

pression to the following principles and convictions. (1) That Catholics, believing a religious foundation and atmosphere to be absolutely essential to true education, cannot possibly accept for themselves the secular solution, though they are quite willing that, provided equal treatment is accorded to the consciences of all sections of the community, secular schools should be provided for those who wish them secular. (2) That there is no good reason why representatives of all religious bodies and of all others interested should not meet in friendly conference with a view to arriving at a 'settlement by consent' of this vexed question. And (3) that if such conference and mutual discussion were entered upon in the proper spirit there is every reason to believe that a solution just and satisfactory to all parties could be devised.

Our chief ground for this confident anticipation is the marked success which has attended such efforts at co-operation in other lands. Let us take Holland as an example—Holland, the first country in Europe to be subjected to the 'neutral' or undenominational system of State education. A Liberal or 'anti-clerical' (as they call themselves in Europe) Government was able to introduce it into that country in 1857. The conditions of the country enabled them to do this. Much dissatisfaction prevailed at the time owing to the predominance and obtrusiveness in the schools of the country of the Calvinistic, or if you like, Presbyterian majority. The Catholic people and others had cause for complaint. The Liberals and those tainted with French anti-Christian principles seized the opportunity to play one lot against the other. They proposed a 'neutral' system of education wherein no denomination would have favors beyond another. At first sight, the proposal seemed fair. Many fell in with it; and amongst them many Catholics. Thus the Liberals gained their point. The conditions leading to the adoption of the 'neutral' or secularist system of education in the United States and in these Colonies were pretty much the same. Indeed, the fathers and founders of the system here, such as Sir Henry Parkes, pointed to Holland as a pertinent example of the immense advantages of a system of education, free, secular, and compulsory. Did Sir Henry Parkes live at the present day what would he think of his pertinent example? Let us see.

At first many Dutch Catholics and others were satisfied with a proposal which seemed to place all on a level. They did not see that their Government was endowing a new sect, and placing schools and children compulsorily under its influence. You may call the sect Liberals, Secularists, Agnostics, French Freemasons. They did not grasp the results which would certainly follow from banishing God, Christian teaching, and a Christian atmosphere from the schools. They did not see that a system of education cannot remain simply and purely neutral and undenominational. They did not realise that the 'neutral' school was in time bound to become infidel. They had not the example of France of our time before their eyes. Hence their blunder. But the working of the 'neutral' or secularist system opened their eyes. They saw the schools of the nation becoming nurseries of irreverence, of moral and religious indifference, and of infidelity. They saw schools, both primary and secondary, nominally neutral but really showing a strong irreligious and anti-Christian tendency.

The discovery called forth opposition from Calvinists and Catholics alike. In a joint pastoral issued in 1868, the Dutch Catholic Bishops declared in emphatic language the rights and duties of parents in the all-important matter of the education of their children. The children belonged to the parents; consequently it was the parents' right and duty to have them trained up according to their own ideas and principles, and not according to a State plan, imposed by a clique of clever secularists and infidels. The pastoral roused the Catholic people to action. At once they set about doing two things—first, building Catholic schools, and, in the

second place, organising an agitation demanding subsidies for these schools. But they were in a minority; they had only 20 members in a parliament of 100. Hence their struggle promised to be long; perhaps hopeless.

Fortunately, two men arose above the political horizon who brought the struggle for Christian education to a successful issue. These were Dr. Schaepman and Dr. Kuyper. Dr. Schaepman was a priest of great ability, who devoted himself to placing the Catholic party on an effective footing. To show part of his work:—In 1868 he found only one Catholic newspaper, the *Tijl*, in Holland. At his death in 1903 he left behind him to carry on his work, 13 dailies and 150 weekly, fortnightly, and monthly periodicals! Dr. Kuyper was editor of an influential paper, *De Standard*. He was a Calvinist, but not of the bigoted, suspicious, always-at-war-with-the-Pope type. He possessed the intelligence and breadth of view to see some good in the Pope and in the Papists. He was delighted to welcome them as friends and as assistants in a good cause. A new Calvinistic party, called 'Anti-revolutionaries,' had recently arisen. This party was determined that Holland should not be governed by French Liberal '*Ni-Dieu-ni-Maitre*' (neither God nor master) principles—that as it was a Christian land Christian principles should prevail in it, and especially in the matter of the education of the youth of the country. At the head of this party Dr. Kuyper soon found himself.

These two men, now leaders of the Catholics and Calvinists, saw that their parties agreed as to many things—and very particularly as to the necessity of a Christian training for youth in the schools of a Christian country. They saw, moreover, that if both parties laid aside their old prejudices, silly suspicions, and antiquated antipathies, and formed a coalition, they would have the country behind them. Both men set to work in speech and newspaper article; and so succeeded in extinguishing the old bigotries and exorcising the old bogeys that the combination was formed, with the result that at the general elections in 1888, the anti-clerical Liberal ministry was defeated and a Christian Coalition ministry came into power. On December 8, 1889, to the great relief of the vast majority of the people of Holland the 'Law of Pacification' was passed—a law based on the recognition of the rights and duties of parents in regard to their children—a law, consequently, granting State aid to all voluntary schools. So moderate and fair-all-round was the new legislation that the Liberals did not dare to oppose it very strenuously. It should be added that the Coalition ministry has given much satisfaction, not only as to its school legislation, but also as to other measures of social and political reform introduced and passed. Such satisfaction has this Government given that the Liberals or anti-clericals have recently lost much ground; they were routed at the general elections in June, 1909. Under the Christian Coalition Government a spirit of conciliation, good-will, and optimism has so taken possession of the people that it promises well for the further advancement of a very industrious and progressive little country.

One may well ask, When will New Zealand take a lesson from Old Zealand? When will a Dr. Kuyper arise amongst us? When shall we see a Christian statesman capable of extinguishing all those petty bigotries, suspicions, and proclivities to fight 'Rome' which still sway the breasts even of our deans, bishops, and presidents of synods—capable of uniting all sincere believers in Christian Revelation in the fight against irreligion, irreverence, atheism, and moral laxity and disorganisation. There is in New Zealand room and much work to do for such a man. New Zealand needs a Protestant statesman who will rise degrees above those Romaphobic Bible-in-schools orators who mount platforms and pulpits to stir up sectarian bigotry with their 'antagonism-with-Rome' 'Inquisition-in-Spain' appeals. New Zealand calls for a Protestant statesman who will

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