among us in what particular way a method devised to choke-damp Christianity in Europe may be used to promote it in New Zealand by aiding Christian children in our schools to attain the glorious destiny known to them by faith? I can thoroughly understand the position of a non-believer in supporting the exclusion of religion from the schools. But how about Christian men and women, who must hold that the highest wisdom is to know Christ and Him crucified, and who know that the training of the Christian child must centre around the personality of Christ, Who is the incomparably perfect ideal to place before youth in the character-forming process of forming the conscience and training the will? What principle of Christian faith, of life philosophy, or of the art of teaching, demands that this incomparable Model should be treated, so to speak, as an "undesirable alien" in the school-training of Christian children in a Christian land? And what motives of right conduct does a secular system of public instruction offer as a substitute for the knowledge and personal love of Him?'

The Reverse of Neutral.

In reply to a remark by our representative on the neutrality of the secular system, Dr. Cleary said: 'Neutrality! The system is the very reverse of neutral. Both the State system and the religious system start with the principle that education is a preparation for life. But here they part company. The secular system rests, in logical effect, upon the following implied dogmas: First, that religion in education is inconsistent with, or useless to the true life aim of the child; second, that the State has the moral right to exclude religion from the school; third, that the exclusion of religion from the school promotes, or tends to promote, the true life aim of the child; and fourth, that the immemorial teaching and practice of Christendom, as to the need of an intimate union of religion and education, are false, or useless, or pernicious. Here we have a highly sectarian set of implied dogmas regarding religion—in other words, religious dogmas. These represent an attitude towards religion, a school of thought combined with action, an "ism." They directly suit the educational ideas of the Secularist and the Agnostic. They do not suit the educational ideals of Catholics and of the large body of earnest men and women of various faiths who desire some measure of religion in our public schools.'

'Is not that putting the situation rather strongly?'

'I do not think so; for there is something stronger to come. The implied sectarian dogmas of the secular system, which I have just mentioned, are forced by law upon our public schools. Those parents that accept them are rewarded with the free education of their children, those who cannot in conscience accept them, must either smother their conscientious objections in return for the valued boon of free education, or they must pay a double and continuous tax or fine—one for the education which they cannot in conscience accept, the other for the education which they can.'

'Reference was made to the Bible-in-schools movement. Have you anything to say in regard to it?'

'I have nothing but sympathy and goodwill for every effort that is being made, or has been made, to mitigate the hard secularism of our system of public instruction. I heartily desire to see every Protestant child duly instructed and trained, during his school life, in the tenets and practices of his faith. And when a scheme is evolved by which this can be done, with fairness to the rights and interests of Catholics and other dissidents, I shall be ready to heartily co-operate with its promoters in an effort to secure for it legislative effect. Unfortunately, the divisions of the friends of religion in the schools have given the opportunity to those who divorce religion from its ages-old place in education. The supporters of the secular system assume (another of their undue assumptions) that no religion is the only feasible "solution" of a difference of opinion among religions people as to the quantity and kind of religion that should be taught in the schools.' The Bishop then took down a volume, and added: 'Here is a speech delivered at Liverpool on April 5, 1872, by the late Marquis of Salisbury. It about "touches the spot"; for the great statesman smote those who tell parents "that, because there is a difference amongst those who desire to

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