

'My reason for not including religion in rate-supported schools is simply the old Nonconformist reason that religion is personal, sacred, varying in its aspects and claims according to varying convictions, and that to support it by rates and taxes, and thus by possible penalties, is to vex and offend its characteristic and essential spirit. The present condition of Biblical criticism brings its own difficulties into this controversy. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there is no Bible upon which all Christian parties are agreed. . . .

To some the Bible is historical; to others it is ideal. Which Bible, then, or which view of the Bible, is to be recognised in schools sustained by the compulsory contributions of all classes of the community? Then are Board School children to grow up without a knowledge of religion? Certainly not. . . . Every branch of education belongs to every other branch. . . . One would suppose from some representations that the children were at school seven days a week, that they had no other home, that they were dependent upon the teacher for everything, and that if they did not hear of religion there they would positively never hear of it at all. I have said that I would not exclude religion. I would simply not include it

IN MARKING OUT THE LINES OF BOARD SCHOOL TEACHING. To my own view the distinction is palpable. . . . But ought not the Bible to be read daily? Not compulsorily, not by tax or fine, not at the expense of unbelievers or disbelievers. I would rather the Bible were not included than that it was put in a false position. A Bible compulsorily read is not likely to be read or received in its own spirit.

'It appears to me that the straight-forward and consistent course for Nonconformists to adopt is to insist that literary education may be given by the State and that religious education must be given by the Churches. That would be an intelligible distribution of functions. . . . One of your correspondents anticipates the inquiry by the assurance that neither parsons nor Sunday School teachers can teach religion efficiently to children. How was the schoolmaster trained to teach it? What is the degree and quality of the religion which he teaches? Is it to teach religion to inform children of the exact distance in miles and furlongs from Dan to Beersheba? I hold that religion has to do with the mind, the conscience, the will, and all the elements that go to the formation and inspiration of character, and that only deeply spiritual teachers can convey to any scholar a right conception of its purpose and influence.

'Then why not compromise?'

'I cannot compromise, simply because I cannot consent to dishonor the Bible. I cannot accept the doctrine that the Bible might be regarded and read as a great Hebrew classic, without admitting that many other sacred books might be usefully read in the same way. . . . It is possible to compromise an opinion; it is disgraceful to compromise a conviction.

'The fact is, men are being tempted on every hand in the direction of compromise. This School Board compromise is only one aspect of a deadly truce. Cardinal Vaughan has set us all a useful example in this matter. He will not compromise with Anglicans or with Protestants. . . . He does not invite us to the Alps to talk matters over, and to see how far we can help one another to stitch the shroud in which we all can bury our distinctions and convictions. . . .

Are we to compel such a man to pay taxes in support of our view of religion? Is he likely to compromise with us by regarding the Bible simply as a Hebrew classic? The School Board circular proposes a distinct and positive policy. Are the Nonconformists to be content with opposing to it a maimed and impotent negation? They are face to face with a great opportunity.'

Thus far Dr. Parker. The following are the chief planks of his policy, as disclosed by his letter to the *Times*:—

1. Religion is a necessary part of a complete education.
2. The State should not furnish the religious part of a complete education ('rate-aided school' are under discussion here).

3. 'Every branch of education belongs,' says Dr. Parker in this letter, 'to every other branch.' Religion should not be 'included' as part of the State programme of instruction in 'rate-aided schools.' But neither should religion be on any account 'excluded' from such schools (it is, of course, 'excluded' by law in New Zealand). In these 'rate-aided schools' there should be the following 'intelligible distribution of functions'; the State to furnish the 'literary education'; 'the Churches' to supply the 'religious education'—but by voluntary effort, and not at the charge of public funds. Part of that 'religious education' to consist of Bible-reading (under volunteer direction, as above)—the Bible not to be read compulsorily, nor as mere literature, nor at public cost. No religious instruction to be imparted in 'rate-aided schools' unless it is furnished by Church sources. Where they fail, the children in such schools are to depend, for religious education, on sources outside the schools—including the home, the Church, the Sunday school, the 'clergymen,' the 'Nonconformist ministers,' the 'Sunday school teachers, visitors, and lay preachers.'

Such is Dr. Parker's idea of 'so-called secular education' (as he terms it in his letter); and he describes as 'hardly worth notice' the 'cry' that it is 'atheistic.' The *Evening Post* must search elsewhere for evidence that Dr. Parker would approve complete exclusion of religion, by Act of Parliament, from the public schools of New Zealand. There was not the slightest need for the *Post* to pick its quotations, at second hand, from Professor Mackenzie's 'valuable pamphlet.' Morley's *Gladstone* and Temple's *Memoirs* are to be found in every decently stocked private library; and these, and the files of the *London Times*, could have been consulted by the *Post*, at any time, within a few minutes' walk of its front door. In all the circumstances it must be deemed a serious thing indeed for so prominent and reputable a journal as the *Post* to have misled its readers into the belief that the late Mr. Gladstone, 'Archbishop' Temple, and Dr. Parker were its 'authorities' and fellow-workers in de-Christianising the school-lives of Christian children.

But (as pointed out on page 32) even if these three noted English Protestants had really shared (and they did not) the educational views of the *Post*, such a circumstance would not in the smallest degree aid it in solving the heart-breaking riddles of our purely secular system, and all that it necessarily implies and involves. To these nagging riddles, Christian disputants on this theme must ever and evermore get back. All the other issues raised (for lack of better argument) by the *Post* constitute what Kipling happily terms mere 'by-lane warfare.' Much to the annoyance of the *Post*, I have kept the whole strategic territory of discussion occupied throughout. I have, nevertheless, not hesitated, on occasion, to follow up my coy and reluctant guerrillero opponent into his favorite shelters in the outlands and caves and hedgerows of discussion. Another time, perhaps, he may give battle along the Torres Vedras lines of the issues that really matter. And then (as the French say) we shall see—what we shall see.

(To be continued.)

At the present time no less than 25 vessels are loading or on their way to Australia and New Zealand ports with cargoes of case oil for the Vacuum Oil Company. The fleet comprises 12 large steamers and 13 sailing ships, and a rough estimate places their aggregate cargoes at something like 3,000,000 cases of oil and spirits. Six vessels are either on their way or have been fixed to leave for New Zealand. The total quantity of oil and spirits coming by them will be roughly 950,000 cases.

Never hurry, never worry,
Don't get in a rage;
Try to keep you temper always,
Says a good old sage.
If you get a cold and shiver,
Don't take doctor's pills—
Run at once, and get—'tis precious—
Woods' Peppermint Cure for chills.