

NONE 805  
N539

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

# THE BIBLE IN SCHOOL

## A QUESTION OF ETHICS

NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED, WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO

*THE COMING EDUCATION BILL*

BY

J. ALLANSON PICTON, M.A.

*(Formerly M.P. for Leicester and a Member of the first School Board for London)*

[ISSUED FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED]

LONDON:  
WATTS & CO.,  
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

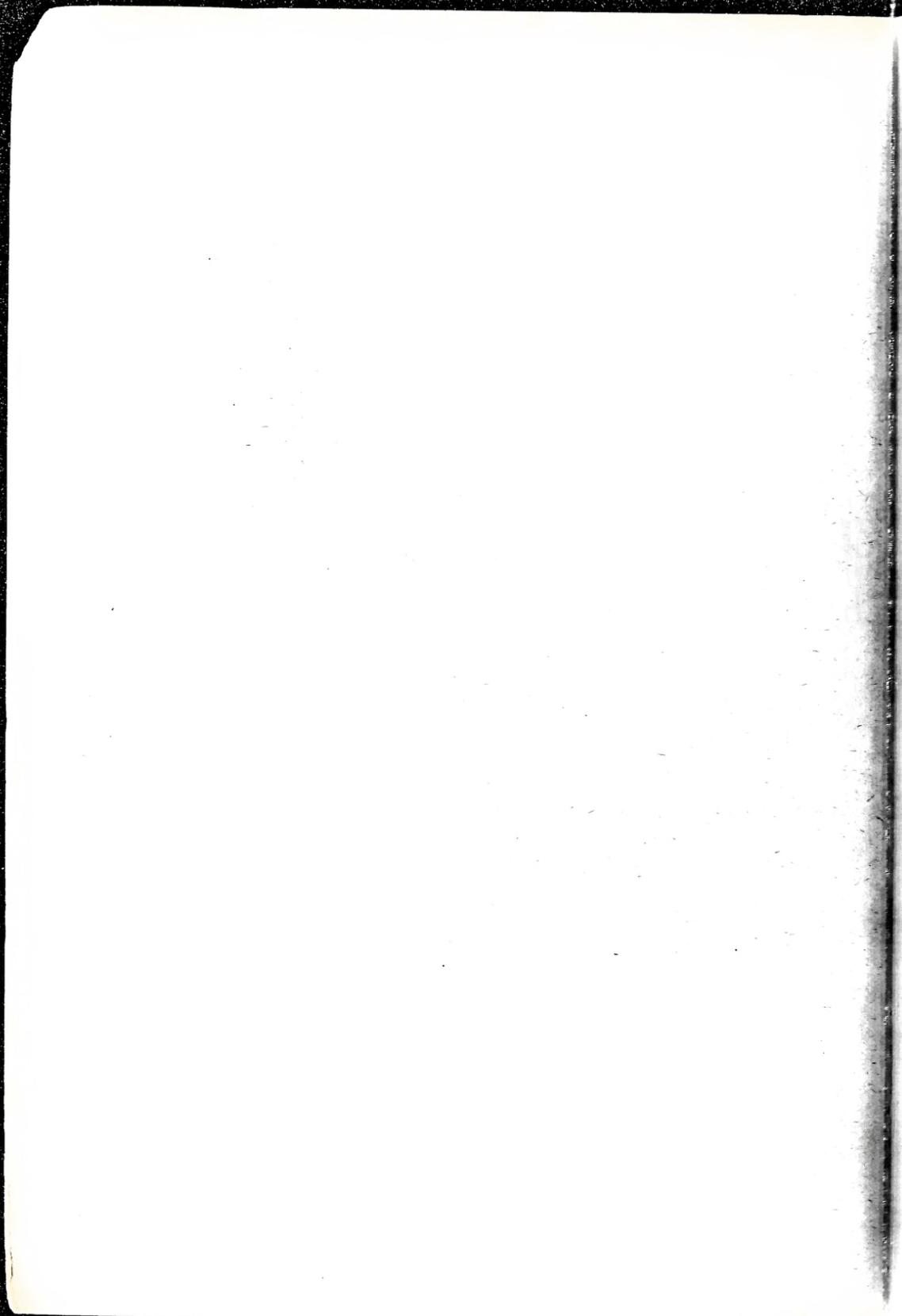
1907



## CONTENTS

---

	PAGE
PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION . . . . .	v
PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION . . . . .	xv
THE BIBLE SPHINX . . . . .	i
RELIGIOUS EQUALITY . . . . .	9
THE NEW CHURCH RATE . . . . .	16
NEW RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES . . . . .	23
MORAL EFFECT ON TEACHERS . . . . .	34
THE EFFECT ON SCHOOL CHILDREN . . . . .	43
THE WRONG TO THE NATION . . . . .	56
CONCLUSION . . . . .	62
INDEX . . . . .	77



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

---

IN the arena of education the most significant event since the first issue of this Essay has been the production and withdrawal of Mr. Birrell's Bill. I do not mention the Act of 1902, because it has appeared to me significant of little but the illimitable evils occasioned by passionate blunders in patriotism. It was the inevitable effect of a "khaki election." But the Bill of 1906 was an attempt to correct, so far as education was concerned, that mistake—with what results we know. If, however, our belief in the continuity of progress be sound, it is inconceivable that the reactionary law of 1902 can remain much longer in force. Such a notion would be as simple as that of the child who fancies that an exceptionally long receding ripple indicates the turn of the advancing tide. But if a new Education Bill is introduced, as we are assured it will be, all highest interests demand that it shall not be drawn on lines which will ensure its delivery into the hands of its sectarian foes. In other words, no loophole must be left for associating the public authority, whether imperial or local, with the teaching of dogmas that divide us.

The Education Bill of 1906.

A nation which sets to its Government an impossible task ought not to be captious in criticism of failure. Now the task appointed by a reputed majority of English people to successive Ministers of Education has been the establishment of religious equality in the schools, together with security for "simple Bible teaching." And this latter phrase practically means, as is abundantly proved in the following pages, the ordinary Scriptural instruction common to the Sunday-schools of the great evangelical sects—Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and all Wesleyans. But this common belief of those influential sects is, after all, not the belief of the whole nation. For the Church of England, through the voices of her most zealous and self-sacrificing clergy and most devout laity, denounces that common belief as not only insufficient, but misleading. The Roman Catholics, as a matter of course, protest. It is matter of common fame, to which I shall refer again, that a rapidly

A failure, and the reason why.

increasing number of Nonconformists themselves have surrendered most important elements of that once common belief. And outside of all these is a dim, uncounted, but formidable host, who utterly deny all miraculous revelation, and who insist, as they have always done, but more loudly than ever now, that their rejection of revelation does not in the least invalidate their claim to full citizenship, including religious equality.

The preference of undenominationalism fatal to religious equality.

What the reputed majority demand, then, amounts to this: that in a nation notoriously divided as to forms<sup>1</sup> of religious belief a delusive attempt must be made to establish as "undenominational" one particular form of belief that happens to be shared by certain great and influential sects. Such a position reminds us of what is said of the Emperor Julian by Mr. T. R. Glover in his *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*: "A zealot whose principle is the equality of all sects and the preference of one stands in slippery places." In our times we have to do, not with an individual zealot, but with a congregate or multi-personal zealot, constituted by an alliance of the great evangelical denominations. The principle enunciated by Mr. Glover is, however, quite as applicable in the twentieth century as in the fourth. And the story of the Education Bill of 1906 cruelly exposes the fate of the modern zealot "whose principle is the equality of all sects and the preference of one."

Perhaps I may fairly claim that this painful and wasteful episode in the struggle for national education is a glaring illustration of the main thesis of the following pages. For that thesis, in few words, is simply this: that to teach in the schools of the nation, and by authority of the nation, a transcendental subject on which the nation is for the present irreconcilably divided in opinion is worse than impracticable. It is not only a waste of time and money: it is a perennial source of strife, a deadly injury to citizen education, a cause of hypocrisy, falsehood, and all the forms of immorality inevitably propagated by these vices. Yet hardly once in the course of the Parliamentary debates on that misbegotten Bill was this essential issue fairly faced. With certain happy exceptions, especially among the Labour Members, the prevalent assumption was that we are all agreed on "simple Bible teaching," though not one champion of a lost cause attempted an articulate explanation of what

<sup>1</sup> I say *forms* because one of my deepest convictions is that the division is superficial only. But the actual realities feebly represented by those forms were earnestly taught in a strictly "secular" school which I attended for six years of my boyhood.

that teaching is. And nearly all ignored the patent fact that this effete assumption has been long drummed out of existence by the discordant sectarian bands who drowned by their noise all the more practical educational issues at School Board elections. Nor has the abolition of School Boards cured the mischief. For it has simply transferred the battle of the Bible to municipal elections, and especially to the choice of "co-opted members" on Education Committees.

But other signs of the times have portentously risen on the horizon; and perhaps most significant among them is what is called "the New Theology." With that I have nothing whatever to do except to insist that, however incorrectly the epithet "new" may be otherwise applied, the movement is a novel and, I might even add, a startling illustration of the main positions maintained in this Essay. For, instead of the supposed unanimity of a reputed majority of the nation about the "simple Bible teaching" of which samples are given in the following pages, we find even among the evangelical Nonconformists themselves an outbreak of the most discordant opinions touching the origin, nature, infallibility, and authority of the very Book whose exclusion from the schools, they tell us, would be sacrilege. Now I am perfectly aware that such discordance of opinion would be no sufficient objection to the inclusion of the Bible as a "classic" in the school curriculum, always provided that it could be treated as schoolmasters treat any other classic, and that every teacher could be really freed from theological bondage. But, as an old School Board hand and present member of a county education committee, I know that these premises are at present simply impossible. For the Bible is in the schools, not as a "classic," but as "the word of God." Yet now the advocates of the New Theology, from their distinguished leader the Rev. R. J. Campbell downwards, have practically repudiated every intelligible sense in which the Book could be honestly called the word of God.

The "New  
Theology."

I must dwell for a moment on this point, because, unfortunately, the theological habits slowly formed during two millenniums impose on good and honest men, I will not say a slippery, but certainly a subtle, use of words which pleases the eye or ear, but leaves the reason befogged. It is therefore necessary here to particularise the new forms which the old problem of the Bible in school has assumed. For when we are told that there is nothing in the new views held by so many Nonconformists at all inconsistent with their advocacy of the old use of

the Bible as a class-book, it is surely needful to get a clear idea of those new views, and also to remind ourselves of what the old use of the Bible in school was and is. I will dismiss the latter first, because it is only necessary to refer readers to the later pages of this book,<sup>1</sup> which, after six years, remain substantially, and indeed for the most part exactly, true of present practice.

Contrast of  
the new  
views with  
"simple  
Bible  
teaching."

In sum, the ancient and present usage amounts to this: That the Bible is presented to the children as the very word of God, as "God's letter to mankind," and bearing everywhere the stamp of divine authority, which it is wicked to doubt. But, of course, the time spirit is too strong for uniform insistence on the old rigid literal interpretation. Thus there is often an attempt on the part of the more intelligent teachers in municipal schools to evade the difficulties of the Creation story, the Fall, and the Tower of Babel, or perhaps of the Almighty's visit to Abraham's tent, by feeble suggestions of "allegory," always with the reservation that all is the "word of God." In this view of contemporary Bible-teaching I am generally confirmed by Mr. Nevinson's recent most interesting letters to the *Westminster Gazette* on visits which he paid to various elementary schools during the hour of religious instruction. His remarks on the evident anxiety of Council school teachers to avoid any suspicion of heresy were suggestive and painful.

Now let us note the contrast between the established usage in public elementary schools—even those called "undenominational"—and the ideas so rapidly spreading among Nonconformist supporters of the Bible in school.<sup>2</sup> To the "New Theology," as expounded by its leader, the Bible has just as much authority as each individual mind feels impelled to assign to it. But its claim to be "the word of God" is gone. The first books of the Bible—so constantly prescribed by Council "syllabuses" for the religious inspiration of infant minds—are a collection of myths mainly of Babylonian origin. "The Fall theory is not only impossible in face of the findings of modern science; *it is a real hindrance to religion.*"<sup>3</sup> The Incarnation, as understood by all recognised

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 29 and following.

<sup>2</sup> It is only just to the Rev. R. J. Campbell to note that he at least is consistent, and has joined the Secular Education League. It is only what I should expect of a man with a single eye to veracity.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. R. J. Campbell, in *The New Theology*, p. 64. The italics are my own. But the words are well worth emphasising in view of the constancy with which this old myth is taught to young children as the starting-point of genuine religious history.

doctors of theology, whether Catholic or Protestant, is explained away. Not that the divinity of Christ is denied. But it is regarded only as a resplendent illustration of the divinity partly expressed, partly latent, in every other man.<sup>1</sup> It is true that, with expansive tolerance, Mr. Campbell thinks "even the Athanasian Creed is a magnificent piece of work, if only the Churches would consent to understand it in terms of the oldest theology of all"! The date and authority of this "oldest theology" are not given; and it is not my business to conjecture the author's meaning. For my sole purpose in alluding to the book at all is to show how far it shatters the persistent assumption that there is such a thing as "simple Bible teaching" on which the dominant sects are agreed. And the book proves my point, because it is written by the most popular Nonconformist preacher of the day, occupying a sort of episcopal pre-eminence in the central temple of Evangelical Nonconformity, and because the book has attained a circulation rarely accorded even to works of fiction.

Take up any syllabus<sup>2</sup> of religious instruction approved by local Education Authorities, and note how impossible its prescription must be to an honest teacher holding the "new theology." For the greater number of such documents—in fact, almost all—prescribe the story of the Fall for the edification of the youngest children, together with the narrative of the Deluge and the adventures of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of which the mythical characters are clearly involved, though not expressly stated, in the New Theology. Further, the New Testament does not remain intact. For though Mr. Campbell is quite willing that his adherents should believe the story of the Virgin-Birth if they can, he is himself of opinion that it was "unknown to the primitive Church"; that it is an unauthorised addition to the earliest Gospels; and that the reference in Matthew i. 23 to the supposed prophecy of such a portent in Isaiah vii. 14 is due to the Evangelist's ignorance of Hebrew.<sup>3</sup> Anyone who observes what a prominent place the story of Bethlehem takes in municipal religion as taught in Council schools can judge of the cruel position into which the New Theology forces any of its adherents who happen to be undenominational school

Syllabuses  
of Bible  
teaching.

<sup>1</sup> *The New Theology*, chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> The character of these syllabuses, in which the Act of 1902 has caused no change whatever, is indicated in Chapter IV.

<sup>3</sup> *New Theology*, p. 98.

teachers. Are they to tell the children what they themselves in the new light believe to be false, or are they to resign their places?

I need not pursue the subject; or I might show that in regard to such fundamental doctrines as the Trinity, the Atonement, Apostolic authority, and the nature of the kingdom of God, followers of this new and popular teaching must find it impossible without hypocrisy to work up to the pattern set before them in the syllabuses adopted by the various education authorities. What, then, is the hope of those who still support such a system? Do they really think in their heart of hearts that the adherents of the New Theology are a few aberrant and exceptional persons who are negligible in any great question of the national conscience? But in the following pages evidence is given that these ideas prevailed to a large extent among elementary teachers before ever Mr. Campbell was heard of. Are their numbers likely to be lessened now? I will quote an authority for which I have a more rational reverence than any have who think that religion can be served by blindness to staring facts. For one feature of the character of Jesus does, I think, shine clearly upon us through all the mists breathed by imaginative affection; and that is his splendid veracity. It was shown, as all the Gospels tell us, in his treatment of the Sabbatarian superstition in his day. It was shown in his exposure of Pharisaism at the peril of his life. It was shown in his daring to cast aside the asceticism of John the Baptist and to rejoice with the sons of men. And it seems to me it was his sense of outraged veracity which gave a tone of anger to his retort upon those who wanted a sign of what could never come, while they were blind to the plain tokens of what was coming. "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky. But can ye not discern the signs of this time?"

"Can ye not discern the signs of this time?"

It can scarcely be too often repeated that my argument does not involve any judgment one way or the other on the theological points at issue between the different schools of thought above noticed. My sole object is to expose the hollowness of the pretence that the great majority of the nation are substantially agreed about the Bible, and that they all mean the same thing by "simple Bible teaching." Whether the old theologians or the new are right is a question that makes no difference to my argument. At any rate, they disagree. They differ about the dates, authority, and historicity of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and most

of the other Old Testament books. They are at variance about the Fall, the meaning of Jewish sacrifices, the Messianic prophecies, the Atonement, the divinity of Christ, the extent of the inspiration of St. Paul, the historical value of the Gospels, and especially of "St. John's." But whatever may be the amount of truth attained by any of the contending parties, it is only one party that has the advantage of having its opinions established and endowed in the schools; and that is the rapidly lessening section which holds to the old beliefs common to Nonconformity and Low Church in the year 1871, and then stereotyped once for all by the "Compromise" of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith.

One variety of opinion alone established and endowed.

Yet another sign of the times is the awakening of many earnest Churchmen to the fact that the establishment and endowment of religion, at least in the schools, involves humiliating conditions such as cancel the value both of privilege and money. Thus it was interesting to read in an editorial article of the *Church Times* on June 14th, 1907, the following endorsement of the practical conclusion which the ensuing pages were written to enforce: "It is clear that under the conditions of religious disunion prevailing in our country the appropriation of public money in payment for religious teaching is a mistake. It would not be impossible to make an equitable provision for all religions alike; but the difficulties are great, and the fanaticism of a small minority can make them insuperable. The only reasonable alternative is to leave the provision of religious teaching entirely to voluntary effort." This practical conclusion is, of course, reached by a very different course of thought from that of the following essay. And for "the fanaticism of a small minority" I would substitute "the common sense of most." But the value of the omen is its suggestion that the possessors of a living faith, as distinguished from mere formalists, are beginning to see that they dishonour their faith by allying it with injustice and falsehood. If this sentiment spreads, the wrong will cease.<sup>1</sup>

The position of Churchmen.

<sup>1</sup> It is curious to contrast the above High Church frank acknowledgment of obvious justice with the eloquent plea for privileged Puritanism uttered by one of the ablest and most practical statesmen of the day. At Pontypridd, on July 20th, 1907, as reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, the Right Hon. D. Lloyd-George rightly denounced the system which has given the Church of England millions of public money "for the purpose of conducting little missionary schools throughout the country." But in eulogising with well-justified patriotism "a race whose intelligence had been cultivated and strengthened and developed by a century of Puritan theology," he perhaps naturally overlooked the fact that church people have just as good a right to object to a system which gives public money to pay for "missionary

New Regu-  
lations for  
Training  
Colleges.

Yet another sign of the times is to be found in the new "Regulations for the Training of Teachers," issued while I write. These regulations provide that no candidate for admission to any training college may under any circumstances be rejected on the ground of religious faith, "or by reason of his refusal to undertake to attend or abstain from attending any place of religious worship, or any religious observance or instruction in religious subjects in the college *or elsewhere*."<sup>1</sup> The last words, which I have italicised, are obviously incompatible with the requirement of any religious belief whatever in candidates for admission. They clearly leave it open to the intending student to decline any Bible instruction or any lectures in "divinity." But, of course, the wise men of the Board of Education are quite aware of the facility with which such a regulation may be evaded in already established training colleges. They therefore add another regulation, that after August 1st, 1907, no new sectarian training college shall be recognised, nor any new hostel, unless connected with an unsectarian institution. Moreover, to ensure compliance with these regulations, as far as possible, the Board will prohibit the examination of candidates by college authorities as a condition of admission. Other means, of course, will be taken to secure the necessary intellectual fitness of candidates. But the colleges are to be left under no temptation to favour their own theological persuasion. Now, surely, if such regulations are consistently carried out, they will of themselves, without any new Education Bill, make the future use of the Bible in school impossible. For no student can be compelled to receive any instruction therein either in his college "or elsewhere." Now, if under such circumstances any would desire still to have the Bible in school, they neither love nor honour the book as I do.

Inconsis-  
tency of  
Ministers of  
the Crown.

Unfortunately, however, this does not appear to be admitted by the Ministers of the Crown who are responsible for the new regulations. And a brief note of the attitude they assumed towards an important and influential deputation of Church dignitaries who, on July 20th,

schools" of that Puritan theology propagated under the form of "simple Bible teaching." But even if the new Educational Bill should deny them the legal right, the moral right will remain. I am well aware that Mr. Lloyd-George would repudiate with honest indignation any idea of maintaining Puritan privilege. But to Churchmen "simple Bible teaching" *is* Puritanism. So it is to Catholics and to Unitarians and Rationalists. And I think it is in the course of these pages proved to be really so.

<sup>1</sup> *Regulations for the Training of Teachers*, 8 (d).

1907, protested against those regulations, may well find a place among the signs of this time. It is only due to the high ecclesiastics, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who represented Church opinion, to acknowledge that they argued their case with moderation and with the inevitability of conviction necessarily involved in their view of life. On the other hand, the chief merit of the response made by the Prime Minister and Mr. McKenna was their emphatic distinction between the denominational and the national point of view. They did not deny that if teachers were to give instruction in Anglican doctrine they must receive Anglican training. But they did deny that this was a purpose for which public money could be fairly ear-marked. So far as statutes and prescription guaranteed for the present the existence of training colleges with a "denominational atmosphere," they admitted the legality of privilege. But so far as statutes and prescription left the Board of Education a free hand in administering grants of public money for individual students, they insisted that national and not denominational interests must determine their action.

But one cannot help regretting that they gave their whole case away by needless deprecation of "the secular solution." For surely, if a teacher requires Anglican training before he can give Anglican instruction, he must also require Biblical training before he can give "simple Bible teaching"—all the more, indeed, if he is to make it really simple. But, so far as the regulations show, no student is obliged to receive such training. The Government abjures all responsibility for such things, but will not allow a student to be rejected by any college on account of his refusal to "attend any place of religious worship, or any religious observance, or instruction in religious subjects, in the college or elsewhere." Indeed, to put the matter plainly, the only forces on which religious people can rely to get these young people trained for simple Bible teaching are church or chapel opinion, underhand preferences, spiritual espionage, and in the last issue the social boycott.

Now, if by deprecating the "secular solution" our statesmen mean only that they desire a cultivation of right feeling and pure emotion, of reverence, brotherly love, and loyalty to the real order of the universe, I imagine that everyone must agree with them. But there is usually more than this connoted by language of that kind. For the idea seems to be that something very simple and obvious to common humanity is

Ambiguity  
of the  
phrase  
"secular  
solution."

offered instead of ecclesiastical mysteries. But surely, when we remember that "simple Bible teaching" includes Creation, the Fall, the Deluge, the conquest of Canaan, God's delight in David the man of blood, the Virgin-Birth, the Resurrection and the Ascension, we can hardly help feeling that the concomitant rejection of the Church Catechism is rather like "straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel."

Thus much by way of new Preface has been necessary to indicate some signs of the times that have risen above the horizon since the first edition was issued, and in view of which I have considerably altered and enlarged the scope of the work. But for the sake of historical continuity the Preface to the first edition is reprinted here, and the story of the strange lapse of Nonconformity from its former consistency is repeated, because it is at least of some importance to keep on record the fact that objection to the "Compromise" of 1871 did not originate with unbelievers in the Christian revelation, but with lovers of the Bible. For a similar reason a considerable part of the earlier chapters has been preserved in the original form, because it is of still greater importance to remember that long before 1871 the first promoters of "secular" schools were not "infidels," but religious men.

J. A. P.

*August, 1907.*

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

---

THIRTY years ago, in 1871, when the first School Board for London accepted, with a close approach to unanimity, the well-known resolution proposed by the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, M.P., in favour of Bible-teaching in the schools, there was a small minority of three who recorded their votes against it. Not one of these three was insensible of the value and importance of the Bible in the education of humanity. On the contrary, they had a reverence for it which was certainly not shared by some of those who voted for the motion. Indeed, two of them had devoted their whole energies up to that date to the work of religious instruction. The first of the three was the Rev. Benjamin Waugh, whose name is now known and honoured throughout the world for the salvation he has brought to tens of thousands of suffering children. The second was the late Mr. Chatfeild Clarke, a sincerely religious Unitarian. The third was the writer of the following pages.

Few, if any, would like to confess that they have passed through thirty years of experience without changing an opinion; and I hope I have changed many opinions for the better. But all that I have observed in the course of many imperfect labours in the field of education has only confirmed the conviction expressed by that vote; the conviction that we should have better served the interests of religion as well as of education if we had acted on the judgment of the older Nonconformists, that the Bible is not a proper subject for State patronage and control. In so doing we should only have followed the example set us by those States of Greater Britain whose eyes discern the future more surely than ours.

J. A. P.

*October, 1901.*

\* \* In the following pages I mean by "*State schools*" all schools supported by rates and taxes and subject to the Board of Education. By "*municipal schools*" I mean schools provided, managed, and partly supported by County or Town Councils. By "*transcendental*" religion or doctrines I mean religious beliefs or dogmas that transcend or go beyond the sort of experience or evidence usually required for justice or legislation, and which are also outside the practical necessities of citizen life.

# THE BIBLE IN SCHOOL

---

## I.

### THE BIBLE SPHINX

THE problem of the right use of the Bible in the nation's schools is a question of morality quite as much as of religion. Yes, say the advocates of its indiscriminate use, it is a question of morality, because you can have no morality without religion, and no religion without the Bible. Without stopping now to argue either of the points thus raised, I may remind the holders of such opinions that some noteworthy men of their persuasion have made these very points a reason for objecting to the indiscriminate use of the Bible in the schools; and by the phrase "indiscriminate use" I mean placing it in the hands of every teacher, whether Catholic, Evangelical, or Rationalist, to give to the children of believers and unbelievers alike explanations and instruction therefrom in the principles of the Christian religion and of morality. The once-honoured name of Edward Miall represents now, I suppose, an extinct species of Nonconformity. Yet, whatever may have been the defects of adaptability which made the sectarian struggle for existence fatal to it, that obsolete type of Nonconformity at least commanded respect by its moral consistency. For when it proposed "the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control" it meant all that it said; and was just as much averse to "State Patronage and Control" in the school as in the Church. And therefore, from the time of Sir James Graham's Bill, which dates my earliest recollection of the struggle for national education, the majority of English Nonconformists stood out against any statutory system of State schools.<sup>1</sup> This attitude was for many years impersonated in Edward Miall, who held that under such a system it would be impossible to exclude the Bible, and that the Bible could not be properly taught by unspiritual, still less by unsympathetic or unbelieving, persons. Thus, precisely because in their view no morality was possible without religion, and religion meant to them the Bible as a divine revelation, they insisted that the Book was too sacred a thing for indiscriminate use in the sense defined above;

The  
Miallites

<sup>1</sup> The weaker brethren supported the British and Foreign School Society, which accepted Government grants. But they vainly thought that this did not commit them to the principle of a statutory system of schools.

and, therefore, they dreaded the merging of their Voluntary schools in a State system.

Devout  
Secularists.

The next step in the development of Nonconformist opinion on the question is, I fear, entirely forgotten by a younger generation, who think of "secularists" in regard to national education as Secularists in belief. Now, among the many historical mistakes for which ambiguity of language, and especially of party epithets, is responsible, few are more absurd than this perversion of recent fact. For just before and after the middle of last century the prophetic eye that is sometimes a gift of earnest religion began to discern not only the inevitability, but the moral and intellectual necessity, of a statutory system of elementary schools. And then some of the most earnestly religious among the Nonconformists—such as the Rev. Edward Baynes and the late Dr. Samuel Davidson—suggested that the difficulty might be evaded by confining State or municipal schools to "secular" subjects, and leaving to the Churches the responsibility for supplementing by religious instruction this confessedly imperfect training.

I do not know that I can give a better illustration of the views then held by many of the most devout Nonconformists than a quotation from a speech delivered in 1850 by my father, the late Sir James A. Picton, who was born and brought up among the Wesleyans, and was thoroughly evangelical in his belief. At a meeting summoned by several influential men in Liverpool, to petition Parliament in favour of secular education, he moved the following resolution: "That, in order that the rights of conscience may be effectually secured, it should be a fundamental rule that nothing should be taught in any of the schools which favours the peculiar tenets of any religious sect or denomination." But the speaker did not see in these words any suggestion of the future "compromise." He believed that to avoid tenets peculiar to a part only of the nation it would be necessary to confine instruction to secular subjects. At the outset he referred to an article in the *Nonconformist* newspaper, then conducted by Edward Miall, and strongly opposed to any rate-aided system of schools. He then proceeded as follows:—

Speech of  
Sir James A.  
Picton in  
1850.

The gist of the argument is this: that because there are some things in which it would be wrong for the community or State to interfere, therefore the community should interfere in none, but should leave everything to be effected by voluntary effort.....Is the illumination of our streets to be considered all-important, and is the lighting-up of the lamp of knowledge in the souls of darkened millions to be deemed matter of no concern to the community as such?.....If it be right to provide a library, it cannot be wrong to teach; if it be just in principle for the State to provide the means of intellectual gratification, it cannot be unjust to afford the necessary preparation for its enjoyment. ....The object to be attained is the communication of that knowledge which shall fit a man to understand his social duties and duly to perform his part in relation to this world. This is common ground on which all

can meet, and beyond this the community has no right to proceed. Religious liberty should be absolute, or it is worthless. There cannot justly exist any modification of it. The rights of conscience must be held paramount to all mere human laws.....The practicability of the system of education which we advocate has already been proved with the most complete success in the New England States of America..... But this system is called irreligious, godless, and inimical to religion. Could I bring my mind to this conclusion, I should regard the system with the utmost abhorrence. I have been engaged as a Sunday-school teacher for the last twenty-five years, in attempting to communicate religious instruction to the young, and sooner would I consent to this right arm being severed from my body than it should be upheld in the support of any project adverse to religious truth. It is because I consider this system most favourable to religious teaching that I give it my warmest support. Let us look at the question fairly.....A newspaper is not of necessity irreligious unless it contain a theological treatise or a sermon. The utmost that can fairly be said is that secular teaching is incomplete; but it is good as far as it goes. Now what have religious teachers principally to contend with?.....Not so much, I will take upon myself to say, the actual prevalence of vice in the young as a degree of mental apathy or brutal ignorance, to remove which (in Sunday-schools) often involves a most serious waste of time and labour. ....A system, therefore, which should remove this obstacle, so far from being unfriendly to religion, ought to be looked on as its most powerful auxiliary. But, again, the communication of religious instruction<sup>1</sup> requires a different mode of treatment from secular instruction. In the latter some degree of coercion is absolutely necessary, and the attempt to combine the two in simultaneous instruction is too often nominal rather than real, a profession rather than a practice. The element of religion should be love; its teaching should be the voluntary effusion of a devoted heart. The affections of the young should be called into play, and everything should partake of the gentle and healing influences of Him who "spake as never man spake." In thus enlightening the minds of the young, and fitting them for the reception of religious truth, I believe we are acting in accordance with the precepts of the divine Redeemer, who instructed His disciples to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

No patriotic mind can look abroad on the heaving masses of life around us increasing daily in consciousness of strength, without some degree of apprehension arising, not from the character of our countrymen's hearts, but from the ignorance and darkness of their minds. The heart of the Englishman still swells with the same generous and manly emotions as it has ever done. The same hatred of oppression, the same love of order, the same sense of justice and right, still form the leading features of his character. But he is dark and longs for light.

<sup>1</sup> What the speaker had in his mind was not the teaching of Jewish history, which of course, if sincerity were allowed, might be communicated as easily as Greek or Roman myths, but rather the conveyance of "grace and truth." I am aware that the distinction sounds antiquated now. And I cordially agree that, since character and conduct are the highest educational end, every teacher, whether in so-called "secular" schools or Sunday-schools, ought to be privileged to convey grace and truth if he can. But in the nation's schools the exercise of this high prerogative must needs be subject to two essential conditions: (1) That he shall not wound the religious susceptibilities of parents; (2) that he shall never be faced with the dilemma of hypocrisy or resignation if he should happen to differ from the religion of the majority. And under resignation I include surrender of moral teaching.

Shall it not be given him? He thirsts for knowledge. Shall not its refreshing streams be poured into his soul? Justice, kindness, safety, patriotism, all answer yes! "Wisdom and knowledge must be the stability of our times; then may we hope that the fear of the Lord will be our treasure."

Justice and patriotism may have answered "Yes," but sectarianism answered "No." And in the sequel it was seen that the latter voice was, unfortunately, more potent than was expected by such guileless prophets as the speaker.

Plausible but fallacious criticism of the "secular solution."

Of course, such a proposal as the above was open to obvious criticism, on account of its suggested separation of things inseparable. But many advocates of so-called "secular" schools were quite as well aware as their critics that the distinction between things sacred and secular is purely arbitrary. They knew that a religion of daily life—of reverence, of devotion, of enthusiasm for good—was worth more than all the rules of arithmetic, but that it might, and would, be taught, or rather inspired, by a good man or good woman even in the process of teaching those rules. They could not, however, quite see how it was possible for such a religion of daily life to be naturally or effectively taught in a course of Bible lessons wherein the good man or good woman was forced to tell lies. And this they held must be the result in a good many instances if teachers were accepted without any profession of creed, but were expected to teach the average creed of the nation, whether they believed it or not.

Three courses conceivable; but only one possible.

Now, this difficulty might be avoided in one of three ways—either by allowing every teacher to use the Bible just as he would any other book, and to say of it precisely what he felt, just as he would about the *Pilgrim's Progress* or *Paradise Lost*; or, secondly, by allowing only the use of an authorised selection of Bible extracts illustrating the beauty of goodness; or, finally, as suggested by the so-called "secularists," by keeping the Bible out altogether. The first solution is, of course, abstractly the right one, and in a hundred years will probably be adopted. But, so long as any considerable section of the people regard the Bible as miraculous and infallible, that solution is impossible. And this should be remembered by liberal thinkers, who talk about the Bible as a "classic," which it would be vandalism to exclude from the schools. Nor am I convinced by Dr. Frank Hayward's urgent and able plea that the Bible, treated on Herbartian principles, leads the child through "historical culture-steps"<sup>1</sup>—is, in fact, savage with the young barbarian, mythological with the boyish dreamer, while it dramatises the evolution of despotic law and then of responsible

<sup>1</sup> *Reform of Moral and Biblical Education on the Lines of Herbartianism, Critical Thought, and the Ethical Needs of the Present Day.* (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.; 1902.)

freedom. For it seems to me that the writer gives up the whole case when he admits that Jowett's suggestion to "treat the Bible like any other book" is an impossible one. But the freedom of exposition which Dr. Hayward himself advocates would be generally regarded as compliance with Jowett's suggestion, and would therefore be equally impracticable. To say nothing of denominational State schools, which are still very numerous, the local education committees, selected largely for religious reasons, would not allow it. And if any teacher dared to treat the stories of the Patriarchs, or Joseph, or David, or still more the first chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke, in accordance with the modern criticism approved by Dr. Hayward, the debates of the local authority would have a special value for the local Press. The second solution, the selection of non-controversial passages, was advocated by the late Professor Huxley. But when he realised his failure, and saw what came of it, he was candid enough to own that the third solution would have worked practically better than his.<sup>1</sup> Those who advocate this solution quite share the regret of liberal religionists that most of our great colonies and the United States have found it necessary generally to exclude or severely to limit in their primary schools the use of so precious an inheritance from great times of old. They would even agree that the expedient is a humiliating one. But, then, they do not think that the humiliation attaches to those who would treat the Bible like any other book. They rather think it falls on those who persist in investing it with unreal attributes, such as forbid truth and sincerity in using it.

Prof.  
Huxley's  
proposal.

The idea of a book absolutely without an error is now generally, even by most of the religious sects, regarded as a figment of the ages of ignorance. But, while the possibility of error is allowed, the admission of its actual presence is guarded and limited by considerations which have no relation whatever to evidence. It is, I believe, common now for schoolmasters who know anything of geology to explain to their pupils that in the Mosaic account of creation the word "day" does not mean twenty-four hours, but an indefinite period of time. Yet those teachers whose culture enables them to estimate the force of congruity in determining the meaning of words, whether in literature or law, must feel sure that the six-times repeated refrain, "The evening and the morning were the — day," determines beyond question the intention of the writer to picture an ordinary day of twenty-four hours.

An infallible  
book recog-  
nised no-  
where but in  
school.

<sup>1</sup> In a conversation with myself. The plan was never adopted, except in the sense that, as even fanatics would not insist on having every word of the Bible read in the schools, some selection was inevitable. But it was not made on Professor Huxley's lines. It kept always in view the dogmas common to the evangelical denominations.

Such teachers may know that various ancient commentators have felt the need of a larger space of time for so majestic a work. But this does not affect the impression made on their common sense that when a man of Hebrew race wrote "evening and morning" he must certainly have had in his mind the ordinary Jewish mode of reckoning from sunset to sunset. If, therefore, he tells his young students of truth that the sacred writer meant thousands of ages when he wrote "days," this teacher knows in his heart of hearts that he is not speaking the truth required at the moment.

The teacher  
and Genesis.

It does not in the least matter whether the view here taken as to the significance of "evening and morning" be correct or not. The point is that it is conscientiously held by a large number of educated teachers who are required to teach the Bible to children as "the word of God." And, of course, this special detail as to the meaning of the six days is only fixed upon for distinctness of illustration. But let us leave that detail, or suppose it obscured in a haze of generalities about the undeniable dignity and occasional sublimity of the Bible story of Creation. From the "Broad Church" point of view we are told that, whatever may be the sacred writer's errors in science, no ancient myth, no poetic imagination of uninspired men, ever so nearly approximated to the actual facts of the earth's origin and development as recorded in the rocks. Be it so—at least, for the purpose of our present argument. Then let the teacher be free to tell this to his pupils; and, if he is a man who happens to know where the narrative came from, let him be free to tell his pupils further that it is a revised and improved edition of a story found inscribed on clay tablets among the ruins of Babylon.

Certainly, if he were allowed to take this course, he would be saved from much humiliating prevarication about the "firmament in the midst of the waters," "dividing the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament," and about the grass and herbs and fruit-trees which brought forth seeds and fruit before the sun was made, and about the creation of birds before the "creeping thing and beast of the earth." He might most honestly tell the children that, with all its mistakes, the first chapter of Genesis is a most precious and touching record of some devout soul's effort to find the secret of the world in God. But the requirement that he shall set it forth as a direct revelation from the Creator of what he did before there was any man to see it is surely a sore strain on any morality in which truth has its proper place.

The inquisi-  
torial rate-  
payer.

The conservators of a decaying creed, however, demur to any such freedom on the part of teachers. "We pay our rates and taxes," they say, "to have the Bible taught in its simplicity as the word of God. It would be an outrage on our conscience if teachers were allowed to treat

it as a human book." And the advocates of a rate-aided Gospel in municipal schools would add that it is not sectarian religion they want—not, for instance, the Independent theory of Church government, nor Presbyterianism, nor Infant Baptism, nor any such high matters—but only the *simple* truths of the Trinity and the Incarnation and the Atonement, and Immortality in heaven or hell, and Salvation by the blood of Jesus. A good man whose notion of catholic comprehension is embodied in the Union of the Evangelical Free Churches cannot conceive that there is any touch of sectarianism in State-school religion as thus defined. Perhaps he never meets with anyone who does not hold the simple gospel composed of those doctrines. And if he hears that such eccentric heretics really do exist, he waves them out of sight with such phrases as "entirely exceptional" and "negligible minority." Whether that answer to the conscientious plea raised by these heretics is in accordance with fact will be a question for our consideration later, though I may remark, in passing, that the first years of the twentieth century have already exposed the arrogance of any such assumption. For the "New Theology" movement—already mentioned in the Preface to the present edition of this Essay—has certainly not caused; but only revealed, the widespread scepticism pervading the outwardly orthodox majority.

Meantime, I would only observe that the "Nonconformist conscience" has not always been content to measure its own rights by the size of the minority it represented. I am old enough to remember times when the existence of even ten righteous men conscientiously objecting to pay their parish church rates, though there might be five hundred anxious to pay, was thought by good Nonconformists quite a sufficient reason for resistance, even at the cost of restraint or imprisonment.

While freely granting that in this preliminary statement of the issue there are involved many incidental points on which I can have no hope of sympathy from the majority, yet, if the substance of it be summarised, I do not see how it can be denied without contradiction of patent facts notorious to all. Who will dispute that on the relations of religion to moral instruction, and of the Bible to religion, discordant and irreconcilable opinions are held with equal intensity of conviction by many of the worthiest members of the commonwealth? But those differences are more than merely intellectual divergences. They touch on deepest faiths and inspiring hopes and infinite fears. They are the clash of mutually contradictory oracles held by opponents in the debate to be the divinest utterance of their deepest and most real being. Indeed, the differences are such that, if the opinions of any one group are adopted as the law of the people's schools, all other citizens must suffer painful

Change in  
the Noncon-  
formist con-  
science.

and dishonourable disabilities. No matter what may be the selection made, whether the opinions of Conformists or Nonconformists, of Catholics or Protestants, of Rationalists or of "unsectarian" Evangelicals, all the rest must endure what they regard as the perversion of the State's authority and resources to mischievous and demoralising uses. As ratepayers they must support out of their wages or wealth the propagation into the new age of doctrines which they detest. As teachers they must either play the hypocrite or take an inferior position. As parents they must either acquiesce in the instillation into their children's tender minds of what to their parental affection seems dangerous poison, or, by availing themselves of the "Conscience Clause," they must inflict on their families the fate of little pariahs during all their school hours. As citizens they must submit to have the whole moral energy of the land they love devoted to immortalising errors which, according to their point of view, may seem superstitious or godless, loose and latitudinarian or promotive of priestcraft, but at any rate offensive to some dearly cherished faith.

The only  
way.

Under such circumstances I cannot see how the conclusion is to be avoided, that the only way of treating the Bible honestly and reverently in our educational system is to leave it to the voluntary action of Churches, Sunday schools, and other religious organisations, to which its popularity has been much more due than to State patronage and control. In this conclusion I am supported by the invariable acknowledgment of reasonable religious people that such a course is the only logical one, though persistent sentiment resists it. But there are some cases in which English contempt for logic in legislation is obviously mischievous and misplaced. And those are cases in which not merely a rough adjustment to an average expediency is required, but an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of some moral right. Of this instances might be found in the history of religious toleration, the slave trade, and slavery itself. Or if we come down to our own times, the story of the opium trade with China—nay, also of Chinese labour in the Transvaal—proves abundantly that where the dictates of logic establish moral claims the plea of expediency is always in the end overborne. Some ingenious and plausible objections to the sovereignty of justice in this case will be best treated later on. But if the Bible has to stand like a mysterious and fatal Sphinx, with its unanswered questions and its dire penalties at the gates of knowledge, that is not the fault of the so-called secularists, but rather of the religionists, who refuse to national school teachers unfettered freedom in the interpretation of the Book.

## II.

### RELIGIOUS EQUALITY

"RELIGIOUS equality" has too often been interpreted to mean equality of privilege for Christian sects. We have not yet entirely outgrown the feeble tolerance of kindly Commonwealth Puritans who would extend the protection of the law to Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and even Quakers, but who would bore with a hot iron the tongue of a man who should outrage their "fundamental" beliefs. Modern sentiment, indeed, protects us from too close an imitation of seventeenth-century practice in this respect. But in the assumption that the claim to religious equality before the law is morally invalid in the case of Unitarians, Rationalists, Pantheists,<sup>1</sup> and Agnostics, the germ of the old cruelty still survives. Now that is just the assumption which has underlain all nineteenth-century discussion by liberal Christians of the rights of "ultra-Rationalists," or disbelievers in any revelation made by a personal God.

Limited  
notions of  
religious  
equality.

The "Broad Churchman" repudiates with honest indignation any lingering desire to subject even the "Infidel" to secular pains and penalties on account of his unbelief. But he retains an equally honest conviction that the "Infidel," by his alleged voluntary alienation from the spiritual life of the Commonwealth, has forfeited any claim to equal consideration with Christians on any question affecting the establishment, endowment, or other public expression of the national religion. This description of the attitude of liberal Christians towards ultra-Rationalists can hardly be accused of exaggeration. Indeed, there are not a few among the former whose objection to the unrestricted citizenship of the "Infidel" is much more distinct. They say that he dishonours their God and Saviour, and that, though they hope his invincible ignorance may be leniently considered by the Supreme

<sup>1</sup> If I do not mention "Atheists," it is because I do not recognise the term as properly applicable to any actual form of belief or unbelief. I never met, nor do I expect ever to meet, a man who would deny that being is eternal. All the self-styled "Atheists" I have ever known have simply denied that my idea of God, or any other idea of God, answers to their notion of eternal being. I am bound to respect their negative attitude. But I should call it Agnosticism, not Atheism. When I find a man who positively denies that there is anything eternal, or, in other words, who thinks that at one moment—so to speak—in the infinite past there was nothing, and at the next moment there was everything, or "the promise and potency" of everything, I will allow him the name of Atheist. But I shall not feel bound to respect his intellect.

Judge, yet they cannot consent to involve the nation in moral peril by extending to him a "religious equality" inapplicable to irreligion.

It may be readily acknowledged that from this point of view the problem of religious equality raises issues far too vast to be adequately treated in connection with the right use of the Bible in the nation's schools. But it will presently be seen that, though we cannot help indicating those larger issues, we do not need to lose ourselves in them. For even if we grant, what I, for one, absolutely decline to do, that for the public expression or recognition of the nation's religious life the legal recognition of the Bible is desirable—as, for instance, in the Coronation service, and in swearing witnesses—yet everyone must surely acknowledge that if any particular public use of the Bible involves hypocrisy and lying, that use becomes a sacrilege, because, in theological language, it desecrates the vessels of the Temple by devoting them to the service of Satan. Now, precisely this is actually involved in the use of the Bible in schools according to the great Smith "Compromise." Such an objection can only be met by asserting that the desecration is not inherent in the legal usage of the book, but in the infidelity or extreme Rationalism of those who cannot use it aright. And this necessarily involves the corollary that none who are unable honestly to use the Bible in accordance with prevalent opinion ought to accept any office in which such use is required. Now that means practically the exclusion of all who cannot accept the residuum of Biblical belief common to Anglicans, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Methodists. The full justification of this assertion must be reserved for a later stage of the argument, when we come to discuss more particularly the position of teachers under the present order of things. Meanwhile I only assume that, if this be so, it raises the question of religious equality for Rationalists in a practical and limited form, such as need not carry us very far into the vast issues suggested above.

We need not, for instance, discuss the Broad Church idea that individual alienation from the spiritual life of the Commonwealth may justify the exclusion of that individual from entire religious equality. For obviously we have to do here not with the spiritual life of the nation, but with the Biblical theories which a national school teacher is, as a matter of course, expected to hold and enforce. It is all very well to say that "theories" are not expected, but practical teaching. Yet if the practical point be the historical truth of the six days' creation, or of the conversation of Eve and the Serpent, or of the argument of Balaam's ass with its master, or the three days' lodging of Jonah in the belly of a whale, or the Virgin Birth, or the feeding of five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, or the bodily

At least it should involve the abolition of compulsory or mercenary sacrilege.

Strain on conscience sometimes involved in "simple Bible teaching."

resurrection of Jesus guarded by angels, it is difficult to see how the conscience of the teacher can avoid the issue of fiction or fact. Either the teacher holds that the accuracy of such narratives is guaranteed by an authority independent of historical evidence, or he does not. If he holds the former theory, he can, of course, honestly teach these stories as narratives of fact. But if he does not hold it, even the chance hints occasionally let fall in the secular history lectures of a training college are enough to suggest to him that for such stories historical evidence of the sort required for secular events is not forthcoming. And unless he have a mind exceptionally impervious to the echoes of criticism in the air, he feels in his inmost soul that, however useful as parables or otherwise those old-world tales may be, they have no claim to be treated as historically true.

We are not, however, at this point concerned with the special difficulties of intelligent teachers. I have referred to the effect of historical lessons in training colleges only as suggestive of the far more pronounced scepticism pervading the wider circles of moderately-educated people, who are under less temptation to a biased judgment. And if I use the word "scepticism," I take it in its proper and original sense of an inquiring spirit. I do not say, and I do not believe, that more than one-fifth, if so many, of English-speaking people reject entirely the idea of a divine revelation given them in the Bible. But I do maintain, because the tone of our current literature of social conversation proves it, that the old matter-of-course assumption of the divinely-guaranteed historic accuracy of the Hexateuch, and the books of Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, has entirely disappeared from all circles of tolerably well-educated society. No literary aspirant to the pages of our most eminently respectable monthly magazines has now the slightest hesitation in treating the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch as a figment of the Great Sanhedrim, or of unsupported tradition. The popularity of the late Professor Huxley's controversial essays cannot be wholly explained by their brightness and vigour. Admiring readers might not go all lengths with him in his negative conclusions. But they were not revolted by his claim to treat the Bible on the common-sense principles that he applied to science; and even this extent of acquiescence involved an immense shifting of the foundations on which their ideas of cosmic and human origins, as well as of Judaism and Christianity, had hitherto rested.

Reference to one recent publication alone may save us a good deal of detail. Surely none but bigots can rejoice over the financial difficulties that prevented the completion of the "Polychrome Bible." But if there should be any so unsusceptible to the real "powers of the world to come" as to imagine an interposition of a watchful Providence

Sceptical  
attitude of  
the general  
public.

The "Poly-  
chrome  
Bible."

in this case, let them look at the volumes issued; let them note the list of contributing scholars, nearly all belonging to churches reckoned as orthodox; let them think of the amount of money sunk in a commercially unsuccessful, but magnificently prophetic, enterprise, and they will be compelled to own that it indicates a flowing tide of new opinion about the Bible. To describe it shortly, it is an incomplete edition of the Hebrew Scriptures with a new translation, accompanied by brief pregnant notes and a very few pictorial illustrations.

The feature from which the Polychrome Bible derived its name is the variegated colouring of the pages designed to show at a glance the various documents from which the Hebrew Scriptures, as we have them, are believed by the editors to have been compiled. The treatment is entirely and unreservedly free—as much so as if the subject were the Vedas or the Zendavesta. It is at the same time profoundly reverential, as is indeed most becoming whenever or wherever we study genuine records of man's struggle upwards from the passions of the brute to the eternal life. The result, however, is a version subversive of many, or indeed most, of our traditional ideas of the Bible. The translation, if it is correct, which, so far as my knowledge goes, I believe it generally is, would often make the evangelical interpretation of crucial passages obviously impossible.<sup>1</sup> The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is so entirely rejected that the earliest documents therein of any length and importance are attributed to the latter part of the ninth century B.C., while the narrative of creation in Genesis i. and Levitical regulations, long defended as Mosaic, if nothing else was, are regarded as the work of exiled Jews in Babylon about 500 B.C. The Prophecies of Isaiah are assigned to a number of sacred bards, among whom the Isaiah of former evangelical divines occupies a limited though luminous space. The Psalms are "the hymn-book of the second Temple." We are told that "it is not a question whether there be any post-Exilic Psalms, but rather whether the Psalms contain any poems written before the Exile."

My point, however, is not the amount of importance to be attributed to the scholarly judgment of the learned men responsible for this great work, but rather their representative position in the world of religious thought. Had they been condemned heretics, "aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel," it might be said that their views are exceptional and eccentric, at any rate of no value as evidence of the trend of opinion. But so far is this from being a correct description that the editors are all of them men of high position and some of distinguished fame in English, American, or German Universities, and in communion

Religious  
position of  
its editors.

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, Isaiah vii. 14, where for "virgin" we read "young woman."

with national churches or other great and respected Christian denominations. The chief editor was Dr. Paul Haupt, Professor of Hebrew and the cognate languages in the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and until 1889 Professor Extraordinarius of Assyriology in the University of Göttingen, Hanover. Isaiah has been edited by Dr. T. K. Cheyne, Canon of Rochester, and Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford. Exodus has been treated by Dr. Herbert E. Ryle, Hulsean Professor of Divinity and President of King's College, Cambridge; the Book of Numbers by Dr. J. A. Paterson, Professor at the Theological Seminary, Edinburgh; and Deuteronomy by Dr. George A. Smith, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis at the Free Church College, Glasgow. There is no need to give the rest of the thirty-eight names. With the exception of one Unitarian gentleman and two Jewish scholars, the three editors of two minor books, all of them would be recognised as official representatives of moderate orthodoxy in religion.

Another proof of the revolution in opinion about the Bible is the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, of which only one volume had appeared when the first edition of the present Essay was published. This great and scholarly work, though involving large expenditure, could hardly demand the vast sum which would have been needed to carry out the original idea of the Polychrome Bible with its Hebrew text, and English translation, laboriously assigned to various older documents distinguished by different colours. But in any case it must have been a costly work, and the very fact of its completion in four large volumes suggests a popular demand which could not have been found in Great Britain or America fifty years ago. Not that there was less interest then in the Bible. But the demand was almost exclusively for works which would prove the Bible true. Now this is neither the motive nor the burden of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. The one purpose is to ascertain the real facts and state them. Nor does such a purpose in the least involve a negative or iconoclastic zeal. For if the Bible were not a valuable inheritance of mankind, such a work as this would not, morally or intellectually, have repaid the enormous labour involved. And, like the parts of the Polychrome Bible, it owes its existence, not to hesitant sceptics, still less to "blatant infidels," but to clergymen and others, who are, many of them, shining lights in reputedly orthodox churches.

Similar case  
of the *Encyclopædia  
Biblica*.

Of the conclusions affirmed it may be said, generally, that while the various writers differ considerably, there is scarcely one of them who can be conceived as endorsing the idea of the Bible implied in the syllabuses of scriptural instruction for public elementary schools.

The elaborate and searching article on the Gospels, running to 198 columns, is by two well-known authors—the Rev. Dr. Abbott, late Head

Thus  
"simple  
Bible teach-  
ing" be-  
comes a  
theological  
test.

Master of the City of London School, and Professor P. W. Schmiedel, holding the Chair of New Testament Exegesis at Zürich. They are not agreed, and the latter is much more "radical" than the former. It must not be assumed that I agree with him. For, if I point to the fact that he allows only nine brief passages in the Gospels to be "absolutely credible,"<sup>1</sup> it is by no means for the purpose of endorsing any such conclusion, but only to emphasise my main point here, that the differences of opinion among religious people are enormously great. From which it follows that no education authority has a moral right to expect all young teachers, fresh from the higher instruction now open to them, to give, as a matter of course, such "simple Bible teaching" as assumes the historicity of the Gospels. And to exclude the increasing number of those who cannot conscientiously do so would be a gross violation of religious equality.

The inference I draw from such signs of the times as I have mentioned is not an extravagant one. It is not that the majority of the people in England or America have been converted to pure Rationalism, but only that it is unjust and absurd to say that the rejectors of the historical accuracy of the Bible are a negligible quantity, eccentric heretics, aliens from the spiritual life of their race, and therefore rightly subjected to religious disabilities where questions of national education are concerned.

Probably many of my liberal religious readers will think that I have taken a great deal of unnecessary trouble to arrive at an obvious conclusion. Of course that is so, they will say; but where are the religious disabilities? My answer is that those disabilities are twofold—first, denial of the just rights of conscience; secondly, exclusion from honest and self-respecting service of the nation as teachers in its public schools. I grant that, if disbelievers in Bible history can consent to a colourable hypocrisy, they are not excluded; but if anyone holds that eligibility to appointment under such a condition constitutes religious equality, with him I will not argue. I was brought up in a different school, and I think it is a loss to the passing generation that the principles of that school are, for the moment, out of fashion.

Limitations  
of the  
argument.

The argument of this chapter necessarily presupposes, as a condition of its practical application, the stage of religious evolution reached by England in our own age. But it would have been manifestly inapplicable in any practical way of statesmanship to Wycliffe's England or even to Oliver Cromwell's, as that great ruler was obliged sadly to acknowledge. Further, if there are now nations whose prevalent religious feeling is mediæval rather than modern, the argument would be practically inapplicable also to them. But it does not in the least

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*, s.v. "Gospels," paragraphs 139-40.

follow that there is no such thing as eternal right. For, as I have said elsewhere, the only intelligible sense in which moral truth can be called eternal is this: "That whenever and wherever the same conditions occur the same moral truth holds good."<sup>1</sup> Thus, where the right of private judgment on things religious has been popularly and authoritatively affirmed, justice requires that each man should allow to all others the same unreserved freedom of conscience which he claims for himself. But where the right of private judgment is both popularly and authoritatively denied, as it was in the Middle Ages, each man may feel bound to be almost as watchful over his neighbour's obedience to Church authority as he is over his own. And when the alternative was everlasting hell-fire or heaven I can well conceive that the golden rule of doing unto others as you would they should do unto you might well suggest denunciation of the heretic for the salvation of his soul, or at any rate for the prevention of the spread of his damnable errors.

The rule was the same; but the prevalence of superstition made the conditions different, and therefore the practical application was different from what seems right to us. But, at any rate, under mediæval conditions compulsory uniformity of belief, so far as it could be practically enforced, was perfectly defensible. There is nothing in this acknowledgment to detract in the least from our admiration of the martyrs for individual conviction. Indeed, there is much to enhance our admiration. For they had to contend, not only against brute force, but against the universal convention which confounded ecclesiastical obedience with moral duty—just as, at the present day, acquiescence in "simple Bible teaching" is regarded by many as a dictate of the moral law. Yet surely England as a whole, England apart from Scotland or Ireland, England of two or three hundred sects, England of a free Press and free speech and "liberty of prophesying," England which has boldly inaugurated of late new programmes of free thought and of free religious organisation, belongs to the twentieth century, not to the fourteenth, and cannot, with any decency, longer maintain that religious equality in the schools should be confined to Low Church and Nonconformist sects.

<sup>1</sup> *Spinoza: A Handbook to the Ethics.* p. 156 n.

### III.

#### THE NEW CHURCH RATE

Nonconformity before the Compromise and after.

BEFORE the year 1870 the Nonconformists held that it is wrong, unjust, and even cruel, to make a man pay for the maintenance and spread of what he holds to be religious error. I am old-fashioned enough to be of the same opinion still, unless we happen to live in a community that still belongs to the Middle Ages. The sentimental generalities of "Broad Churchmen," which appear singularly attractive to Nonconformist "perverts"—like the late Right Hon. W. E. Forster<sup>1</sup>—have on this subject blurred the boundary lines of right and wrong in the minds of many influential men of Puritan traditions. With much plausibility they say that men like the late Edward Miall were wrong in assuming that there is a clear and straight-cut dividing-line between things "sacred" and "secular." They were wrong, also, in assuming that a national or municipal government ought of right to confine itself to a policy of gas and water, of sewage and sanitation. They were wrong, again, in conceiving of government as a corporate policeman, whose only duty is to keep individual citizens from wronging each other. If the life of a man should be treated as a whole, and not as a mosaic of religion, morality, business, and politics, so ought the life of a nation to be treated as a whole. From that point of view the business of a Government is to foster and co-ordinate all healthy forms of the national energy, whether ticketed as religious or secular, social or commercial, aesthetic or practical, individual or collective. Nor is this reaction against "administrative nihilism" confined to Broad Churchmen and Nonconformists. It has generally the support of the Ethical Societies and their organs, among whose aims the substitution of non-theological ethics for religious instruction in the nation's schools is prominent. I do not understand, however, that the supporters of the Ethical Movement desire to make the denial of revelation a part of our school teaching, still less to extort rates from the pockets of devout evangelicals for the support of such teaching.

New Nonconformist theories of State's functions.

<sup>1</sup> Though of limited outlook, Mr. Forster was a very shrewd man. The saying attributed to him, that he "would get over the religious difficulty in a canter," at least suggests his knowledge of Nonconformity in his day. He knew that if the sturdy opponents of "State patronage and control" were allowed to have the "simple Bible teaching" of their Sunday-schools patronised and endowed, their consciences would be satisfied; and they would not be able to conceive any reasonable objection on grounds of conscience by anyone else.

It is at this point that I find a limit to the generous theories of the State's function, which have so largely superseded that of the corporate policeman. There are, I believe, other limits; for many methods of social action derive all their charm and effectiveness from voluntary impulse, and are practically paralysed if this be superseded by law. But we are concerned at present only with the particular limit that comes into view when religion is touched. It was from this point of view only that the Nonconformist opponents of church rates could be justified. In extorting from them by force the support of transcendental<sup>1</sup> doctrines that they condemned, an indefensible wrong was done to their conscientious convictions. This has now been conceded to them. But most of the survivors of that struggle appear strangely blind to the bearing of their own arguments on the education rate, so far as it is spent on the present Bible teaching.

Limits to such theories.

I am one of a school till lately "everywhere spoken against," who, just because we prize the Bible highly, regret very much to see the venerable Book misused as it is in our schools. Its value to us consists, not in any revelation or any otherwise inaccessible information supposed to be found in its pages, but in the unrivalled power of spiritual and moral inspiration inherent in its noblest utterances. Through all our changes of opinion, surviving all denials forced on us by evidence and honesty, rising triumphantly from the scientific grave to which a dead creed has been committed, that power seems to us indestructible, immortal. We do not think of the Bible less; we think far more of it than when we believed in Eve's apple and Balaam's ass. For then it represented to us a series of violent dislocations of the order of nature. But now the Bible is to us an age-long vision of truth disentangling itself from error, of right slowly conquering wrong, of the emergence through the illusions and lies and sufferings and struggles and passions and aspirations of mankind of that more perfect state which, if the earth last long enough, must bless some future generation, and which, by its consummation of past, present, and future in one consciousness, may well be called the eternal life, or even "the fullness of the godhead bodily."

Real value of the Bible.

We think such a Book degraded to low uses when it is enthroned as a fetish, before which judgment and reason grovel in the dust of superstition. And we protest against being made to pay for such sacrilege. Indeed, the wrong done to conscience in our case is much more offensive than anything that could be alleged by our predecessors under church rates. For, after all, our evangelical fathers and grandfathers

Degradation of the Bible.

<sup>1</sup> As explained in a preliminary note, I use this epithet to describe doctrines going beyond the sort of evidence usually required for justice or legislation, and also outside the practical necessities of citizen life.

agreed almost entirely with the religious and moral teaching of the Established Church. Their points of difference touched only ecclesiastical order and sacraments, which, however important in their view, could hardly be said to affect fundamental morality. But we, in these times, are forced to support a system which we not only suspect, but know by experience, to be utterly inconsistent with a cultivation of that "truth in the inward parts" which in the Bible itself the Eternal is said to require.

Possible  
limits to the  
rights of  
conscience.

I am not so foolish as to hold that legal compulsion is necessarily barred the moment any plea of individual conscience is raised. I fully acknowledge also the difficulty of drawing a clear line between legitimate and illegitimate pleas of conscience. Nor is it essential to attempt it here. I confine myself to one class of cases in which it seems unjust and cruel to reject the plea. But I will offer one or two suggestions on the general question.

In matters on which public opinion is much divided by differences depending on sentiment rather than on evidence it is always dangerous for authority to be intolerant of conscience in recusants. Further, if the differences concern transcendental questions, with no immediate or obvious bearing on the practical life of the commonwealth, such intolerance is more than dangerous; it is wrong. For one need not be a fanatical "individualist" to hold that some inner sources of individual character and will are of priceless worth to the community, and should be held sacred in every man. Among these we may surely count the individual feeling of solitary responsibility to eternal Power for personal loyalty to its rule. Without this, indeed, we have no true commonwealth at all. For any group of creatures who fulfil only by instinct, and unconsciously, separate functions of convergent advantage to the whole of that group, are more on the level of a hive than of a commonwealth. To this latter some intelligent consciousness of subordination to a common end is necessary, and this cannot be permanently secured without individual loyalty to a control higher than institutions and more comprehensive than the State. It was an inarticulate feeling of this truth which led the ancients to insist so much on religion as the sanction of patriotism. This also was what St. Paul had in mind when he said, perhaps too indiscriminately: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.....Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake." But when the loyalties clashed St. Paul resolutely obeyed the higher. It has taken the rulers of this world a long time to find out that it is precisely such men who, if only their conscience be respected, make the best citizens. In fact, records of our own time—such as some of the proceedings under the

Where its  
claims are  
indefeasible.

so-called Blasphemy Laws, and also under the Church Discipline Acts—show that the lesson has not even yet been perfectly learned. But we have surely got so far that, if any wrong done to conscience is clearly made out, public opinion will insist on finding a remedy, lest so precious an inspiration as that of individual loyalty to truth and right should suffer sacrilege. My plea is that such a wrong is done by the present system of Bible instruction in public schools, because it forces every citizen, whatever his belief or unbelief, to pay for the propagation of transcendental doctrines having no necessary bearing whatever upon citizenship; and even though he may conscientiously think some of those doctrines not only false, but immoral, still he must pay.

Before leaving this part of the subject, however, let me try to show how such reasonable claims of the religious conscience as are here raised may be distinguished from perverse individual revolts against salutary State regulations. I will take the case of the self-styled "Peculiar People," a case by no means easy to deal with, but one which an advocate of conscience-rights ought not to shirk. If I understand the position of these people rightly, it is their conscientious conviction that the Bible requires them in cases of sickness to depend on direct divine healing, without the intervention of a human physician. I am not competent to discuss the legal difficulties which thus arise. How far any man, whether a "Peculiar" brother or not, can be compelled to ask and act on medical advice for his child, just as he is compelled to obtain "efficient instruction" for that child, I am not lawyer enough to say. He is not compelled to go to the schoolmaster for his child's instruction if he can ensure it in some other manner. It might be plausibly asked: Why, then, should he be compelled to go to the physician for medical aid if he can obtain it in some other manner? But "there is much virtue in an 'if.'" The legal view, or, at any rate, the common-sense view—which lawyers tell me is the same thing—is that the "if" here does in many cases introduce an impossible, and therefore unreal, alternative. What the law requires is that the parent shall do all within his power to prevent unnecessary suffering to his child, and still more to save its life. Whether he be rich or poor, it is within his power to obtain medical aid, and there are cases in which legal evidence can prove that medical aid, so far as human judgment can discern, would make all the difference between life and death. In such cases "conscientious" objection to medical aid does not come under the conditions laid down above as defining the rights of conscience.<sup>1</sup> It may be, indeed, a case of false sentiment, but it is still more a stolid refusal of evidence. Transcendental doctrine may,

Spurious  
claims. The  
"Peculiar  
People."

<sup>1</sup> See p. 18.

perhaps, be involved, and on that the parent may keep his own opinion. But sickness and healing are matters of physiology rather than of mysticism. They have a palpable and immediate bearing on the practical life of the commonwealth. Where this is the case, and where the requirement of medical aid is based upon an overwhelming consensus of experience and opinion, the community is abundantly justified in telling the recalcitrant parent to keep his scruples for the kingdom of heaven, and to render his due obedience to the kingdom of this world.

Difference  
of the case  
of the objec-  
tor to  
vaccination.

The conscientious objector to vaccination may claim to be in a different and stronger position, not because his conscience is more sacred than that of the "Peculiar" person, but simply because there is not the same overwhelming consensus of experience and opinion to support compulsory vaccination as there is to support compulsory recourse to medical aid for serious illness. If experience had confirmed Jenner's assertion that one good vaccination would make the patient insusceptible to small-pox for the remainder of his life, the probability is that the question of compulsion would never have arisen. The popularity at one time of the system of inoculation shows how anxious people were to protect themselves. It is improbable that, if no cases of small-pox after vaccination had been known, such a marvellous preventive would have needed enforcement by fine or imprisonment. But if, contrary to probability, resistance had been encountered similar in its eccentricity to the attitude of the "Peculiar People," a claim to exemption on conscientious grounds would have had small chance of sympathy in the face of such overwhelming proof of a palpable and obvious benefit to the practical life of the community. Even to the plea that a man might well be allowed to leave his own children unvaccinated, seeing that all others could, if they chose, be guaranteed by this infallible antidote against danger from his neglect, it might perhaps have been justly replied that he would be exposing his own children to unnecessary danger and suffering, contrary to the spirit of modern law. But all such arguments are annulled by the now notorious fact that the vaccinated sufferers from small-pox outnumber the unvaccinated in about the same proportion as the vaccinated bear to the unvaccinated in the whole population.<sup>1</sup> If a man draws from this fact the conclusion that the alleged preventive makes no difference, but practically leaves things just as they would be were vaccination entirely abolished, I do not say that he would be unanswerable; but I do say that it is unjust to treat him as an obstinate fanatic or a traitor to society. This, in

<sup>1</sup> See Report of the Dissident Commissioners, annexed to that of the Royal Commission on Vaccination, 1901. The "Conscience Clause" unanimously recommended on the motion of the late Lord Herschell would never have been suggested if vaccination had accomplished what Jenner declared it would.

fact, is just what the recent law has recognised by excusing from compulsion all who, in proper form, make a declaration of conscientious objection. In other words, the case is authoritatively pronounced to be one in which the plea of conscience cannot justly be ignored.

I will take yet another case to elucidate the principle suggested above as a test of the rights of conscience. The other day I observed in the newspapers the report of a sale by legal order of certain goods belonging to a worthy Quaker who had refused to pay his taxes because of the South African War. He would not voluntarily support bloodshed, and therefore took joyfully the spoiling of his goods. But, with all respect for one who is clearly a man of high character and strong individuality, I hold his plea to be entirely illegitimate. The maintenance of peace and the making of war both belong to the practical, material life of the commonwealth. In such matters, if it is to act at all, it must act as a whole. There may be, and there nearly always is, division of opinion. But the majority determines the action, and it is carried out as the action of the whole. On no other conceivable plan could a *commonwealth* exist at all. This action as a whole, however, is only secured by the subordination of the wills and opinions of the minority to those of the majority. After doing all they can to secure that right counsels should prevail, the minority are no longer responsible *in foro conscientiæ*. To refuse at least passive obedience to the general voice in a matter strictly within the functions of a commonwealth would be to invalidate social order.

Quakers and  
war taxes.

Of course, social custom or law may sometimes be so bad that it ought to be resisted. And in that case chaos must be endured for a while that a better order may succeed. But such extreme crises are very exceptional, and perhaps they never arise unless the commonwealth, or those who usurp its powers, have exceeded its functions of organising the practical, earthly (or, if we may use the word, secular) life. This happened in the seventeenth century in England, and it is the chronic state of things in Russia. But to say that the act of the community in making external war can justify those who object to it in refusing to pay taxes would be to declare any commonwealth impossible, and to assert the principle of anarchism.

The conscientious objection felt by an increasing number of English people to be made to pay for the present Bible-teaching in the nation's schools is not open to any such condemnation. Such teaching cannot fairly be described as one of those public functions in which the commonwealth, if it act at all, must act as a whole. Indeed, so far as public elementary schools are concerned, such an assumption has been solemnly repudiated by Parliament in the Act of 1870. That Act does, indeed, forbid any "creed or formulary distinctive of any

Strength of  
the case  
against the  
Bible rate.

particular denomination"—a prohibition found perfectly consistent with strongly dogmatic teaching. But it does not require that there shall be any religious teaching at all. It throws the odium of persecution on the local authority. Even in the elementary schools of the "National Society" the State now declines any responsibility for religion except so far as concerns the maintenance of the "Conscience Clause." It does not examine in religion, and it does not "inspect" religious instruction. It is clear, therefore, that in modern statecraft the support of religious teaching is not placed on a par with the maintenance of war, or with the provision of secular instruction as the duty of the whole commonwealth acting together. Further, it cannot reasonably be said in defence of municipal school practice that the infallibility of the Bible or its historic accuracy, or the transcendental doctrines taught from it, have a palpable or necessary bearing on the practical life of the nation. If, therefore, any Rationalist were moved by his conscience to refuse to pay his school rate on the ground that it is applied to propagate "free church" dogmas, his conduct would certainly not be open to the same criticism as that of the conscientious Quaker mentioned above. And if the evangelical Nonconformists were right, as I presume they still think they were, in objecting to pay church rates, they ought to realise the gross inconsistency of which they are guilty in compelling rejectors of their creed to pay for teaching it. This is in flagrant contradiction to the doctrine of religious equality which, with stammering tongues, they still assert.

Survivors, if there are any, of the noble army of "church-rate martyrs" might ask why Rationalist nonconformity does not prove its sincerity by a similar martyrdom. It is a question of proportion. Unbelievers in supernatural religion have often gone to prison, or suffered odious wrong in law courts, rather than play the hypocrite. But the devotion of part of a rate to a purpose they disapprove, while they heartily applaud the use of the greater part of it, hardly seems to them to justify martyrdom. The church rate was devoted wholly to church uses. It would be scarcely becoming in the advocates of religious equality as the right of a free-born Englishman to urge that a man must have his goods distrained before he can fairly claim that right.

#### IV.

### NEW RELIGIOUS DISABILITIES

RELIGIOUS equality is also outraged by the exclusion of non-Evangelical Nonconformists from honest and self-respecting service of the nation in its public schools. This is a wrong which cannot, of course, be felt so widely as the last, because, naturally, those born with an imperious vocation to the teaching are a small minority. But where this particular form of injustice strikes it is felt with a special bitterness. And the number whom it affects is rapidly increasing. I do not mean merely that the number of silent protestants against the doctrinal residuum constituting "undenominational religion" is increasing, but that the number among them who find either open or tacit hypocrisy intolerable is rapidly growing. In proportion as the impossibility of retaining the old beliefs becomes more widely felt, the demand for relief from any pretence of believing them becomes more urgent. There was a great change in the theology of the middle classes during the later years of the nineteenth century.

Even so recently as the School Board era of 1870, the sharpness of the issue between the creed of the Evangelical Alliance and actual fact was not generally realised with anything like the same distinctness as now. The significance of Assyrian and Egyptian records had not been grasped except by a very few profound scholars. The Tell-el-Amarna Tablets, with their revelation of the condition of Palestine about the time assigned to the Mosaic exodus, had not been discovered. The Polychrome Bible had not presented its rainbow spectre of Bible origins. The *Encyclopædia Biblica* had not appeared. Even the "Moabite Stone," though discovered in 1868, was not generally known, nor for years afterwards fully appreciated. The inscription of Menephthah, recording a victory over certain "Israhili" in North Palestine, about the date when he was supposed to have been drowned in a mad pursuit of Israel through the Red Sea, was as yet unknown. The enormous antiquity of the human race, and even of civilisation and organised religion, was as yet entirely under-estimated, but has since been enlarged beyond the dreams of old-fashioned anthropologists by recent excavations in Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and Crete. So far as the spade had then recovered the past of sacred lands, it was believed that the correspondence of Egyptian, Assyrian, and Chaldean ceremonies and forms of worship with Biblical references confirmed the Scripture

Should honest unbelief exclude from the nation's service?

Reasons why the question is more urgent now than in 1870.

record ; while the actual occurrence in inscriptions of names mentioned in the Old Testament was thought to have finally settled the question of its historical veracity. It is true that the epoch-making book of Darwin had been published eleven years before. But even among scientific men there was considerable hesitation in applying the theory of natural selection to man. And religious liberals who toyed with edged tools dwelt fondly on the absence of the "missing link."

Suspense of judgment then more possible than now.

While such was the state of popular knowledge and opinion, it was not difficult for conscientious teachers of the young to find relief in suspense of judgment. Members of a profession largely under clerical influence, and charged quite as much with the moral as with the intellectual training of their pupils, were naturally predisposed to believe that it was their duty in the meantime to go on teaching "divinity" as it had been taught to them. Comfort was found in the reflection that God's voice in nature and God's word in the Bible could not possibly contradict each other ; and the meaning given to both terms remained so very vague that there was ample scope for temporary accommodation. Even in cases where inconveniently definite questions were asked, it was always possible for instruction to disappear in a haze of reverence. "Do you think, sir, that we must take this literally?" asked a boy in a class studying the ass's argument with Balaam. "Such an occurrence," replied the master, "is so very remarkable, and, indeed, unparalleled, that in the present state of our knowledge I would rather not give an opinion. Perhaps there is some explanation of which we are not at present aware." So long as this kind of mental attitude remained possible the disabilities of doubt were not acutely felt. The supposed foundations of morality could be accepted as they stood, with an acknowledgment that their relation to the foundations of knowledge was an unsolved question.

Acknowledgments of a Free Church Council.

But the state of things is very different now. The surrender of the historic accuracy of a large part of the Old Testament is so general that a very considerable number of teachers are conscious of a clear contradiction between what they are expected to teach and what they themselves believe. It is difficult to understand how an honest man can accept a position like that. In March, 1901, the "National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches," in its meetings at Cardiff, heard some plain speaking on this point from the Rev. Dr. Monro Gibson. It is true that his subject was that of Sunday-school teaching. But the principles he laid down are plainly applicable to all national schools in which the Bible is taught as a divine revelation.<sup>1</sup> And,

<sup>1</sup> The analogy between undenominational State schools and Nonconformist Sunday-schools, so far as concerns religious instruction, is far closer than is commonly supposed. The effect of Mr. W. H. Smith's resolution of 1871 was practically to

although no Board-school teacher is called upon to sign a creed or to make any profession of faith, he would not be allowed to give religious instruction if he did not assume this view of the Bible in all his lessons.<sup>1</sup> So far as the Bible is concerned, then, the words of Dr. Gibson have a clear bearing upon the position of municipal school teachers. He fully admitted that "within recent years difficulties had arisen on account of the change of view brought about in the minds of many Christians by the results, or supposed results, of recent investigations." He was quite willing to allow to Sunday-school teachers a latitude which experience shows to be impossible in State elementary schools. The sectarian equilibrium in the management of the latter is so exceedingly delicate that it can only be preserved by excluding from the lessons everything but what is held in common by the most conservative and orthodox sections of each evangelical denomination represented. On the other hand, liberal clergymen, like Dr. Gibson, can often secure a great deal of freedom to the teachers within their own communion. This must be remembered in applying the following observations to the case of municipal schools, and accordingly the warnings must be interpreted more stringently. The italics are my own:—

They were confronted (said Dr. Gibson) with the difficult and delicate question as to what must be the attitude of our Sunday-schools towards this burning question of the day. It should be laid down as an axiom to start with *that only those who firmly believed in the divine authority of both Testaments had the right to be Sunday-school teachers at all.* (Cheers.) A man who had no message of God to declare, but only doubts of his own. Those who were quite out of place in the pulpit or in the chair of a teacher. Those who were themselves wandering in mist and darkness were no proper guides for others—least of all for the children. Most intelligent people, indeed, had doubts and difficulties in minor matters, so they could not expect their teachers to be all-round

Testimony  
of Dr.  
Monro  
Gibson.

introduce into nearly all the Board schools under Mr. Forster's Act precisely the evangelical teaching given in common by very low Churchmen, Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists. So far was this carried that for some time the Catechism approved by representatives of the Evangelical Free Churches was actually used by the School Board for Liverpool in its schools.

<sup>1</sup> The experience of Mr. F. J. Gould, the author of an excellent manual of Ethical teaching, and formerly an assistant master under the London Board, is decisive on this point. Being exceptionally conscientious, he could not reconcile it with his sense of right to teach a "syllabus" implying doctrines which he no longer believed. True, he was generously relieved of the duty while still retained on the staff. But he became a marked man, and the promotion deserved by his uncommon abilities was barred. He naturally left the profession. But he has since written handbooks of moral instruction valued even by the orthodox clergy, and is prominent as a leader in the beneficent movement for the reform of moral teaching in our schools. This is the sort of man whom our "tests" involved in "simple Bible teaching" banish to the ranks of aggressive secularism. He is at this present time of writing the honoured "minister"—if I may use the title—of the Leicester Secularist Society. If anyone supposes that Mr. Gould's case is peculiar, except in regard to his unusual punctiliousness of conscience—well, such an one does not know as much as I do of the working of "simple Bible teaching."

dogmatists, though even in the minor matters they should be careful not to parade their doubts. But if their doubts touched the great question whether God had really spoken to man and given himself for our salvation, *then must the doubter be silent; or, if he must speak, let it be under the banner of infidelity, not under the flag of Christ.* (Hear, hear.) *The teacher must be honest. If a teacher believed that the Pentateuch was a composite production, he must not teach his scholars that Moses wrote it all as his own original composition.* He took this as a simple illustration, which was none the worse in that it suggested the remark that a good Sunday-school teacher was likely to find something much better to do than to occupy his time with a matter which was of no spiritual value when there were so many urgent themes pressing for attention. (Cheers.) *A man must either teach what he believed or not teach at all.* (Hear, hear.) In the great majority of the lessons in the Old Testament, as well as the New, there need be no occasion whatever for raising any of these questions. One of the greatest dangers of our time was making far too much of the letter of Scripture and far too little of the spirit. What of those cases where a difficult question was sprung upon them? In that case he should consider it to be the teacher's duty to state what he considered to be the truth on the matter, but at the same time to intimate that this was a subject on which good Christians differed, and therefore it was a matter which was not essential, on which a person might think either this way or that without serious harm. It should, in fact, be treated as an open question. It was the dogmatism that did the mischief on both sides. Suppose he had the story of Eden to deal with, and had reached the record of the Fall, and a smart boy popped the question, "Was that a real serpent, teacher?" Now he maintained that, in the present state of opinion among good critics, it would be a grave fault to say either "yes" or "no." He should answer: "Some say yes, others say no; but it does not matter in the smallest degree to our great lesson of to-day which of them is right." *But some might ask: "If you leave such questions open, do you not unsettle the mind of the scholar?" His answer was that their minds ought to be unsettled on questions which were unsettled.* (Hear, hear.) The settling of the mind on a question which was unsettled was most mischievous and in the highest degree dangerous for the future. Who could tell, for example, what dire mischief was done in the childhood of Professor Huxley by those who succeeded in settling in his mind that the Bible must teach science with the rigorous position of the nineteenth century or be utterly discredited? No one could read intelligently Huxley's anti-Christian writings without seeing that his fierce antagonism to Christianity was determined by the fact that he was taught in his youth to regard as settled questions those which all intelligent Christians now treated as open or as settled in the opposite way. What had been rubbed into him from his earliest days was the mischievous dogma that, if there was a solitary inaccuracy in any reference which touched the domain of science in any of the books which made up the Bible, it was impossible to accept the Scripture as from God. If only the minds of men like Huxley and Tyndall had been unsettled on the question of the relation between science and inspiration, how different might the history of Christian thought have been in the last fifty years. He did not say they would have become Christians; that was not the result of an intellectual process, but the work of the Spirit. But they certainly would not have spent their strength in sowing broadcast the seeds of unbelief, and if they had not accepted Christ themselves they would, at all events, have looked with favour, and not with deadly hostility, on the truth. In guiding the steps of the young they should see to it first that they were leading them up, and not down,

and next that the steps were made easy to them, so that they might not stumble as they climbed.<sup>1</sup>

It must be a very prejudiced mind which would fail to recognise and respect the moral and intellectual courage shown in these words from the occupant of an orthodox pulpit. But the conclusion of the report from which the above is an extract is even more instructive :—

Professor Rendel Harris (University lecturer in Palæography at Cambridge) opened the discussion. He said he thought that Dr. Gibson was a little in danger of sailing down the channel of "no meaning" between "yes" and "no." As to the serpent mentioned in the Eden story, if he were asked he should at once say that it was mythical, and should be treated as such. (Oh.) When they were dealing with the educated sense of mankind they should not hesitate to speak out bravely and face the question, and say: "Man is older than we thought him to be at one time." He asked them to appeal from the smaller Bible to the larger Bible of nature. They learnt from Genesis that Adam sewed together fig leaves. Well, the only fact they got there was that primitive man could sew. (Laughter.) If, however, they went into Kent's Cavern at Torquay, they would find the actual needle used by primitive man. That was much more convincing than any story, and he pressed upon them the importance of studying the Bible by the light of nature and not nature by the light of the Bible.

Professor  
Rendel  
Harris.

During Professor Harris's speech many present dissented from his views. Having exhausted his time-limit, a vote was taken as to whether he should continue his speech. Several delegates voted against the motion, and Professor Harris said he had no intention to break the time rule. (Laughter.)

The Rev. P. Williams (Derby) thought that Dr. Gibson ought to have dwelt longer on some of the important points, and not have passed over them by using catch phrases. They would like to have had a definition of the "Divine Authority of Scripture" and the "human element in the Bible." They knew both were there, but still they wanted the matter defined so that other people might know they were there. (Cheers.)

Dr. Gibson, in reply, said he was bound by a time-limit, and could not, of course, deal with all questions in a single paper.

The six years elapsed since that Free Church Council was held have not lessened, but, so far, have rather increased, the moral difficulties so frankly acknowledged. Now, if in a conference of "Free Churches," with no fear of ratepayers before their eyes, and no sacred "compromise" to maintain, it is so difficult to obtain a sanction for honesty in teaching the Bible, how much harder, indeed how impossible, must it be to secure it for teachers in rate-supported schools whose directors represent a carefully-schemed balance of sectarian jealousies! The only possible expedient for maintaining an unreal appearance of agreement is to adhere strictly to such explanations as are not likely to be challenged by any section of evangelical believers. A paradoxical state of things thus arises. For, while the liberty of teaching is necessarily much narrower

Aggrava-  
tion of the  
difficulty in  
Public Ele-  
mentary  
Schools.

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, March 14th, 1901.

in rate-supported schools than in Sunday-schools under the liberal influence of clergymen like Dr. Monro Gibson, the area from which the teachers are, or may be, drawn is much wider in the former schools than in the latter, and nominally there is no imposition of any creed whatever.

The moral issue.

Is this anomaly favourable to the honesty so earnestly insisted upon in the above extract? Honest and self-respecting service in Board schools under the present system is obviously made impossible to consistent Rationalists—nay, more, it is impossible to young men trained under liberal Christian influences and encouraged to accept the results of modern research, so far as these may appear consistent with the retention of belief in revelation. Suppose a young teacher entering school life with the teaching of Professor Rendel Harris fresh in his mind, and impressed with Dr. Gibson's manly exhortation not to teach what he does not believe. There is handed to him a "syllabus" of religious instruction in which "The Life of Abraham" is mentioned as a subject. To the younger children he may teach it as a story without saying whether he thinks it historical or not. Yet he cannot but be aware that his little pupils receive it as actual fact. That it would be possible to teach it otherwise is known to him by his experience of the effect produced when he indulges them with a fairy tale such as *Little Snowdrop* or *The King of the Golden River*. The children are as much interested in these stories as though he had assured them they were actual facts. Yet they know quite well that it is not so. The stories belong to that wonderland where historic criticism never intrudes. But when he relates to them "The Life of Abraham," including the divine demand for a human sacrifice, he is aware that they receive it as a statement of solemn fact, while at the same time he does not believe that it is so.

Treatment of Old Testament stories as mythology not allowed.

With the higher standards, containing children from twelve to fifteen years of age, the difficulty is much more serious. Encouraged by the liberty allowed him by clergymen such as Dr. Monro Gibson, he has yielded to arguments which convince him that the records of Abraham's life in Genesis are a composite production, showing an unsuccessful attempt to piece together a consistent whole out of discordant materials. Warned against dishonesty in teaching, he cannot tell his pupils that the narrative is guaranteed by the authorship of Moses. If among his scholars a prize-winner in the examinations of the Sunday School Union should ask how it is that a precisely similar incident, arising out of a falsehood about a wife, is related twice of Abraham and once of Isaac, the same king being concerned at a considerable interval of time in two of the stories, what shall this honest follower of Dr. Monro Gibson say? If he says what in his own conviction is the truth, that the confusion arises through the unskilful patching of different materials, all of which are

Impossibility of answering intelligent questions.

largely, if not wholly, mythical, there will be a disturbance at the local Education Committee, and the teacher's career will be at an end. If he prevaricates, and says that it really does not matter, that in any case the moral lesson is the same, it is very doubtful whether even this would satisfy the weak brethren of the Education Authority; but it would certainly be fatal to the teacher's own self-respect.

These observations are not in the least invalidated by the suggestion that the opinions adopted by the teacher are possibly incorrect. From the point of view of religious equality in the nation's schools, such a suggestion is entirely inept. The consideration of importance is that even Christian opinion, as represented by men like Dr. Monro Gibson, has now got the length of encouraging young people not to feel guilty of mortal sin if their reading convinces them of the composite and imperfect nature of "The Life of Abraham." And yet if they act on the declaration above quoted, that "a man must either teach what he believes or not teach at all," the second alternative alone is open to them. Even though they should have the genius of a Pestalozzi or a Froebel, they are excluded from the nation's schools, except on condition of open or tacit hypocrisy. If this is not religious inequality, and inequality of a shameful and odious kind, I do not know what can deserve the name.

The cruellest form of religious inequality.

Readers who keep pace with the times in matters of opinion, but are unfamiliar with the working of the elementary school system, may perhaps be incredulous as to the existence of such a state of things as is here described. Is not the teaching "unsectarian"? they ask. The reply is that it is only so in the sense of teaching all that the "Evangelical Free Churches" hold in common. "Is not Bible-teaching confined to necessary explanations in grammar, geography, and archæology?" No, it is not, as is clearly proved by the adoption, for a time, of the Free Church catechism by the Liverpool School Board.<sup>1</sup> By the Shrewsbury School Board the teaching of the Apostles, Creed was ordered, and, by the courtesy of the Town Clerk, I am informed it is to this day continued by the local Education Committee under the Act of 1902.

But as this point of the amount of disputed dogma possible under the Cowper-Temple clause is very important, and is also the subject of very general misunderstanding, I will give more detailed evidence. And as most of this was previously given in the former edition, I shall first show cause why it cannot be considered out of date. Indeed, it will never be out of date as long as the creed common to certain

<sup>1</sup> It is no answer to say that the answers on sacraments and Church order were omitted. Of course they were. But to Nonconformists they are unimportant, compared with the body of divinity contained in the other answers.

influential sects and rejected by all the rest of the nation continues to be legally treated as "undenominational."

The President of the Board of Education on the "Cowper-Temple Clause."

The *Times* of June 26th, 1907, gave a brief but significant report of the reception on the previous day by Mr. McKenna, President of the Board of Education, of a joint deputation of educational and Nonconformist bodies on the question of the enforcement of the Cowper-Temple clause.<sup>1</sup> The deputation, which included the Rev. Dr. Clifford and the Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell, complained that the clause was being interpreted in such an elastic manner that it practically gave no protection to the evangelical Nonconformist conscience. I quote the report of part of Mr. McKenna's reply:—

He distinguished very considerably between what was the view of the Board as to the law on this question and what its view was as to policy. He had to deal with Acts of Parliament as they were. He did not approve them, and he did not defend them. As regards the construction which had been put upon the Cowper-Temple clause as to its value, he was heartily in sympathy with everyone who had spoken. But when he was asked whether they were to-day where they used to be between the period 1879 and 1902, he was bound to answer that they were not. The Act of 1902 made a very serious difference in the law. He had no longer the power finally to determine whether or not the Cowper-Temple clause was being contravened. He had been told that section 16 of the Act of 1902 did not give him power to determine whether there had been a breach of the clause, but, if there had been a breach, it gave him power to enforce the law. There, again, it was a question of law; it was not a question for the layman. It was a question of the strict construction of section 16 of the Act of 1902. Section 16 of the Act of 1902 enabled the Board of Education to compel an authority to fulfil their duty by proceeding in the Courts of Law on an action of *mandamus*. A local authority was under no obligation to compile a syllabus of religious instruction at all, and was under no obligation to give religious instruction in schools. Therefore, if a local authority did not compile a syllabus or did not give religious instruction at all, they had not failed to fulfil a duty. (Hear, hear.) He had no power under the Acts of Parliament alone to enforce the Cowper-Temple clause by withholding the grant. He could only deal with the Code at this moment as it existed.

The rest of the reply dealt partly with a hypothetical future Bill, and partly with the wrongs of religious Nonconformists in Preston, who, it appears, suffer specially in that town the form of injustice which Nonconformists themselves are quite ready to inflict on those who believe less than they do. But what I have quoted is sufficient to prove that, in the opinion of a Minister of Education with all sources of official information at his command, the interpretation of the Cowper-Temple clause, so far from being more just and rigorous, is

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Clause 14 of the Act of 1870 prohibiting in Board schools the use of any "religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination."

more favourable to sectarian dogma than when this essay first appeared. I am perfectly justified, therefore, in once more calling attention to the report of the Royal Commission on Education issued in 1888. And I may say that not one fact adduced by me in 1901 has been disputed.

Among a great variety of interesting information the Report included an account of the religious instruction given in the elementary schools. I learn from this Report that Pulliblack's *Teachers' Handbook to the Bible* and Mr. M. F. Lloyd's *Abridged Bible Catechism* were being used in Board schools with the apparent approval of the Education Department. This fact shows what is meant by "unsectarian" teaching. Of Mr. Pulliblack's book I desire to say no more than that it assumes throughout the literal historical accuracy of the Old Testament, even of the early chapters of Genesis. Mr. Lloyd's *Catechism*, on the other hand, is an ingenious scheme to set forth the whole evangelical doctrine of the plan of salvation by contriving to furnish in the exact words of the Bible the answers to a number of leading questions. Thus, to the question, "What promise of a Saviour was made to our first parents?" the answer is: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is unnecessary to quote further. The assumption that the serpent-myth is actual history, that the serpent was Satan and the seed Christ, sufficiently shows how the plea of the Bible, and the Bible alone, may be made to support the teaching under the name of unsectarian religion, of beliefs abandoned by educated people and condemned by the spirit of the age. This should be borne in mind when we note the selections of Scripture made by School Boards and their successors for the teaching of children.

It appears that at the date of the Report—and I can find no evidence of any change—the Bible narratives of the Creation, of the Fall, of the Flood, and of Noah's exploits were considered to be specially suitable for the moral instruction of infants. They were prescribed for this purpose by the School Boards for Bolton, Manchester, Rochdale, Newport, with St. Moollos, and many others. In Liverpool the Book of Genesis was taken for the first year's course; but whether that included babies does not clearly appear. The School Board for London does not seem to have regarded those narratives as milk for babes, and its selections were much above the ordinary level. But in its prescription of the "lives" of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as subjects for study, it certainly intended that they should be treated as historical, and this all teachers understand. The same remark may be made wherever a particular book or section of Scripture is prescribed

Illustration  
of "simple  
Bible teach-  
ing" under  
the C.-T.  
Clause.

Lessons in  
Massacre.

by this or any other Board. Thus, under the Wanstead Board, the higher standards were set to study Joshua and Judges. It would be difficult to find in all literature two books more full of bloodshed, murder, massacre, and savagery. I can appreciate as well as anyone the gleams of a higher life that flash from their pages here and there. And even the most shocking pictures they give of the ancient alliance between superstition and cruelty might conceivably be used by a teacher entrusted with perfect "liberty of prophesying" to illustrate the depths out of which the evolution of reason and morality has raised us. But that is not allowed to municipal school teachers any more than to "sectarian" teachers. Indeed, the former are more tightly bound by the "Compromise." The Book says that God overthrew the walls of Jericho by a miracle, and that by his express and particular command the Israelites "utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and ass, with the edge of the sword." Now, if any teacher were to tell his pupils that the massacre might be historical, but that the allegation of a divine command was clearly false, there would undoubtedly be trouble at the next Education Committee meeting, and probably at many others to follow.

Divine im-  
morality.

The same may be said of the slaughter of Achan and his family, of the murder of the five kings at Makkedah, of the assassination of Eglon, of the treachery to Sisera, and a dozen other sanguinary deeds which, in reading Joshua and Judges, children are taught to regard as excepted by divine command from ordinary rules of morality. How can any educated man or woman read these sanguinary legends with their innocent pupils without hastening to assure the children that these are no words of God? It is not a case in which silence can appease the conscience. The absence of explanation or denial confirms the misbelief in young hearts that are forming their faith for life. If the truth cannot be told, at least let such horrible narratives be banished from the schools.<sup>1</sup>

The case of  
the New  
Testament.

In dealing with the New Testament it might be thought that the course is clearer. When we find selections from the life of Christ, or the story of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, ordered to be taught, or the Acts, or St. Paul's Epistles, it might be thought that here at least the plan of "unsectarian" instruction can meet with no difficulty. I am not so sure of that. It is notorious that what is called "the Higher

<sup>1</sup> I do not speak without experience. I taught Bible classes for many years. I don't think I ever took the Book of Joshua. But I did try to make Hebrew folklore interesting. I remember I was specially pleased with the written reproduction, by a boy of twelve, of my story of the Deluge. He concluded thus: "All this sounds very terrible; but it would be still more terrible if it were true."

Criticism" has no more spared the New Testament than the Old. Moreover, the acceptance of the results of that criticism is not confined to "Secularist" lecturers, nor even to Unitarians. We have only to glance at the list of contributors to the new *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and at the opinions they support, to see that many scholarly Churchmen have entirely abandoned the literal truth of New Testament history, together with the authenticity of several epistles.

I do not urge their ecclesiastical authority as conclusive against the Bible-instruction rate. But at least it helps to refute the arrogant assumption of Nonconformist perverts and others that School-board religion represents the views of all but an eccentric and negligible group of ratepayers. The rational desire to treat the New as well as the Old Testament like any other book is now supported by clergymen of the Church of England who repudiate even a literal belief in the physical resurrection of Christ. No one with an eye for the signs of this time can doubt that these clergymen represent the theology of the future. Nevertheless, any teacher who is now of that opinion can only gain employment in a public elementary school on condition of playing the hypocrite. Let it be clearly understood that what I am urging is not the permission to teach such opinions in the schools, but only the exclusion of a subject of instruction which, in the present chaotic condition of belief, imposes on many of the best candidates for the office of teacher the cruel alternative of insincerity or proscription.

If it be asked how such a paradoxical state of things as above described can have been established in the entire absence of any authoritative "creed or formulary," the explanation lies, as previously explained,<sup>1</sup> in the great renunciation of principle by Nonconformists in 1870. In consequence of that and the great Smith compromise the creed of School Boards and of the later committees came to be, like the creed of the Free Churches, the consensus, undefined in words, but very rigid in substance, of the supposed opinions of the majority. "And why not?" cry some. "Surely true democracy consists in the rule of the majority." Well, in our time the democracy stands for Cæsar. And Nonconformists before 1870 used to be very eloquent on a certain text in the Gospels reserving "the things of God" from Cæsar's control. They, too, perhaps, are touched by the rationalism of the age, and now explain that text away. But they cannot explain away facts; and it is surely a shameful fact that, however clearly a young man is marked out as a born teacher, his adherence to the views of Robertson Smith, Driver, and Cheyne on the Old Testament, and of Dr. Abbott or Professor Schmiedel on the Gospels, excludes him from the freedom of the profession except on one condition—that he shall speak or act a lie.

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 16, 17, *ante*.

V.

MORAL EFFECT ON TEACHERS

ON July 15th, 1907, there appeared in the *Times* an interesting and impressive letter from Dr. T. J. Macnamara, M.P. This letter was evoked by Mr. A. J. Balfour's attack on the new regulations governing the admission of students to residential training colleges—an attack supported by many fierce articles in the ecclesiastical press. To the regulations themselves I have already referred in the Preface to this edition. But the letter made special reference to the demoralising effect of theological tests, and certain words which I shall quote from it may very appropriately open the argument of this chapter. Thus, after explaining how a "King's Scholarship" gives the successful candidate "a considerable Government grant in aid of a course of college training," Dr. Macnamara proceeded:—

Roughly, about 5,000 young people win this training "scholarship" year by year; but, when they seek to utilise it at a residential training college, they find that about 4,300 of the 5,000 residential places open to them are strictly reserved for students who are willing—over and above their success in the Government examination—to subscribe to a pretty rigid denominational test. As a matter of fact, the majority of these 4,300 residential places are open only to members of the Established Church. What is the result? If the student be a Nonconformist, he must take a very high place indeed in the Government examination if he is to secure admission to one of the very few undenominational residential colleges. Because not only are the places open to him very few, but they are open also to members of the Church of England. Failing to secure entrance to an undenominational college, he telegraphs right and left to the other training colleges, and is promptly told that he will be admitted with pleasure if he is a member of the Church of England. *A number of young people, to my certain knowledge, succumb to the temptation, and are admitted to the Church solely for the purpose of utilising their dearly won Government "scholarship."* Others very properly decline to conform, and go on as ex-pupil teachers, and, having been at this critical stage thrown off the track, never afterwards succeed in completing the course for the teachers' certificate. The grievous hardship of all this is the fact that the Church colleges take in year after year students who are far less meritorious and able than many of those who are shut out. This is not only unfair to the apprentice; it devotes the State grant to the training of inferior material.

The italics are, of course, my own, and are intended to mark the moral considerations with which I am about to deal. For, notwithstanding the idiosyncrasies of exceptional latitudinarians, ordinary people, I believe, still regard a profession of faith as a moral or an

immoral act according as it is made truly or falsely. Now, I suppose, evangelical Nonconformists, almost without exception, have heartily approved the above letter. For very many of them have known cases of bright boys and girls, devoted Sunday scholars and welcome additions to Church membership, who have been subjected to precisely the temptation described in the letter. News of their passing the King's Scholarship examination was eagerly welcomed by the chapel circle, and a happy career was predicted for them in which "simple Bible teaching," unpolluted by catechism or formulary, was to be a conspicuous feature.

A Moral  
dilemma.

Then came the check, the change, the fall.

For, though they had done very well in the examination, their success was not so exceptional as to enable them to command one of the very small number of places available in Nonconformist or undenominational colleges. But their success had been quite sufficient to make them desirable candidates elsewhere. And as the vast majority of available places were elsewhere, the painful alternative arose of taking a permanently inferior standing as teachers or of changing their profession of faith. Dr. Macnamara deals very gently with the occasional or perhaps frequent result. But, he says, "a number of young people, to my certain knowledge, succumb to the temptation." He seems to be paraphrasing a very old account of the same transition: "They give up all religion and go to church." That is not my judgment. Heaven forbid! But if we talk of "succumbing to temptation," it is implied that there is something morally wrong. And so, no doubt, thought the pastors and the deacons and the Sunday-school superintendents of the various chapels to which these perverts had belonged.

But I can imagine—nay, I have known—strictly analogous cases which the same religious people would not see at all in the same light. For in these days of "New Theology" and "re-statements" of doctrine there is an ever-increasing number of young people with the teacher's gift and enthusiasm who do not, and cannot if they are to be true to themselves, pretend to accept that view of the Bible which is implied or presupposed in what is called "simple Bible teaching." That is, there are very few narratives of either the Old or the New Testament which they can conscientiously teach as historic fact; and very much of the morality they think to be interesting rather as a record of ethical evolution than as "revelation." Now, the crisis in the moral and spiritual development of such young people may not occur so early as the time of the King's scholarship examination. Up to that period they have accepted, almost as a matter of course, the Bible as "the word of God," and as an infallible revelation. But either towards the close of their college career or afterwards the rational spirit, which at the present day

is more or less immanent in all forms of literature and learning, stirs in them a questioning mood. They read Mr. R. J. Campbell's *New Theology*, and, their appetite for hitherto forbidden knowledge being quickened, they look up the *Encyclopædia Biblica* in a public library, and next are led to translations of Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*; and then, with a hunger for more spiritual food, they apply to the public library again for the works of the various Anglican and Presbyterian divines who have re-stated in once startling, but now familiar, forms the theory of revelation.

The end of it is that at a period when they are expecting to become head teachers they find that their views of both the Old and the New Testament have so fundamentally changed that they can no longer give "simple Bible teaching" with sincerity. They cannot, without doing violence to their convictions, teach as fact "the life of Abraham" or of Jacob as set down in the syllabus. They cannot sincerely teach the Ten Commandments as laws written by the finger of God, because they are now quite sure that they are nothing of the kind. Even the Gospels they now regard as, to a large extent, legendary; and they are as certain as they can be of anything that the Fourth Gospel was not written by Zebedee's son. What are they to do? If they frankly avow their position, they will probably be treated with courtesy, and something will be said in praise of their honesty. But they will soon experience the bitter truth uttered by Juvenal: "*Probitas laudatur et alget.*" For they will be relieved of giving Scripture instruction, and their prospects of promotion permanently barred.

It would be trifling with common sense and notorious facts to pretend ignorance that there are large numbers of young teachers, both men and women, in that very position at the present time. Here, then, is a moral dilemma precisely analogous to that sympathetically described in Dr. Macnamara's letter to the *Times*. For these young men and women must either prematurely blight their prospects of promotion or they must set their teeth and put a strain on conscience such as will be a life-long burden. But where now is the Nonconformist sympathy so eagerly extended to the young chapel-folk whom Dr. Macnamara described as "succumbing to the temptation" to go over to the Church? I am afraid it is sadly lacking. But why? Surely the two cases are on all fours in principle. Unless, indeed, Nonconformists would draw the line at their own "simple Bible" views, and maintain that, while it is perfectly right to doubt or deny any other religion, it is wicked to doubt or deny theirs. One almost despairs of getting even good and kindly and otherwise fair-minded people to see straight where the Bible is concerned.

But sometimes, when the plainest proof of injustice fails of access to

Are the rights of conscience a monopoly of the advocates of "simple Bible teaching"?

the conscience through the ear, the ugly consequences of the wrong may become so repulsive as to enforce conviction. And if I can only show what the consequences are in this case both to teachers and children, I do not despair of success. Indeed, I venture to think that, if Dr. Macnamara could only realise how the moral difficulty he has pointed out is necessarily involved in the retention of the Bible in school, he would refuse to endorse any new Education Bill that should transgress beyond secular lines.

The last words of the preceding chapter may by some be thought too strong. But I shall establish their literal truth. It will be remembered that, in introducing the subject of the religious disabilities set up by School Boards, and continued by local Education Authorities under the Act of 1892, I have carefully refrained from asserting that the barriers are absolutely impassable. All I allege is that the tests implied, though not avowed, exclude Rationalists, whether Christian or non-Christian, from "honest and self-respecting service as teachers in the nation's schools." But they are, of course, not excluded from service of a different kind. As an illustration of the sort of service which latitudinarians or heretics are allowed to give, take the following extract from a letter printed in *Democracy*<sup>2</sup> of February 23rd, 1901. The occasion of it was a previous letter from a Board-school teacher, complaining of the odious task of teaching what he did not believe. Whereupon "Another Board-School Teacher" addressed the editor thus:—

Licensed  
hypocrisy.

SIR,—The state of feeling disclosed by the remark of the "Board-school Teacher" anent the pressure put upon him to teach "Scripture" against his wish is, I am afraid, common to many others of that class of the community. One does lose a certain amount of self-respect in standing before a class and teaching for truth what one believes to be false. But under somewhat similar circumstances I ask myself: Why be honest? Why trouble at all about the matter? The Scripture lessons occupy little time, after all, and the harm done cannot amount to much. In view of the facts that all the work done in school may be described as an attempt to enable the children to conform to the canons of Christian or commercial morality (*sic*), and that no degree of conformity to those of either cult will abate the ills or conduce to the welfare of humanity, I feel that more harm is done in the ordinary school work than in the time set apart for religious instruction. But one must get a living somehow; so I, personally, comply with the terms of my agreement with my employers, and let conscience go hang.

I will not do any body of teachers the injustice of accepting this gentleman as a fair representative of their moral tone. But my own experience, and a fairly extensive intercourse with them during many years, assures me that the first sentence in the above extract is substantially correct. The discontent, however, is caused not by "the

Significance  
of the above  
letter.

<sup>2</sup> Since become *The Ethical World*.

pressure put upon them to teach 'Scripture,' but by the necessity imposed upon them to teach it in a fashion inconsistent with their own convictions. I will undertake to say that, if permission to teach honestly what they believe about the Bible were given to school teachers, three-fourths of them, at the very least, would tell the children that the greater part of the Hexateuch must be regarded in the same light as a series of fairy tales; that the story of Jonah is a moral fable, very impressive in its way, but probably destitute of even a basis of fact; that the Book of Daniel is a romance, and that of Esther a political apologue. I believe, also, that, if they dared, the same proportion of teachers would treat all the miracles of the Old Testament as originating in the imagination of Jewish patriots and poets, rather than in actual fact. Even if I put the proportion numerically too high, the most sanguine believer in the evangelical fervour inspired by our training colleges must surely feel that the letter above quoted is indicative of considerable mental unrest. Let the extent of Rationalism among teachers be minimised to the utmost possible degree consistent with notorious facts, still it will remain true that a large number are forced into teaching what they do not believe.

A dangerous position.

Now, this is a sort of fact of which the moral import is not dependent on statistics. If only twenty per cent. of the men and women who stand before their classes with the life of Abraham, or the account of the Deluge, or the story of the Virgin Birth, or of the Resurrection, in their hands as the basis of moral instruction, hold these parts of the Bible to be unhistorical, while they are obliged to treat them as solemn facts, it seems too like taking "a lie in their right hand" for the inculcation of truth. The misdirected satire of Jean Ingelow in ridiculing a theory of spiritual evolution which she did not understand would be much more applicable to the case of these teachers:—

Gracious deceivers who have lifted us  
Out of the slough where passed our unknown youth;  
Beneficent liars who have gifted us  
With sacred love of truth.

Human nature is too complex and unfathomable to allow of any sweeping affirmation of demoralising consequences in such a case. I was once asked by one of the best men I ever knew, himself an Anglican clergyman, why I did not seek orders in the Established Church. I replied that "for one reason I had never, up to that moment, seen any creed that I could sign." "Indeed!" he responded; "never seen the creed you could sign, hav'n't you? Well, now, I have never seen the creed I couldn't sign." Making all allowance for my friend's love of paradox, I yet could not but feel that between his notion of responsibility for assenting to a creed and mine there was an

impassable difference. Yet I knew him to be in all other relations a man of unimpeachable honour and courageously truthful.<sup>†</sup> I should be very loth, therefore, to deny the possibility that analogous instances of personal paradox may be found among teachers who believe one thing and teach another. But the letter I have quoted above is sufficient proof that the position is a dangerous one.

Let it be granted that the moral degeneracy exhibited in that letter is an extreme and exceptional instance of the working of the system. Let it further be conceded that at the other end of the scale there are a number of sincere and devout Evangelical teachers whose Biblical creed is an inspiration to them. There will remain the large majority who belong neither to one class nor to the other. Pledged to no creed, possessed of culture enough to appreciate the revolution in educated opinion on the origins and authority of the Bible, they yet feel no special impulse to any independent study of such questions, and ordinary prudence warns them against any precipitancy in adopting ideas which would create a daily consciousness of discord between duty and conviction. The result is an attitude of conventional acquiescence which guards their mental comfort, but empties their Scriptural teaching of all reality. Some of the more studious among them, while shy of reading distinctly Rationalistic books, find much edification in the works of a contemporary school which suggest that after all there is nothing exactly true, and it does not much matter. Mr. A. J. Balfour's elegant disquisition on the duty of believing with the majority, Professor Percy Gardner's charming explanation in his *Exploratio Evangelica* of the possibility that a creed may be both true and false at the same time, have great attractions for honest men in such circumstances. Pretending to their own consciences to adopt, though without legitimate authority or open avowal, a freedom which I have above suggested as their due if they are to teach the Bible at all, they tell the stories of the Old Testament without any pretence of discriminating fact from fiction even in their own minds. What does it matter? they ask. If they were telling the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, they would not feel it necessary to warn their infant hearers that beans do not, as a rule, produce stalks reaching up to heaven. The attitude of the child's mind towards such a narrative is, they well know, neither that of belief nor that of unbelief. It is simply that of interest and wonder at an unfolding vision. Why should the case be different with the story of Eve and the Serpent?

The position  
of the  
majority of  
teachers.

<sup>†</sup> There can be no harm now in stating that the clergyman was the late Rev. John Rodgers, Vicar of St. Thomas Charterhouse—not "hang theology Rogers," but his successor in that cure—and for some time Vice-Chairman of the School Board for London. Of his courage various education campaigns in London afforded ample proof.

The moral difficulty is that Bible History is tacitly accepted in school as divine and infallible.

It is not for me to answer that question. The point of my whole argument is that, if Hebrew myth or legend is to be treated at all in State schools, they should be treated precisely in that manner. What I complain of is that they are not so treated, but rather as parts of a divine and infallible history. And the position is such that they cannot be otherwise treated, unless the children under instruction are expressly told so. This would be quite possible in Sunday-schools, even of orthodox churches, if liberal influences like those of Dr. Monro Gibson or Professor Rendel Harris happened to prevail there. But in no Board school is it at all possible, because the attempt would lead to theological discussion on the Board, and revive the religious difficulty in its most obnoxious form. The result is that teachers have to treat as solemn fact every Hebrew legend or impossible miracle read as a Scripture lesson. Those whom I have described above as receptive of modern dissolving views, wherein historic falsehood shades off into spiritual truth, may flatter themselves that they are only giving a moral lesson through a parable. But the illusion is dissipated the moment that any intelligent pupil asks such critical questions as occur to precocious children. "Mother," asked a four-year-old *enfant terrible* whom I once knew, "what does God sit down on when he's tired?" "O, my dear," said the mother, "God is never tired." "But," retorted the child, "you said he rested on the seventh day."

Now, critical questions of children are of no disadvantage whatever, if suggested by the inconsistencies of an avowed parable or fable. But any question of the kind may rudely dispel the rationalising teacher's notion that he can use Hebrew myths as he uses Æsop's Fables without letting his pupils know it. If it be said that as a matter of fact such questions are rarely or never asked in school, so much the worse for the system. For the absence of any such sign of intelligent interest shows that the whole lesson is regarded as a ceremonial observance having no relation to realities. Besides, there are many cases in which an intelligent and rational teacher, who was really free, would anticipate such questions for the sake of the spiritual impression he is seeking to make. If, for instance, he is using the infatuated Pharaoh of the Exodus as a type of earthly power, scornful of spiritual verities, and eventually crushed by a might that it cannot understand, he must needs deny the literal truth of the assertion that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart"; or, otherwise, all modern analogies fail. To explain the arrogant contempt of George III. and his court for the new-born American patriotism, by asserting that God hardened that monarch's heart, would not be tolerated even by literal believers of what is said about Pharaoh. It is, therefore, impossible for the teacher to make any obviously fair application of the ancient example to the modern instance.

Take, again, the alleged command given by Jahweh to Moses, Joshua, and Israel at large to smite the nations of old Palestine, and "utterly to destroy them," to "make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." Either this command is accepted as historical or it is not. In the former case the teacher has an unenviable task in "justifying the ways of God to men." In the latter case a conscientious teacher would almost give all his hopes of preferment to be allowed to say that the statement was a false and blasphemous pretence of the Israelites. But even here the recipients of dissolving views may find an issue. It may not be true that any personal Deity gave such a command. Yet the doctrine of the gradual selection of higher races through the survival of the fittest in each generation's struggle for life is, in one form or another, generally accepted; and, probably, the application of such a doctrine to the resettlement of ancient Palestine would not stir up "the religious difficulty" even on School Boards. But such an interpretation is estopped by the conditions under which the lesson is given. The "compromise" involves a tacit undertaking to assume, if not the infallibility, at least the historical accuracy, of the Bible, especially where it narrates the successive steps in the progress of the alleged revelation to which all the compromising sects are at least officially committed. One of those steps is the establishment of the chosen people in Palestine, and the suppression of the earlier inhabitants by order of a personal divine ruler in order to make room for the former. This divine ruler speaks with human speech, expresses emotions of anger and jealousy indistinguishable from human feeling. He issues orders like an earthly sovereign who has a policy of conquest to carry out. It is not Fate, or the Unknowable, who is here acting and speaking. It is an intensely personal Being, whose mercy elsewhere is said to endure for ever, and whose "compassions fail not." How is it possible for any honest Christian, with the words of Jesus murmuring in his heart, to tell children that such a Being ordered these massacres? Yet no Elementary schoolmaster would be supported by his Committee in treating as fictitious the terrible command above-mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

What reality can there be in the teaching of the Bible under such limitations by any man or woman touched by the spirit of the age? The possibility of simplicity and straightforwardness is confined to that small minority of teachers who still hold the whole Bible to be literally true. Unconscious of any incongruity between modern thought and the "plan of salvation" taught to them in their childhood, they are also

Records of early Hebrew savagery.

In such a case "simple Bible teaching" needs devout simpletons as teachers.

<sup>1</sup> Of course, this general assertion, based on nearly forty years' experience, must be taken for what it is worth. But it is to be remembered that even school managers, who themselves disbelieve any such divine command, would fear the "talk" of the neighbourhood and possible offence to religious ministers.

untroubled by any inconsistency between Old Testament fables and the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. They tell, with such fervour as a cooling faith allows, of man's first disobedience, of the curse thereby entailed on all posterity, and of the elaborate process of miracle and prophecy, of type and sacrifice, of commandments and law and ceremony, by which a divine Being laboriously prepared the coming of the sacred victim whose death and resurrection open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Such a course of instruction amid all the array of theological dreams it unfolds has, undoubtedly, lucid intervals in which moving appeals may be made to the heart. The loss of Eden, the passion of Cain, the aspirations of Enoch, the faith of Abraham, the story of Joseph, David's heart-broken sorrow for Absalom—all, even when taken literally, give the opportunity of contrasting the meanness of self-will with loyalty of soul to a divine ideal. But the possibility of this does not in the least palliate the wrong spoken of in previous pages, the injustice done to dissenting ratepayers and less orthodox teachers who object to do evil that good may come. They protest against being made aiders and abettors in the perpetuation of what they think falsehood, even though some moral truths may occasionally glimmer through it.

The intolerable strain on enlightened teachers.

But, outside the minority who can with their whole hearts "teach the Bible" in the sense intended by "the compromise," teachers are exposed to degrees of strain varying from the abject surrender to hypocrisy quoted above, to casuistical ingenuities and non-natural interpretation of obvious duty. "Obvious duty" because neither by authority of ratepayers, nor by orders of a School Board, nor even at the request of parents, is any man justified in teaching to his pupils as truth what he himself believes to be a lie. "Parable," "allegory," "fable," and such like, are not the words to describe the method of one who himself accepts a Bible story in one sense and takes care that the children shall understand him in another. To talk about a dispensation of "illusion" is right enough when we are groping after an increasing purpose running through the ages of faith. In those times everyone believed the illusion, and there was no dishonesty. But when a man tells of a universal deluge or of the overthrow of Jericho's walls by sound of trumpet, or of Joshua's arrest of the sun, in such a manner as to make the impression that he believes them as facts when he does not believe them, this is not an economy of illusion; it is a lie—or at least it would be so to any unsophisticated conscience,

## VI.

### THE EFFECT ON SCHOOL CHILDREN

AT the risk of needless reiteration, I must again disclaim any inclination to deny the educational value of the Bible, if properly used. The question here raised is, What has actually been the ethical value of the Bible as taught under the conditions already described? After thirty-seven years of daily text-grinding in the people's schools, or rather after a hundred years of it if we take into consideration the previous work of voluntary associations, the question of Browning's Pope seems very pertinent:—

“Well, is the thing we see salvation?”

Is the language in our streets much purer or less profane and coarse than it was in 1870?

More than one local Council, in grief at the coarse, foul, and disgusting words constantly used in its streets, has desired the law to be strengthened. We have had practically universal and professedly compulsory education for nearly six generations of school children<sup>1</sup>—and yet we have to ask the magistrates to supplement the moral work of the schoolmaster in a matter like this. The following paragraph from the *Westminster Gazette*, of September 6th, 1901, is very suggestive, and unfortunately is not yet irrelevant to present manners. The italics are my own:—

The vocabulary of the streets.

We would gladly see the resolution passed by the East Ham Council to stop offensive language on tram-cars adopted by other local authorities. The use of language of this sort is disagreeable enough to many, wherever heard; it is particularly so on public conveyances where other passengers are compelled to listen to it. *The strange thing is that those who indulge in it are, as a rule, quite unconscious of giving any cause of offence. They are so accustomed among their fellows to express themselves in such a way that they go on doing so wherever they may be.* It will, no doubt, be possible to curb the nuisance by measures of the kind referred to; but, as the use of objectionable language anywhere is an offence at law, it might be well, perhaps, if the law were put in motion more frequently than it is. Persons passing along the streets often have their ears assailed with foul expressions, which a few prosecutions might make less common.

Is it not a scandal that elementary schools should be so powerless to mould the manners of children who have attended them for six, eight,

<sup>1</sup> For the greater part of the period compulsory attendance has begun at five years of age and ended after thirteen.

or ten years?<sup>1</sup> All these foul-mouthed people, who "are so accustomed among their fellows to express themselves in such a way," have passed through some elementary school in which the Bible, or even the Catechism, has been taught, and "explanations have been given therefrom in the principles of the Christian religion and morality." And yet they have not been saved from coarseness, profanity, and indecency in speech.

Lack of moral inspiration in the schools.

Is the effect of cheap literature quite what we hoped and expected? When opening our first Board schools, did we forebode that in the twentieth century the cry of "All the winners" would sell more papers than the most thrilling announcements of scientific or archæological discovery, or even of the most exciting political events? If the English translation of the Bible is, as some incongruously say, a "British classic," should not its incessant reading have raised the intellectual tone of the people above the level where it remains? In our incessant whining for clumsy methods of force to put down betting, bribery, and impurity, is there not a manifest despair of moral remedies? Yet I should not be at all surprised to find that the hysterical people who continually write letters to the Press urging methods of barbarism, such as the "cat," as infallible moral restoratives, have no less fervently throughout their lives insisted on Bible drill. And when this conspicuously fails, the natural conclusion, that there must have been some lack of moral inspiration in the method, does not seem to occur to them. The fine old Christian saying that "force is not God's way"<sup>2</sup> loses its significance when the Bible becomes a fetish; and "Bible and beer" has to be supplemented by Bible and birch.

The good humour of an English mob is proverbial, and was a character acquired long before "simple Bible teaching," under the Cowper-Temple clause, was invented. But such good humour does not prevent outbreaks of rudeness, coarseness, and disregard for the rights of others which here and there make Bank Holidays odious. Now, if moral training in public Elementary schools is good for anything, it ought surely to secure compliance with the precept, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them." But the constant recurrence of cases in which private parks, by courtesy

<sup>1</sup> Take, for instance, the objectionable and even dangerous habit of promiscuous and continual spitting. Of late public authorities have been obliged, on hygienic grounds, to interfere. But until doctors decided that disease may be spread thereby, mere decency had no chance of consideration. I did my humble best as Board School manager in London from 1871 onwards to secure attention to the subject, but in vain. Yet if morals include "manners," as surely they ought, the doctors should have been anticipated by the teachers.

<sup>2</sup> "Βία γὰρ οὐ πρόσστι τῷ θεῷ." It occurs in the anonymous Epistle to Diognetus of uncertain but very early date (cap. vii.), and also in Irenæus (*contra Hæreses*, lib. iv., cap. xxxvii. 1).

opened to the public, have had to be closed because of the abuse of such courtesy, proves that the lesson has not been successfully impressed.<sup>1</sup>

I gladly acknowledge that juvenile crime, in the sense of offences punished by sentence of magistrates or judges, has largely diminished. But this has been brought about by improvements in the law rather than in juvenile manners. Children who would, in a more barbarous though recent age, have been sent to prison are now sent to Industrial schools or Reformatories. That, however, is quite consistent with a persistently low standard of juvenile morality, and of this there is too much evidence.

Of such evidence I will give a specimen forced upon my attention on the very day when these lines are penned. Its value must, of course, depend on the extent to which it corresponds with the experience of my readers. But I scarcely think that many will say that it is an unusual case. This morning, then (July, 1907), I was one of a bench of magistrates before whom eight boys, of ages varying from twelve to seventeen, were accused, some of them of stealing, and others of malicious damage, involving, as was proved, serious danger to human life. The little robbers had made a raid on certain "penny-in-the-slot" machines, by means of tin discs, which, as it turned out, worked quite as well as the penny with His Majesty's image and superscription. Some of us thought—and many may share our opinion—that machines making theft so easy constitute an unfair temptation to our child citizens under our present feeble and futile systems of moral training. But perhaps I was alone in thinking that it was the moral training quite as much as this imperfect "penny-in-the-slot" system that was to blame. For, whatever may be the attractions of illicit chocolates and cigarettes, boys from twelve to seventeen years old ought to have—and would have under efficient moral training—sufficient feeling of the meanness of theft and of its disastrous consequences to social order to enable them to resist.

There were also three accusations of malicious damage, one of the accused youngsters being a defendant also in the previous case. In a neighbouring mountain quarry the stones are run down tramways having an incline steeper than a high-pitched roof. Now, on a Saturday half-holiday, when there was no one about, these adventurous boys, finding

<sup>1</sup> In the former edition I gave certain then recent and notorious instances of the kind, in one of which two Sunday-school teachers in charge of a children's excursion were concerned. I have no reason to believe that the evil is much abated since then. And I have had special opportunities during these years of noting how vain are the efforts of the Selborne Society to preserve picturesque places of resort from desecration. Picnickers seem to imagine that it is not of the least consequence in what state of filthy untidiness they leave nature's beauties.

An illustrative case.

a waggon securely "scotched" at the top of one of these steep tramways, removed the "scotch" and started the waggon off. It was good fun, no doubt; but, as several deaths have occurred through incautious trespassing on these tramways, it was highly perilous fun, and the boys were quite old enough to know it. Compared with this danger to life, it seemed to me that the smashing of the company's waggon was trivial. In old times these peccant children would have been sent to swell the number of juvenile criminals. But, of course, no such consequence followed in this case; and as the same just and rational leniency is now exercised in thousands of similar cases, this amply accounts for the apparently satisfactory change in the statistics of juvenile crime. Yet is it so satisfactory when we learn the real reason of the change? These latter frolicking boys, though accused of "malicious damage," were, I believe, not capable of malignity. No; but neither they nor the pilferers had such sense as they ought to have had at their age of their duty to their neighbour, or of their moral relations to the community which assures their safety and their prospects in life. Now, if anyone thinks this is too much to expect from boys of twelve to seventeen, let him watch them at their games of "marbles," or follow them to the cricket-field and the football-ground. There he will find that cheating is held in contempt, that any youth who tries to "sneak" an advantage from his fellows is not only pummelled, but "boycotted." Why should it be different when the "game" to be played is that of society?

The moral instruction of such juveniles,

But it happened that an official visit which I paid to an "undenominational" school<sup>1</sup> at an hour earlier than the petty sessions suggested an explanation. For there I found the "religious instruction" going on. The school was divided for this purpose into two classes, senior and junior. The elder were studying the beginning of the romance of Joseph in Genesis xxxvii. The points on which questions were asked were the reasons for Jacob's partiality to Joseph, the delights of a "coat of many colours," the filial obedience of Joseph—which, according to the chapter before the children, seems very questionable—the significance of Joseph's dreams, and the unreasonableness of his brethren and father in objecting to them. The junior children were being instructed in Matthew ii., especially the "massacre of the innocents." The lady teacher was particularly anxious that the children should appreciate the inferiority of Herod's claim to be King of the Jews as compared with that of Jesus. She was also careful to explain the wiles by which that

<sup>1</sup> Lest it should be supposed that "denominational" schools would have done better, I may as well mention that all the accused youths attended, or had attended, a Church school.

child-slayer would have cheated the innocent Magi had it not been for the intervention of the deity. And this was moral instruction!

Let it not be said that these instances are unfair because exceptionally inept. The contrary is the case. I have myself known teachers who realise that the practical problem is to awaken an effective moral sense, and who try to bend "simple Bible-teaching" to its solution. But it is they that are exceptional, not the type I have described. And those exceptional teachers are usually earnest in pleading for more freedom in treating the Bible and in extending the scope of moral instruction beyond it. Nor let it be supposed that I am here assuming the possibility of eliminating by any means whatever the dangers attendant on exuberance of animal life in youth. But I do say that the only way of minimising them is to develop as early as possible a sense of comradeship, fellowship, responsibility to and for society, which shall inspire the child to be as faithful to the surrounding community as he is now to the narrower circle of his playfellows in games. And I maintain that to look for any such results from a talk about Joseph's dreams and destinies, or about the rival regal claims of Herod and Jesus, is to expect grapes from thorns and figs from thistles.<sup>1</sup>

It may be said that our failure to improve morals as fast as we increase knowledge condemns the churches as well as the schools. That is so. But in regard to the possibilities of amendment in the two cases there is this difference. The churches are much more free than the schools are to adapt their moral teaching to the needs of the time. Theological Articles scheduled in an Act of Parliament, and even Trust Deeds deposited in a denominational Muniment Room, are no more effective than the handcuffs and bonds imposed on professors of the "box-trick," where there is the will to get rid of them. But the watchful jealousy of a majority on an Educational Committee elected for the purpose of guarding the sacred compromise is not to be eluded. As a matter of fact, it is notorious that the Churches are, to a very considerable extent, changing their methods of teaching. I have already given illustrations of the freer spirit which is gradually inspiring even Evangelical Sunday-schools. We may well hope, therefore, that, in accordance with historic precedent, the Churches will insensibly shift the standard of orthodoxy. And, meanwhile, there is little temptation to insincerity. Whatever may be the case with ministers—among whom there is a great deal more moral heroism than is commonly supposed—Sunday-school teachers, at any rate, have no temptation to

Schools  
more stereo-  
typed than  
churches.

<sup>1</sup> Anyone who supposes such an argument to imply materialism is quite mistaken. It points to a universal religion, which involves, absorbs, and transforms all the sectarian religions that have ever been conceived.

continue their work of Bible teaching for a single day after they find out that they cannot do so honestly. Besides, Sunday-schools do not compel us to pay rates for their support. They have no national or municipal authority at their back. They do not involve us as citizens in responsibility for their teaching or moral influence. Whatever may be said about the lingering fiction of a "national" Church, its Sunday-schools are entirely voluntary and unofficial.

Every citizen responsible for the moral inefficiency of the schools.

The case of public elementary day schools is very different. Attendance at one or other of them is compulsory on some eighty-four per cent. of our children. We are forced to pay for their support through taxes and rates. It is by the national or municipal authority, or both, that every lesson in them is given. We are, therefore, responsible for them; and if they are allowed to demoralise the commonwealth of the future, it is our fault. Or, if they are maintained on a system proved to be inefficient in attaining the highest ends of education, every citizen is to blame. Further, the position of the elementary teacher is a much more difficult one than that of the Sunday-school teacher. To the former his work is also his livelihood. He cannot abandon it with a light heart the moment he is required to offend his conscience. Nor is there the slightest prospect at present of obtaining for him an honourable "liberty of prophesying." This would imperil that sacred ark of the covenant, "the compromise."

The result is that the Bible teaching in public elementary, and especially in municipal schools, is inevitably more demoralising than that of Sunday-schools. In the latter the worst evil to be feared is that of ignorance, or, perhaps, honest bigotry. But in the former the tendency of the system is to make dishonesty a necessity of life. Or if dishonesty be, considering all things, too hard a word to use, the least evil that is possible is the prevalence of a lifeless formalism in precisely that part of school teaching which most of all requires the energy of an eternal spirit. Now, by this last phrase I mean the moral fervour which persists from age to age only on condition that it shall continually change its modes of expression into accordance with the new actualities of the times.

Only use and wont can account for the indifference with which the majority of electors look on while the springs of morality are poisoned before their eyes. What does it matter? ask some. If the teaching is false, it means as little to the children as the drone of a beetle, and meantime the religious difficulty is avoided. It seems never to occur to such people that they are thus consenting parties to the waste of nearly one-fifth of a child's school time. How can such a system be anything but demoralising? Even the children from decent and respectable homes want waking up on moral subjects. Let

it be granted that such children hear nothing but good at home. They hear it, however, in the form of kindly platitudes about "behaving" and doing as they are told, and "honesty as the best policy"—which platitudes are neither stimulative nor impressive. They require to be made to feel that the matter of conduct is interesting, and they will never be made to feel that by a teacher who explains the grammar and geography and archæology of a Bible story which he does not himself believe. The fate of those children—alas, too many—who have no decent homes to echo the platitudes of morality is far worse. It is simply shocking to hear little victims of society's crimes rattling off pious phrases and shrieking saintly hymns to which they obviously attach no meaning whatever. And if their teacher is compelled by his engagements to add to the falsehoods and unrealities of their young lives a lesson on a supernatural revelation which he does not himself believe, he becomes, like the parent, to Christ inconceivable, who, instead of a fish, would give to his child a serpent.

Perhaps one reason for persistence in the present system is that its most devout supporters do not regard morality as teachable, but expect it rather to be inspired by a miracle of divine grace. The instrument for the accomplishment of this *opus operatum* is the word of God, and the word of God is identified with the Bible. A magic charm is thought to lie in the syllables of the sacred text, like the influence once attributed to written spells—a charm altogether apart from any significance of the words.

The Bible  
as magic.

Or if that be thought too strong an expression, I will try to defend it. There are scattered through Shakespeare's works very many gems of moral truth quite clear and limpid enough to appeal to children in the upper standards of elementary schools. Thus Portia's exquisite description of "the quality of mercy" does not depend much upon the context for its appeal to the heart. And detached sayings, such as "Truth hath a quiet breast," "Love's best habit is a soothing tongue," "Never anything can be amiss when simpleness and duty tender it," easily stick in the memory, and under free moral instruction would become pregnant with connotations which would return whenever the saying was remembered. But then no one attributes to such words any supernatural authority, and they are, therefore, not recognised as "the word of God," though in a clear sense they are so, as being the inevitable outcome of human experience, which is a partial expression of God. But the absence of a supernatural sanction is thought to unfit such words for the purposes of religious instruction; whereas when similar lessons are read from the Bible the supernatural sanction is assumed, and therein lies their value. In other words, it is not the moral contents, not self-evident truth, that counts, but only the

Not the  
truth but  
the sanction  
valued.

supernatural sanction. And this is what I meant above by saying that the Bible is valued for some supposed magic charm, akin to that of written spells.

The same fond delusion which induces some well-meaning people to hang up texts in railway waiting-rooms, or to employ sandwich-men to carry texts on their backs, is also at the root of much zeal for text-grinding in schools. If the Genesis story of the Fall of Man, or of the Flood, had been first given to the modern world by some learned excavator of cuneiform records, we should certainly have considered it extremely interesting, and in many ways suggestive of the attitude of early ages towards the mystery of life. As fables they might even have been recognised as useful for combining entertainment with instruction in the teaching of children. But no one would have dreamed of making them a formal basis of moral lessons. What is it, then, which gives such narratives their sacred and even awful importance? It is the feeling that they are parts of a divine "plan of salvation" which must stand or fall as a whole, and of which every separate part is essential to the miraculous power of the whole. The moral significance is not the point of importance, but rather the impact of a divine word.

How far  
morality is  
teachable.

Now there is certainly a grain of truth in the religious assumption that morality is not teachable in the same way as, for instance, arithmetic is teachable. When, in the latter case, the main relations of the digit numbers are fixed in the memory, the rest is mere matter of combination, requiring only attention. But no amount of memory work or of combination of maxims will give morality. Here the working of the sympathies and the will are absolutely essential. How is this to be ensured? The Evangelical people, who are the lifeguard of the system, hold that it depends on a miracle of grace, and a miraculous Bible is, in their view, the best, indeed the only means for evoking that. Now, I am not going to assert that, as regards this miracle of grace, they are fundamentally wrong. At any rate, I hold they are not so wrong as those who treat of human nature as though it were wholly and utterly isolated from and independent of the divine Whole in which it lives and moves and has its being. But this expectation of grace from the mere repetition of sacred spells is unworthy of the spiritual aspirations with which it is too often associated.

Grace, its  
meaning.

No; grace comes through human intercourse, and the more vivid, the more intimate, the more natural that intercourse is, the more probable is the transmission of grace. Apply this to teacher and pupils. The former is rightly expected to be the medium of a grace that touches the sympathies and moulds the wills of his pupils. But he can only discharge this function through free intercourse of mind and heart. How is that possible to him in the course of lessons which require him to pretend

Communi-  
cated  
through  
human in-  
tercourse.

a mental attitude wholly alien to his real life? It is of no use to say that it ought not to be alien to his real life, or that he ought to be a sincere believer. There is nothing whatever in the engagement of a municipal school teacher to bind him to that, and, even if there were, the ideas of the most sincere "believers" about the Bible are now very often, indeed, identical with those held by eminent unbelievers fifty years ago. But the "compromise" makes no allowance for this change. And the result is that really only a minority—and, I suspect, a very small minority—of such teachers feel entirely at ease and natural in giving a Scripture lesson.

How can a teacher, touched by the spirit of the age, feel at ease in teaching the life of Jesus to his class? He has, perhaps, been reading with sympathy and resistless conviction the article "Gospels" in the new *Encyclopædia Biblica*, edited as we have seen and largely written by eminent clergymen of the Church of England. He finds that in the judgment of the writers of this particular article—a judgment founded on evidence he cannot resist—the Gospels are a growth, rather than the work of the men whose names they bear. For the reality of the miraculous events, including the resurrection, there seems to him now to be no evidence whatever of the nature usually demanded by modern historical science. And, indeed, nothing is left to him but a vision of transcendent beauty floating between earth and heaven, too pure for material solidity, and yet impossible of invention by any such minds as are reflected in the New Testament canon. The result probably is that he still keeps and still worships the Vision, as a transfiguration of a supreme manhood too great to be understood or rightly reported by disciples.

The rationalist teacher and the life of Christ.

I am not writing a polemic, nor yet an eirenicon. I am not, therefore, called upon to defend such a mental attitude as is here described. I only say that, in these times, it is one very natural to many who desire to keep both reason and emotion true. And those who go through this experience, if they have the teaching faculty, are likely to be specially quickened by that experience. The very anxieties and "searchings of heart" they have suffered make them more sympathetic; and the spiritual heroism which prompts them to refuse the consolations of pretence gives a ring of sincerity to their utterance that tells upon children no less than on adults. But imagine such a man or woman set to give a lesson, according to the "compromise," on the alleged birth in Bethlehem, or the feeding of the five thousand, or the walking on the sea! He must treat such things as historic facts, and is afraid lest by any chance word he should betray his real position.<sup>1</sup> He must

Bondage to the letter.

<sup>1</sup> See preface, p. viii, where reference is made to Mr. Nevinson's observations on this fear in his articles contributed to the *Westminster Gazette*.

Disappearance of the spirit.

expound the "fulfilments of prophecy" asserted by Matthew or Luke. He must explain away the words of Mary to the child Jesus, when she said: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." If questioned on the precise mode of multiplication of the baked bread and cooked fishes that fed the five thousand, he can only reply feebly that these things are a mystery, when he holds them to be fiction. The great immeasurable soul of whom he has glimpses through the preternatural transfiguration wrought by the Gospels is reduced in his inevitable teaching to an itinerant wonder-monger, who puzzled the world by a sort of holy magic. Is it strange that religion, taught after such a fashion, should be morally barren?

To restore it get rid of insincerity.

It may be asked, How would the position be improved by excluding the Bible? One answer is that the moral atmosphere in many schools would be purified by the elimination of unreality and insincerity. That such evils accompany the use of the Bible in school is not the fault of the Book. It is a consequence of the conventional superstition with which it is treated. But, so long as half the population regard it as divine and infallible, while the other half believe it to be a collection of human documents, each to be taken on its merits, it is impossible to ensure sincerity and honesty in its use. If ever a time comes when it can be used with the same sort of intelligent discrimination and freedom as is claimed by university professors in teaching Cicero's *De Officiis* or Plato's *Republic*, it will become an exceedingly valuable handbook. But that time does not seem to be within a measurable distance now.

Natural morality more easily illustrated by modern instances.

Another answer to the above question is that if morality were taught as a part of our natural life, dependent on human experience and not on a miraculous revelation, the teacher would be more likely to bring his lessons home to the every-day life of his pupils. Which is the more likely to inspire a wholesome fear of lying—the story of Gehazi, or the account of a plague of small-pox which might have been stopped by the isolation of the first cases but for the lying denials of their relatives that there was anything wrong? In my time it was usual to tell children that "Don't-care" met a lion, and was eaten up. The warning had not much influence; but the true story of a child who walked unwarily, and fell headlong down a flight of steps, induced, at any rate for a short time, some alertness in looking to the path before us.

It is no aspersion on the Bible to say that it cannot supply the place of systematic instruction in the morals of daily life. Listening to the "explanations given therefrom in the Christian religion and morality" by even the best elementary teachers, one cannot but feel that the knowledge of Scripture is one thing and morality another. Both teacher and taught are for the moment affecting to live in another world entirely different from this, conducted on a different method, actuated

by impossible motives, and continually corrected by miracle. The stories, the maxims, the doctrines, are items to be remembered for examinations. But they are none of them on the same plane as the child's daily life. The notion of any practical application rarely occurs, except as a preparation for death or a key to the dream-world of heaven.

In former years, when I was still a member of the School Board for London, and much nearer in creed to the Evangelical Free Churches than I am now, I was so impressed with the practical absence of systematic moral teaching from the schools that I called attention to the subject, and obtained the appointment of a small committee to consider the question. One of the members was the late Rev. John Rodgers, Vicar of St. Thomas's, Charterhouse, and at that time Vice-Chairman of the Board. My proposal was that a course of lessons should be based upon the summary of practical morality given by the Church Catechism in answer to the question, "What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?" I thought then, as I do still, that the summary is a very good one.<sup>1</sup>

Ineffectual effort to secure moral training under the late School Board for London.

The highest classes in elementary schools are perhaps capable of receiving more definite instruction on the origin, nature, and obligations of social relationships. But for children from seven to twelve years of age it contains just the sort of practical summary of duty, in the form of a "categorical imperative," that is adapted to their needs. Drawn out into a series of detailed lessons with ample illustrations, it would form an admirable basis for a course of moral instruction and exhortation likely to affect the life. In this conviction I went so far as to sketch the outline of such a course of lessons, which, I suppose, exists still somewhere in the archives of the extinct Board. And, as it was grounded on the Catechism, I thought myself secure of support from Evangelical Churchmen. I am glad to remember that the Rev. John Rodgers supported me. But I was sadly disappointed in the more pronounced Evangelical laymen. One of them, a most excellent man in all social and business relations, though belonging to the strictest sect of "Low" Churchmen, and elected to the Board entirely on account of his religiousness, declared vehemently that "it left out everything that a Churchman cared for." It was useless to suggest that "everything a Churchman cared for" could be supplied in a Churchman's own Sunday schools. The very appearance of teaching morality for its own sake, apart from the magic, symbols, and formulas of theology, was considered suspicious, and the project had to be dropped.

<sup>1</sup> Among those who never learned this Catechism a very curious mistake is prevalent. It is supposed to urge contentment with "that state of life unto which it *has pleased* God to call" us, whereas, of course, the words are, "to which it *shall please* God to call me." Also the word "betters" has been quite gratuitously taken to refer exclusively to social rank, whereas it refers just as naturally to moral worth.

The decision was regrettable ; but, from the point of view fixed by the "compromise," it was perhaps inevitable. For both Churchmen and Nonconformists, having once established and endowed the Bible—and practically their common interpretation of the Bible—as the one sanction of morality recognised by the School Board, were naturally loth to imperil that settlement by any admission of merely natural ethics. But, however that may be, surely the later refusal of the same Board to allow children to be withdrawn in accordance with the Conscience Clause from Biblical instruction to receive moral lessons instead is indefensible. The facts are as follows :—

Attempt by  
the Moral  
Instruction  
League to  
assert the  
rights of  
parents.

A society known as the Moral Instruction League was formed before the end of last century to stimulate attention to moral teaching in schools, and to suggest what the members held to be better methods. Using a right which is presumably within the limits of the British Constitution, to influence their fellow-citizens by conversation, they visited the homes of parents having children in attendance at Board schools, and explained their ideas. They showed that by law the children could not be compelled to receive the regulation Bible teaching. They pointed to the article in the School Board Code which directs that "during the time of religious teaching or religious observance any children withdrawn from such teaching or observance shall receive separate instruction in secular subjects." They then suggested that the parents, if they preferred non-theological moral teaching, should withdraw their children from the Bible lessons, and at the same time request that they should, during the time of those lessons, receive separate teaching in morality. The suggestions were received by the parents with an unexpected amount of favour. As many as a hundred children, or more, were withdrawn from theological teaching in each of several schools. But so threatening a schism was met with prompt measures by the alarmed devotees of the Compromise. In the first place, separate moral instruction was refused to the children withdrawn. Instead of that, they were set to toil apart at ordinary school drudgery. Now, this appears to have been a rather hard, and even cruel, interpretation of the School Board rule ; for it virtually refuses to recognise ethics as a "secular subject," and it forces upon unwilling parents the alternative of Bible or nothing. Under such circumstances, it is easy to understand the success of the next step taken by zealots for the Compromise. The parents were visited in their homes, and the difficulty and unpleasantness of the situation created for their children were vigorously explained. The result was that the children returned to the Bible lessons ; and this has probably been adduced as evidence of the unanimous desire of parents of all creeds and none to have their children taught the common faith of

Defeated by  
undenomi-  
national  
bigotry.

Evangelical Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents.

It would have been more generous, and equally in accord with their existing School Board regulations, if the Board had consented to regard natural ethics as a "secular subject," and detailed teachers—who could easily have been found—to give the lessons to the children for whom they were asked. The refusal to do so suggests that the authorities were afraid of the experiment. Perhaps, like the authorities of Jewish orthodoxy at the first feeble beginnings of Christianity, "they doubted whereunto this would grow." But, after all, they are ministers of law, not of their own theological views; and I cannot for a moment suppose that their legal advisers would have told them that a concession to these parents would be contrary to the law. There are some, especially among the clergy, who boldly maintain the right of every parent to have his children taught his own creed at the public expense. It is noteworthy that these extremists belong to a Church which formerly resisted fiercely the imposition of a conscience clause, and which also refused to believe that any schools were necessary except her own. But, though the new policy of the priesthood is certainly more charitable than their former action, it has the misfortune to be impracticable. Our sects are too many to allow this sort of liberality.<sup>1</sup>

Bogus  
rights of  
parents.

But if ever there was a case in which parents were justified in asking to have their own views of moral instruction carried out, it is surely the case I have described. For they did not presume to ask that any peculiar notions of theirs on transcendental subjects should be taught to their children, nor yet any eccentricities of morality. They would probably have been quite satisfied with the practical principles of conduct set forth in the Church Catechism, as above quoted. If Bible teaching can claim to be "unsectarian," how much more justly can the title be claimed for doctrines of morality from which not one in a million of the population would dissent! The refusal of their request was unreasonable, unjust, and ungenerous. That it would be sustained by a majority of electors zealous for the Bible even to persecution may, unhappily, be true. But it was not in the true interest of morality. It is of a piece with the policy which sets unbelievers to teach belief, and counts the conscience and heart of the teacher nothing so long as he speaks by the Book.

<sup>1</sup> Besides, it is absurd to say that a parent has a right to have his individual opinions on transcendental subjects taught by his fellow ratepayers and taxpayers to his children. For what the Commonwealth seeks by its education policy is good citizens of this world, not of any unknown world. But when a parent asks that his child shall be taught at the public expense such a doctrine, for instance, as priestly absolution, he is asking not that his child shall be made a good citizen, but that he shall be taught how to secure the safety of his soul in an unknown world. Such a claim is simply preposterous. If valid, it would give the "Peculiar People" a claim to have their children taught at the public expense the sinfulness of calling in a doctor.

## VII.

### THE WRONG TO THE NATION

Contrast of  
kindred  
States  
where the  
religious  
difficulty is  
excluded.

SECOND in importance to the disastrous effects of a hollow compromise on the teaching of morality is its injurious influence on the development of the national intellect. In the United States, and in our own greatest Colonies, there has been an almost complete elimination of the religious question. It is true that in the older settlements of Canada friction is kept up by the survival of Catholic claims and influence. It is true also that in the United States and in Australia occasional efforts have been made by devout sectaries to disturb the settlement effected by dropping theology. We know, likewise, that in many common schools of the United States the old custom is still kept up of reading from the teacher's desk at the commencement of school a few verses from the Bible "without note or comment." I am one of those who think that this comment of silence is worse than almost any other. The custom is a tribute to the survival of Puritan traditions in America. But the fact that, in spite of these traditions, the Americans have substantially left the teaching of the Bible and Christianity to the Churches is all the more creditable to their spiritual courage. At any rate, their practice affords no support whatever to the evangelical compromise in England. But these modifications of pure "secularism" have been almost a negligible quantity. It is substantially—and excluding Catholic Canada—almost exactly true that the educational policy of Greater Anglo-Saxondom<sup>1</sup> has been determined solely by educational interests, and not by sectarian rivalry. I recognise, of course, that other advantages besides this blessed peace have favoured our kinsmen beyond the seas, and especially in the United States. The absence of an Established Church, the more prevalent sense of equality, and, in the great Republic, the system of common schools, which merges all class interests in the one national and patriotic interest, have, of course, conduced to the same end. But even these happy features of the new commonwealths would have been ineffectual if the religious difficulty had not been excluded.

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, excludes the Anglo-Dutch States of South Africa. At the time of writing, the religious question in education appears to be in process of settlement for the Transvaal by the adoption of a Bill securing two and a half hours' instruction per week in "Bible history." The population there has apparently not yet become as much interested in historical criticism as are the people of England. Contrasting the two populations, we may find a fresh pathos in Kohleth's words: "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

These commonwealths have not had to balance the claims of jealous sects. They have not had to repress the enterprise of heterodox school managers lest they should attract more scholars than the orthodox. They have not been tempted to minimise the number of school places needed in a district lest they should disturb sectarian monopolists who could not raise the money for enlargement. They have been privileged to consider two questions only—how many children required education, and what were the best methods of intellectual and moral culture. Whatever criticisms may be passed by our old-world scholars on the rawness of American culture, witnesses of indisputable competence—as, for instance, the correspondents commissioned to gather information for the *Times* newspaper on American machine manufacture—are emphatic in their testimony that the commercial and scientific progress of the States is very largely owing to the facilities for education offered from the common schools upwards. No ecclesiastical traditions, no balancing of sect against sect, not even “pious founders,” have stood between the people and their intellectual aspirations. And this is not in the least because the American people are less bigoted than we. So far as we can judge, the Puritanical traditions of the Pilgrim Fathers still exercise a widespread and enduring influence on American religion. But, whatever may be their various beliefs, they drop them at the school door, and ignore them in their educational counsels.

How different has been our experience in the old country! In 1807 the then Archbishop of Canterbury stamped out Mr. Samuel Whitbread's precocious scheme of national education with a pious appeal to prejudice, pleading for Christianity in the words of a heathen poet:—

Hac casti mancant in religione nepotes.

This sanctimonious, but infamous, veto<sup>1</sup> by a titled priest against the education of a people is often quoted; but the oftener the better. Those who have studied Mr. Whitbread's scheme know that, though it was of course far too indulgent to the Established Church, it drew the lines of a really national education. And though it would not have exorcised the demon of sectarianism any more than did the Act of 1870, yet it would have practically anticipated by sixty-three years the establishment of approximately universal elementary education. And when we think of all that the nation has lost through that long delay, it is hard to repress an indignation which, considering the sort of training received by the clergy at the very beginning of last century, may perhaps be misplaced.

From that day to this the decisive consideration in every education crisis has been not how to give our children the best possible training, but how to protect first the Established Church, and next the Bible. If

An Archbishop's veto.

Progress and morals subordinated to Church and Bible.

<sup>1</sup> The Bill had passed the Commons, and would almost certainly have passed the Lords if the Archbishop would have allowed it.

the Nonconformists had not been false to their professed principles in 1870, a great part of the nation might then have adopted a wider policy which must ultimately have attracted the whole people. But at the golden opportunity their spiritual courage failed them. They dared not trust religion to the "voluntary principle" which they had invoked against the Established Church. They accepted State patronage and control for religion in the schools. After that great betrayal every School Board election became a theological battle. Questions of education were quite secondary. How many candidates gave an hour during their canvass to the best methods of teaching to read, or the most interesting modes of presenting the problems of arithmetic? The retention of the Bible, and the interpretation of "unsectarianism," or rather "intersectarianism," so as to include all evangelical doctrine, have been the two notes to which every platform has echoed.

Failure of  
Mr. Bal-  
four's Act.

Nor has the Act of 1902 successfully evaded the difficulty as the ingenious and subtle-minded Premier of that day supposed it would. For sectarian strife has been simply transferred to County Council elections; and the balance of sects is considered more important than educational knowledge in the selection of co-opted members of the local Education Committees.

A lesson for  
the future.

In the battle of progress it is always good to fix upon some definite assertion of principle to be maintained at all costs. Supposing that principle to be chosen, as a successful general selects his point of attack, because it commands the field, victory on that point means a good deal more than the achievement of one item in a political programme. The success leavens the national mind with a new temper that suggests consequential steps of further advance. When Cobden and his associates in the Anti-Corn Law League fixed on the bread tax as their objective point of attack, they were wise in their generation. The movement was the more speedily successful because concentrated on the least defensible position of Protectionists. But when once that point was yielded, the whole case for Protection in general was practically given away; and the doctrine of customs dues for revenue alone was triumphant.

In 1870 the Nonconformists had it in their power to do for the emancipation of education what Cobden and Bright accomplished for freedom of trade in 1846. The experience of religious Dissenters since the beginning of the nineteenth century might have taught them that sectarian domination, or sectarian rivalry, was hopelessly irreconcilable with freedom of educational development. Common sense dictated that the only effective way of removing the obstacle was to eliminate theology entirely from public elementary schools, and to relegate it to the free action of the Churches in accordance with the principles up to that date held by Nonconformists. The notion of any danger to religion

from such a policy ought to have been dissipated by the splendid examples in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. So obvious seemed the inference from such palpable facts that Mr. Gladstone himself anticipated a Nonconformist demand for a "secular" system.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, he gave them credit for more faith in their own principles than they possessed. But if they had been courageous enough for consistency, tens of thousands of the generation then coming into the world would have been saved from the sectarian curse which has since blighted their education.

Let us observe what would have been gained by the exclusion of theology. In the first place, there would have been a clear and definite assertion of religious equality in the schools. Where education is carried on under State patronage and control there are only two alternative methods of maintaining religious equality in the schools. The one is to teach every creed, and the other is to teach none. In a country where a very few great denominations hold the field, as in Germany<sup>2</sup> or Austria, the former plan is possible, or at least plausible, though even in such cases there are fragmentary sects who suffer wrong. *De minimis non curat lex*. In Scotland also practically the same system is possible, for Presbyterianism of one form or another is professed by nearly the whole population. In Ireland the bad traditions of Protestant supremacy have survived disestablishment; and education remains a battle-field. Now I am dealing with the case of England and Wales, not with that of Scotland or of Ireland. But, lest it should be supposed that I shirk the question of the latter country, I will say at once that, Ireland being still mediæval in religion, it would be ridiculous to try to solve the problem of either school or university education on twentieth-century principles. Therefore no solution can possibly be found by

The two  
alternatives.

Exceptional  
case of  
Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> This is now too well established to need confirmation. He did not, indeed, characterise "simple Bible teaching" as "a monstrosity." But he did characterise as such the pretence of any municipal body to define what "simple Bible teaching" is.

<sup>2</sup> We are sometimes pointed to the free, unhindered development of education in Germany as a proof of at least the harmlessness of a denominational system. But between Germany and England there are very pregnant differences which make any parallel impossible. Speaking generally, religious belief is not so much a matter of individual conviction among average Germans as with us. Not that they are less religious in sentiment. Possibly they are even more so, because of their conventional indifference about creeds. But they have not generally that idea of the duty of individual conviction which generates our innumerable sects. Their confirmations and first communions are very much a matter of social routine, like the "coming out" of girls, or the assumption of the modern substitute for the  *toga virilis*  by boys. To such a state of feeling rate-supported catechism and scripture are of no consequence, and this indifference makes sectarianism powerless for harm to the schools. Bismarck had some trouble with Catholic obscurantists; but he gave them short shrift. Who ever heard of a German district being stinted of school places to soothe the jealousy of the Lutheran or the Reformed or the Evangelical Church; or of a school generation being allowed to grow up in ignorance in order that the Catholics might have time to supply the needed school places?

ignoring the obvious fact that the Roman Church dominates the consciences of three-fourths of the people as no Church or sect whatever can claim to dominate the people of England and Wales. To insist on "simple Bible teaching" in Irish elementary schools, or on undenominational universities, only adds insult to injury. The treatment must be such as is adapted to a community less advanced in religious thought than England; and "concurrent endowment" of *educational* institutions is inevitable. The attempt to teach the creeds of all is never satisfactory, even under the most favourable circumstances. But those cases in which it seems to be compatible with some freedom of educational development are explained by the fact that there is no desire for religious equality and no intersectarian jealousy—at least so far as the schools are concerned. They are cases of denominational supremacy by consent, in the sense that social equilibrium is found, as in Germany, to be practically secured by the recognition of a very few predominant sects in whose influence the people placidly acquiesce.<sup>1</sup> The champions of different creeds do not fight each other over the starved minds and souls of children. In England, however, the attempt to teach the creeds of all is obviously hopeless. And those Englands beyond sea which have most fully inherited the conscientious sectarianism of the Motherland have wisely adopted the other alternative, and teach the creed of none. Let us note the consequences of our perverse attempt at an impossibility.

Working of  
the Smith  
compro-  
mise.

Although the so-called "compromise"<sup>2</sup> was devised and carried by a Churchman, he was what in the vulgar language of controversy is called a "Low Evangelical," and, though one of the excellent of the earth, he was considered in high ecclesiastical circles as little better than a Dissenter. His evident desire to have evangelical Sunday-school teaching introduced into Board schools appealed to the weak brethren among Nonconformists. They thus gained the doubtful advantage of endowment for their common gospel. But they inflicted a grievance on Churchmen which it is impossible to explain away. For the genuine Anglican view of Christianity differs from the united Nonconformist view. And it differs from it in such a way that, if you teach the Nonconformist view, you necessarily prejudice the pupils against the Church

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing at all in the above passage inconsistent with what I have previously said concerning the conscience rights of minorities in a population that religiously lives up to the twentieth century. When I visited Rome under Papal government I had no scruple about conventionally "bowing my head in the House of Rimmon." And were I to live in Ireland, which is, as I have said, mediæval in religion, I should pay with cheerfulness either rate or tax for Catholic, Protestant, Episcopal, or Presbyterian schools or colleges. But I must repeat that there is no Church or denomination in England which has any colourable pretence to the position which the Roman Church holds in Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> The resolution of the late Mr. W. H. Smith was adopted with slight modifications by so many School Boards that the case of London is typical of all.

view, although you may say nothing about it. Nonconformists are content with the Bible, and the Bible alone. Churchmen desire, also, the catechism authorised by their Church. Nonconformists are satisfied if such explanations of Scripture are given as will set forth "the plan of salvation," meaning thereby the evangelical view of the Fall, the types of Christ in Jewish history and ritual, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and justification by faith. Churchmen, on the other hand, attach great importance to the creeds and sacraments, and are naturally jealous of any teaching which tends to represent the former as sufficient without the latter. That this is actually the tendency of "School Board religion" can hardly with fairness be denied.

A grievance  
of Church-  
men.

I think, then, that Churchmen had, and still have, a grievance under local education authorities with their "simple Bible teaching." But the policy pursued by Churchmen to secure its removal or diminution has been a blight on the education of the country. They have resisted the building of Board schools that were urgently needed. They have insisted on keeping children in crowded and stifling rooms rather than allow the relief which would have been given by undenominational schools. They have stigmatised as "unfair competition" the endeavour of School Boards or municipal authorities to spend their larger resources on giving the children of ratepayers a higher education than the sects could give them. They resisted low fees, and still more free schools, as long as they could; and when their opposition was bought out by the fee grant they managed to retain a power of exacting special fees in addition, and railed against every attempt of Liberals to rid education of such vexatious hindrances.

Their influence with Parliament is enormous, and must continue to be so while the choice of electors is practically limited to a small class of moneyed men naturally susceptible to social glamour. Indeed, that influence is resistless except during the brief moments when what Edward Miall used to call "some great blazing principle" concentrates popular attention. Such a principle was victorious when Church rates were abolished, and when the Protestant Episcopal Church in Ireland was disestablished. Such a principle might have been found in a real religious equality for the schools. But the endowment of the united evangelical sects provided nothing of the kind. It made all Nonconformist appeals to justice hollow and feeble, while it put a weapon into the hands of Churchmen which they would not otherwise have possessed. The result has been a course of reactionary legislation, the purpose of which has been to restore, or at least maintain, ecclesiastical control, while its inevitable effect has been to obstruct and blight educational progress.

*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*

## VIII.

### CONCLUSION

The next  
Education  
Bill.

IN the Preface to this edition I referred to the failure of Mr. Birrell's Education Bill, and in these concluding words I shall venture to utter a warning as to the fate of any future Bill which may be framed on the same or similar, or even analogous, lines. "Weak counsels and weak actings"—to use Cromwell's phrase—have brought things to this pass: that morals are the worst taught subject in our elementary schools, while by "undenominationalists" character and conduct, our chief educational ends, are vainly supposed to be secured by a sort of Bible teaching which Churchmen condemn, which Rationalists reject, which a large proportion of our teachers cannot sincerely give, and discussion of which even Nonconformists deprecate with a shrug. The first and essential purpose of any new Education Bill, then, should be to make obligatory in all State-aided schools a course of systematic moral training independent of any supernatural reference, and based on the experience of man.

Should  
secure  
moral  
training.

Objection 1:  
Material-  
istic, etc.

There are not so many now as there used to be who would say that this is sheer materialism and base utilitarianism. For surely human experience is not all materialistic. Indeed, "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," belong as truly to human experience as does the desire to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. It is for the wise teacher to select the elements of human experience on which moral training is to be based. And if he selects the worse elements instead of the better, he is not fit for his post. Now, if anyone should say to me, "You have quoted the words of an Apostle; why not include them in the ordinary school lessons?" my reply is, I am certainly most anxious to include such words as those if you will only allow them to be treated as expressions of human experience, and not of miraculous revelation. For the moment you introduce miracle or supernaturalism you let loose all the winds of controversy with which we have been buffeted in the previous pages.

Human  
experience  
certainly  
spiritual,  
but not  
admittedly  
super-  
natural.

No wrong  
done to the  
orthodox  
conscience.

Nor can it be pleaded that the pious evangelical teacher would violate his conscience by treating the highest New Testament morals as matters of human experience. For, whatever they may have been in addition to that, they were at least realised in human souls and found by human experience to be the highest good. Indeed, a great deal of pulpit eloquence at the present day, and all the best Sunday-school teaching, is an appeal to common sense to try, by practising it, the

value of Christian morals. There can therefore be no hardship whatever in forbidding the Christian teacher to go beyond human experience while giving moral instruction in State schools. Or, if it be rejoined that to the Christian teacher miracle and revelation are actual facts well within human experience, the reply is, firstly, that Christian teachers are so much disagreed as to the extent and interpretation of those alleged facts that no denomination can any longer claim to represent the Christianity of the nation; and, secondly, that all belief in miraculous revelation is now so widely surrendered that religious equality, nay, common justice, is impossible unless such questions are kept out of State schools.

But we are told that such a scheme is impracticable. In this case, however, it is not we, but the objectors, who refuse to look facts in the face. For this so-called "impracticable" system is being actually worked with the best results by English-speaking people who, in the aggregate, number some hundred millions.<sup>1</sup> To persist, therefore, in dogged denial of practicability is only to prove that a certain stolid attitude known as *non possumus* is not absolutely peculiar to Popes. Or, if it be said that the circumstances and habits of the great Republic and of our newest colonies are too different from those of the old country to allow of our adopting their practice in this case, here again the objection quietly ignores palpable fact. For we do actually during four-fifths<sup>2</sup> of our school-time adopt the very rule that is so often said to be un-English, and therefore impossible. That is to say, the State makes it an essential condition of any money grant that during each half-daily session of the school there shall be two continuous hours<sup>3</sup> devoted exclusively to "secular" instruction. And during these two hours, according to any strict interpretation of the law, it is illegal to devote a single moment to any religious observance, exhortation, or lesson. Now, if it is found so easy even in old English schools to give exclusively secular instruction four-fifths of school hours in all State schools of the land, why on earth should it be "impracticable" to do the same thing during the whole time for which public authority is responsible?

Objection 2  
Impracticability.

*Solvitur  
ambulando.*

Even in  
England.

<sup>1</sup> The population of the United States of America is now more than eighty millions. Add New Zealand, Victoria (Australia), South Australia, together with a large part of Canada, the sum will not be far short of the figure given; and if there should be some deficiency, every year is filling it up. The case of India is different; but it also illustrates the fact that among a population of very various religious beliefs secular training (exclusive of morals) affords the only *practicable* solution of the education problem.

<sup>2</sup> Where—if anywhere—advantage is taken of the legal permission to have religious observances, etc., at the beginning *and also at the end* of each school attendance, the proportion of time given to religious teaching may be slightly more. But the custom is so infrequent that the figure given above is substantially accurate.

<sup>3</sup> It may be one hour and a half for infants; but that does not affect the principle.

Encouragement given by present system to an unreal division between things secular and sacred.

Personal experience of a "secular" school.

Case of children neglected or not reached by the Churches.

Repudiation in 1870 of any claim on the State.

At this point I will make bold to say that the present arbitrary, forced, and unnatural system of a sharp time-table division does more to foster a false distinction between things secular and sacred than any State system of purely intellectual and moral training. For in New England or New Zealand the children of three equally religious neighbours belonging to the Roman, Anglican, and Presbyterian communions go to school together and sit in class together without ever having the false division of things sacred and secular obtruded upon them. Having had the good fortune myself, from seven years of age to thirteen, to attend a so-called "secular" school, I know by experience what I am saying. For that exceptional school, like the "common schools" across the ocean, was frequented, even in Liverpool, by some Roman Catholics of the middle class, and I think by almost every other Christian sect, in addition to Jews. I myself, having been brought up in the strictest sect of the Methodists, may perhaps be credited with having had even at that early age some sense both of religion and morals; and I declare that the moral and even religious tone of that "secular" school was on the whole higher than in a clergyman's school to which I was afterwards sent. I remember at the former school being quizzed as a "Methody," but it was in a very good-humoured tone; whereas, at the clergyman's, a Jew school-fellow, being quick to resent insult to his religion, felt in honour bound on one occasion to "demand satisfaction" from a stronger class-fellow on that account, and got, unfortunately, rather more than he wanted. In the "secular" school—and the same thing, according to all evidence, may be said of similar schools in the New World—the fact of religious division very rarely emerged, whereas in the clerical school they were the subject of constant wrangle.

To arguments such as the above, especially when based on personal reminiscences, a superficial reply is easy, but not effective, because it ignores the main question at issue. "It is all very well," we are told, "for children brought up in Christian homes to hear nothing of the Bible in school. For they hear it read, and perhaps explained, morning and evening by their father. They also attend a place of worship regularly, and probably Sunday school as well. But what of the thousands of children who come from homes which have no Bible at all, or at least where it is never read?" The reply is obvious and conclusive: *Caveat Ecclesia*. Let those who regard the Bible as "the word of God" look to it. For the nation has distinctly and formally declared by Act of Parliament that, so far as public elementary education is concerned, it denies all responsibility for any teaching of the kind. By no statute in force is Bible reading or teaching required in the public elementary schools, although it is permitted under certain restrictions—on the express condition that no grant of money is made for it

out of Parliamentary funds. Not only so, but the nation emphasises its renunciation of responsibility by refusing to allow its inspectors to examine or report on the results of Biblical teaching. The plea, therefore, that, if any part of the children of the State are without Bible-teaching from voluntary sources, the State must step in and provide it, is legally estopped by the fact that the State has, for thirty-seven years past, formally repudiated any such claim.

The arrangement that actually exists is an unprincipled compromise unknown anywhere else on earth, and perhaps impossible to any but the dear old land possessed by so pathetic a faith in "muddling through." For the teaching of the Bible is entirely *voluntary*: only the voluntariness is a privilege not of individual ratepayers, or of individual teachers, nor yet of individual parents—for the Conscience Clause is a sham<sup>1</sup>—but only of County Councils or their Education Committees. Now, notwithstanding the awakening of thought indicated by the literature and organisations above alluded to,<sup>2</sup> I readily acknowledge that still surviving social custom and tradition ensure at least some majority on County Councils in favour of the apparently safe generality of "simple Bible teaching." But scarcely a ratepayer who votes for it knows what he means by it. And the interpretation has to be, not fought out—for it never is—but meanly thrown upon the teachers, with the tacit understanding that if, in their explanations, they offend the beliefs or superstitions favoured by the County Council majority, that majority will want to know the reason why. Such an arrangement may be cunning, may be "expedient" in the very basest sense. But the Churches who think that by such a dishonest compromise they are doing their duty to neglected children, or teaching "truth in the inward parts," reflect shame on the faith they profess. In all reverence, I say that their nominal Lord—if I have ever understood him—would rebuke them with the words, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

To such arguments I know of no reply but the ignoble plea that the "compromise" hushes strife, or, in other words, that it plasters over the open sore of religious schism, "saying Peace, peace, when there is no peace." But surely those who know and feel what is at stake—the moral culture, the character and conduct of the English people—will no longer accept this feeble excuse for the neglect of national duty. To them the hush of theological debate—though welcome enough—will

The teaching of the Bible is now voluntary; but not so as to save the rights of conscience.

The policy of "hushing up"

<sup>1</sup> This was well known to the rejectors of Mr. Birrell's real and effective clause in 1906. That clause, in its original form, excepted from the law of compulsory attendance the time during which religious instruction is given. Mr. Birrell supported this by his own experience as a Nonconformist school boy at a Church school. He "flatly refused" to claim exemption from Catechism, not because he differed from his father, a distinguished Baptist minister, but because he preferred to take the lesson rather than be exceptional. (*Hansard*, April 9th, 1906.)

<sup>2</sup> See Preface to the new edition, and also pp. 5, 11-13, 54.

involves the  
paralysis of  
moral  
teaching.

afford no sufficient compensation for the criminal neglect of our children's training in the moral essentials of social life. For while Calvinistic and Arminian, Baptist and Low Churchman, blandly agree on "simple stories from the Old Testament," the result is that Jacob, who impersonated nearly all the later vices of the Jews with none of their virtues, is exhibited as a type to be imitated by English children if they would please God.

Recognition  
of the fact  
by Educa-  
tion Com-  
mittees.

There are, however, signs of an awakening of the public conscience on this subject, and a considerable number of local Education Authorities<sup>1</sup> are providing for systematic moral teaching in addition to, and in many cases at a separate time from, "simple Bible teaching." What does this mean? It means that the Scripture lessons, *as given under the compromise*, have been found inadequate for the moral ends desired. And if the truth were known, its inadequacy is the direct result of the conditions under which they are given. If, therefore, the above plea be true, that the compromise hushes up controversy, the hollow truce is purchased by the exclusion from the teaching of everything that could rouse or inspire. But, indeed, the plea is *not* true. For Catholics of all shades cannot be, and ought not to be, satisfied with the compromise. And if it be retorted that neither will they be satisfied with "secular education," no one asks them to be satisfied with it. All they are asked to do is to accept—as they do now—some four hours daily of secular instruction from the State, and to supplement it at their own cost by their own teachers with the theological training they desire.

The only  
way.

National  
morals  
would gain  
by the  
"secular"  
system.

But if objections on the ground of materialistic tendencies and of impracticability and of the sacredness of a hollow truce are proved to be futile, much more are the fears mentioned in the first words of this Essay shown to be not only groundless, but opposed to the moral and religious interests for which they are professedly concerned. For the facts adduced in Chapters V. and VI. defy contradiction. These facts, moreover, are the inevitable consequences of the moral incongruities of an educational system involving the social, political, and religious wrongs detailed in the earlier Chapters, II. to IV. Now, of those who say "Let us do evil that good may come," St. Paul made the severe remark, "whose damnation is just." And, whatever the condemnation may signify, it is surely incurred by those who would encourage lying to promote truth, or who fancy that forced insincerity in the teacher can inspire "the simplicity that is in Christ." No, no; the very first and most essential condition of improved and efficient moral training in the

<sup>1</sup> Among these authorities are ten county councils, twenty-one borough councils, and seven urban district councils. The Education Authorities for the West Riding of Yorkshire, Cheshire, Devonshire, and Surrey have a syllabus of moral and civic instruction substantially similar to that of the Moral Instruction League.

nation's schools is the relegation of all doctrine transcending human experience to the custodians of the various phases of the faith. This does not necessarily mean "clericalism"; for Nonconformist Sunday schools are certainly not clerical. And if any portion of our fellow-citizens prefer clericalism, they have a perfect right to exercise their choice, provided they do not make it either a pecuniary or a moral burden on the State. Rid of such a burden, the State would be free to use all its resources, both pecuniary and moral, as it has never done yet, for the training of its children in the duties of a citizen. My argument, therefore, holds good that, so far from being a guarantee for moral training, the present permissive and quasi-voluntary system of Bible teaching in State schools actually prevents it.

There is, I believe, only one other objection, which I need mention, to the proposed relegation of Bible teaching to those who believe in it, and that is the supposed overwhelming consensus of popular feeling against any such a plan. Well, the next Minister of Education who introduces a Bill may possibly have his eyes opened as to the hollowness of this assumption. My own experience suggests that as everyone is said to believe all men mortal except himself, so in this case each sensible person thinks everyone to be devoted to the great Smith compromise except himself. For over and over again have I been assured by more members of School Boards and Education Committees than memory can count that not only do they regard the present system as illogical, but they think it unfair and inconsistent with religious equality. They do not usually add that it is dishonest. For if they realised that, I will do them the justice to say that they would become "Secularists" at once. But they always add: "You must know that you and I are almost alone in such an opinion, and you can never carry your scheme." Well, we shall see. But this I know, that in the evolution of heterodoxy into orthodoxy there come moments when suddenly the vast majority of people discover that they always held the hitherto discredited opinion, and on this question that moment cannot be far off.

One sign of the coming change is the rapidly spreading recognition of the utter impossibility of the task we have been setting since 1870 to our Ministers of Education. And so long as the teaching of transcendental doctrines, whether supposed to be drawn from the Bible or from Church tradition, is made one of the duties of the State school teacher, the solution of the problem is far and away more difficult than that of the Sphinx's riddle, while the consequences of failure are now likely to be, at least to the Minister of Education, analogous to the fate of the monster's victims. The thing has always been impossible since the Toleration Act. But as misguided genius would persist in trying to square the circle long after it was mathematically shown to be an

Supposed  
popular  
opposition.

Growing  
recognition  
of the im-  
possibility of  
any other  
settlement.

Inevitable failure of any new Bill on the lines of 1906.

irrational problem, so, notwithstanding the long-drawn agonies of the Forster Act with its reactionary amendment by Lord Sandon, and the cynical exposure by Mr. Balfour in 1902 of the real meaning of State meddling in religion, and the collapse of the final desperate effort in 1906 to secure a principle in name by surrendering it in substance, it is still possible that temporising converts, from Miallism to Cowper-Templeism, may beguile some unhappy Minister of Education into a fresh enactment of "yea and nay" in regard to religious equality in the schools. But the failure of such an attempt is as certain as that yea and nay are contradictory and mutually destructive. It may pass the House of Commons. It may even, by threats of revolution, be forced through the House of Lords. But any such settlement must be almost as shortlived as the bungle of 1902. For as that was doomed from the first by its failure to realise what is meant by religious equality among Christian sects, so any new "compromise" will be doomed if it stops short of extending unreserved religious equality to non-Christian people. But such religious equality will be accorded only when Parliament awakes to the fact that in passing from the nineteenth century to the twentieth we have left the domination of supernaturalism behind, and have entered upon the age of reason.

Recent spread of rational religion.

If any book known to the last generation was confidently regarded as a book of facts, it was the Bible. Neither Churchmen nor educated Nonconformists are by any means agreed in so regarding it now. It is indeed a fallacy to say that they have on that account surrendered the Bible as the story of a revelation. But they have learned that the facts to which it bears witness are moral and spiritual in a much greater degree than they are historical. They are learning to treat it as a vision of spiritual evolution exhibiting not only the verities of human experience, but its illusions and unrealities as well. It is prized for its humanity rather than for its supernatural portents. In a word, it is now valued for qualities which would be impossible to an infallible book. Yet even those who take these intelligent views of the Bible are by no means agreed as to their application.<sup>1</sup> And those who do not take such liberal views would be horrified by a proposal to trust "simple Bible teaching," except under the strictest safeguards, to one of their misguided brethren. But while fully conscious of this vast change, and of the controversies it stirs, we are asked to maintain, and perhaps under a new Bill to renew and continue, in State schools a system of religious instruction essentially based on the recognition of the Bible as an infallible book both of history and doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> Of course, the so-called new views are most of them old enough. What is new is partly the fresh support found for them by recent research, and partly their acceptance to so large an extent by religious men.

The result is that a large and growing number of masters and mistresses are required to teach what they do not themselves believe. Now, whether the opponents of the evangelical doctrines deduced from an infallible Bible are justified or not in stigmatising some of those doctrines as demoralising, at any rate it must be admitted that to teach to children as sacred truth what you regard as falsehood is certainly demoralising both to teacher and taught. To this, as I have insisted, is very largely due the paralysis that enfeebles moral teaching in the schools, and keeps the habits and manners of our population practically at the same level from generation to generation. The sanctimonious pretence of simple Bible belief required of teachers in all positions of the sliding scale of "the New Theology" demands either a self-conscious art of balancing like that of the tight-rope dancer, or a resignation to mechanical procedure by rote. In either case inspiration is impossible.

Meantime this formalism or dutiful dissimulation excludes serious moral teaching in accordance with the advanced experience and needs of the age. Of course, none but a pedant would think of giving to school children a series of abstracts from scientific writers on morality. But the sense of scientific relation and proportion acquired by the teacher in his own studies may very well furnish the invisible skeleton on which his parabolic and attractive lessons on daily life are framed. It is not an unreasonable presumption that such lessons would be likely to bear more directly and effectively on truthfulness, cleanliness, industry, and consideration for others, than a study of Gehazi, or Ananias and Sapphira, or Mosaic camp rules, or Solomon's reference to the sluggard and the ant. With regard to the last point of consideration for others, I do not dispute that a fine illustration may be found in the story of the young prophet and the borrowed axe in the Book of Kings. But it would not be morally safe unless the teacher, if he thought the floating of the axe to be fabulous, were allowed to say so.

But the danger of overlooking moral flaws in beautiful Bible stories—a danger by which all we lovers of the old Book are beset—is well illustrated by Dr. Frank Hayward's unreserved eulogy on the story of Joseph. "I admit," he writes, "that the secularist should keep his eyes open, and steadily protest against the teaching of stories such as the 'Plagues of Egypt.' But the objection to this story is not that it is mythological, but that it is morally pernicious. The Joseph story may be mythological, but it is morally priceless." Is it? Well, I admire it very much. It is—as I once heard a distinguished newspaper editor say of the Gospel narratives—"such good copy." But when I am told that it is "morally priceless," I cannot forego some mild criticism.

For instance, was it an amiable trait in a favourite son to be so

Moral difficulties multiplied kill inspiration.

Dr. Hayward on the Joseph story.

Some points  
in its  
morality.

eager to relate the divine omens of his future greatness to his less regarded brethren? A teacher whom—as mentioned on a previous page—I heard dealing with this point, suggested that “Joseph could not help having dreams.” True; but he could have avoided making them offensive to others. I am well aware of the absurdity of dealing thus with a relic of ancient folk-lore. But if we are seriously asked to take it as “morally priceless,” we *must* deal with it thus. I also heard the same teacher fumbling to find some moral element in the boy Joseph’s character to account for his divine election. But he could not find anything except “obedience to his father,” of which the evidence is scant. The one heroic moment in the story of Joseph is his resistance to Potiphar’s wife. And I am far from denying that, carefully related to children nearing the age of danger, the incident may be advantageously used. The reasons for his resistance concluding, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” are perfectly admirable. But unless the little hearers are plainly told that the whole narrative is legendary, the impression they get from it of the direction of human destiny by dreams and capricious interferences of heavenly powers, and knowledge of the future given by special favour to an arbitrary king, is not quite “morally priceless.”

True value  
of the cen-  
tral inci-  
dent.

Joseph’s  
corner in  
corn.

Again, it was no doubt astute policy in a tyrant’s vizier to take advantage of the seven prosperous years in order to prepare a “corner” in corn against the coming famine. But is the example “morally priceless”? “And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.” What then? A ruler whose example, was “morally priceless” would surely have pitied the suffering people, and fed them on the most liberal terms from the king’s stored-up wealth of corn. But not so. The incomparable Joseph thought much more of dynastic interests than of the people’s welfare. Accordingly, by the royal monopoly he first “gathered up all the money”; “and when money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan,” “Joseph said, ‘Give your cattle, and I will give you for your cattle if money fail’”; and after the cattle were all made royal property, he pressed the desperate people’s need to the bitter end by compelling them to sell themselves and their wives and children into serfdom to escape starvation. Was this action “morally priceless”?

Its effects  
on the  
people.

Dynastic  
interests  
supreme.

His gener-  
osity to his  
brethren.

On the other hand, much is made of Joseph’s wonderful magnanimity to his cruel brothers who had sold him to the Midianites. His kindness was somewhat severe in the mental tortures it inflicted not only upon them, but upon their aged father, by the detention of Reuben and the enforced adventure of Benjamin. But when all possible credit has been allowed to his family feeling and his tears, the imagination of the

child who reads the story is more fired by the exultation Joseph must have felt in the fulfilment of his dreams, and in the discovery of himself to his brothers as "ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." No one feels more acutely than I the incongruity of such criticism as applied to an ancient and charming myth. But when we are told that, whether mythological or not, it is "morally priceless," the incongruity must be endured for a moment, in order that the more dangerous absurdity may be exposed.

But, after all, if the truth must be spoken, it is not really the moral, but rather the religious, character of Joseph that is valued for purposes of "simple Bible teaching." Here was a boy from childhood chosen by God and favoured with dreams of the honour divinely intended for him. It is always supposed, though the Hebrew story does not say so, that Joseph was a very pious boy, envied by his elders not only for his coat, but for his goodness.<sup>1</sup> At every crisis in the narrative Joseph's good fortune is accounted for by the special providence of God. Thus Potiphar "saw that the Lord<sup>2</sup> was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand." The narrative adds: "And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field." It may very well be that by thus insisting on the "immanence" of God in Joseph and his fortunes the two writers out of whose versions of tradition the tale as we have it was compiled were using the best expressions provided by their language for skill, integrity, and business enterprise. For we know that, according to Mosaic ideas, the handicraftsmen such as Bezaleel—and surely there is beauty in the belief—had all their skill in cunning works, in gold, and in silver, and in brass only because they were "filled with the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship."<sup>3</sup>

But, unfortunately, as I think, and as ever-increasing numbers are thinking now, that is not the form taken by Joseph's religion as explained by teachers imbued with the evangelical traditions common to Low Church Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Independents, and Baptists. No; they inevitably describe Joseph as of the Young Men's Christian

What constitutes the real attraction?

Divine favour as a reward for piety.

The probable meaning of the original writers.

Modern misinterpretation.

<sup>1</sup> There is perhaps some colour given to this—though no justification—in Stephen's noble speech (Acts vii. 9).

<sup>2</sup> Of course, the original word here is "Jahweh"; and it makes a difference, but it is not for me to point out what that difference is. I deal only with the authorised version which is used in schools. The Hebrew idea of Jahweh was not exactly the teacher's idea of "the Lord."

<sup>3</sup> If rightly interpreted, this was Spinoza's idea likewise, only with a transcendently truer conception of God.

Association type—a very good type so far as it goes, but a recent birth of time—as pious and prayerful, and always consistent in his profession, and diligent in all religious observances. The now well-known sensitiveness of the Egyptians to pollution by foreign religions is never thought of as presenting any difficulty in the way of Joseph's court life. Nay, his "divining cup" and his marriage to a heathen priest's daughter who would certainly bring her idolatries with her into his house do not seem to suggest the slightest incongruity with the Young Men's Christian Association type. All such difficulties are ignored or explained away in order to transmute this delightful relic of old Hebrew folk-lore into a sort of ante-dated Christian biography of a pious young man, who prospered immensely because, on account of his piety, "the Lord was with him." It is this unreal aspect of the story, and not any "moral pricelessness," which makes it attractive to the adherents of "the compromise."

Its  
unreality.

Bearing of  
such con-  
siderations  
on the  
coming  
Education  
Bill.

Now, no future Education Bill permitting the seal of public authority to be attached to any such interpretations or misinterpretations of the Bible can have any chance of permanence. It matters not whether the sign of public authority be the use of local rates to pay for such teaching or whether it be the employment of a national servant, the schoolmaster, to give it; or whether it take the odious form of compulsory presence in the school during the time of such teaching under the mockery of a conscience clause, so humorously exposed by Mr. Birrell. However indirectly given, or however ingeniously concealed, the stamp of public authority on effete religious ideas condemned, or at least surrendered, by a rapidly-increasing proportion of the public is a forgery of the great seal of common consent. For the common consent does not exist, and any law that assumes it is incongruous with fact. Not only does the chaos of opinion contradict it, but the undeniable advance of knowledge condemns it.

The doctrine of evolution is against such a law. Historical criticism is against it. The resurrection of Egyptian and Assyrian life confronts and rebukes it. The common sense of a generation better informed than their fathers rebels against it. And all that any good-natured Liberal Minister with a weakness for futile compromise can gain by it is a brief reprieve for an already sentenced system, and the prolongation of the infamy of a country which sacrifices its children's intellects to the ghost of a superstition about their souls. Now, if any reader who has followed my argument from the beginning of this Essay should be able, in sincerity of conscience, to condemn these last words as the blind judgment of a materialist, I can only regret that in earlier pages I must have expressed myself badly. For it is *not* the judgment of a "materialist." It is the heartfelt conviction of one who, during a long

Such views  
not irrelig-  
ious.

life, has cared more for religion than for anything else, and who is persuaded that religion cannot long survive the prevalence of insincerity and hypocrisy in the nation's schools. If we would but faithfully apply our historic conscience to the moral utterances of the Hebrew prophets, their words would be much more valuable than they are. Certainly, considering the base expediencies, the hollow pretences, that sustain the Smith compromise, and the flagrant contradictions it impudently gives to both the spiritual and the scientific facts of contemporary life, we should tremble at the rebuke of Jeremiah: "*The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?*"

But I cannot leave the subject without observing, finally, that the present position of the Bible in the schools is typical of the general relation of religion to contemporary life and opinion. Not that I have any wish whatever for State patronage and control of any new theology. On the contrary, I have been urging all along that State and municipalities alike should keep out of the steam of the Medean cauldron into which the scattered limbs of old beliefs have been plunged in the expectation that they will emerge "re-stated"—not reinstated, but transformed. The words that I add now are only intended as an additional illustration of the absurdity of interference by either Board of Education or County Councils in the struggle for the new Reformation. For, whether their interference be on the Liberal or on the Conservative side of controversies that affect every page of the Bible as a school book, in either case they do nothing but mischief by meddling in a movement that must be spontaneous. For, again, as the old Christians said, "Force is not God's way." The story of Uzzah and his fate is a savage one. But it has its application to the fate of all vain-glorious rulers, from Nero to Mr. Balfour's late Government, who have sought to steady with rude hands the ark of transcendental religion. And if ever there was one age in which such meddling was more perilous than in any other, it must be surely our own. For, though I yield to no Archbishop, nor even to the venerable General Booth, in my conviction of the deathlessness of religion while the human race endures, its position at present is paradoxical and beyond all statecraft. The real nature of its permanent value requires some spiritual courage for its recognition; while its doubtful accidents have become idols to the superstitious. And, as always happens when form supplants substance, frank discussion is feared lest the superficiality of belief should be betrayed. Just as a guarantee against theological strife in Education Committees is sought by agreeing to treat the Bible as something which we all know it not to be, so a social eirenicon is found in a conventional acknowledgment of infallible revelation. In either

The Public Authority to be absolutely neutral.

Present chaos of religious opinion.

case, acquiescence is impossible unless either by an incapacity or a deliberate refusal to recognise patent facts.

Makes Bible  
teaching by  
democratic  
authority  
immoral.

Yet, so far as most of the public functions of religion are concerned, in vain, apparently, do Reverend Canons and Very Reverend Deans assure us that every book in the Old Testament, except certain of the Prophets, is of unknown authorship and compiled from ill-harmonised documents of disputable dates. In vain do they treat as mythical, fabulous, or but loosely historical every alleged fact down to the death of David, as well as every miraculous narrative that follows. Even in the pulpits, which should be first to feel the influences of these dignitaries of the Church, the Fall, the Deluge, the miraculous exodus through the Red Sea, the theophany on Sinai, and the divinely ordered massacres in Canaan, are still solemnly discussed as parts of an infallible revelation. Yet there is scarcely an intelligent, well-read man or woman among the hearers who does not know that this stolid adherence to tradition requires such defiance of the laws of evidence as would not be tolerated in regard to the disputed ownership of half-a-crown. Nor do our scholarly divines offer us any better guarantee for New Testament history.<sup>1</sup> The new Christianity does not insist on the literal historical truth of the nativity of Jesus, or of his miracles, or resurrection, or ascension. It follows the author of the Fourth Gospel, to whom the idea was more than the fact. In like manner the new reformers think they lose nothing if they keep the idea of victory by self-sacrifice as it shines out from the Gospel story. But, if I understand them aright, they do not pretend that such an idea was anything new to man. They only think that in the reminiscences, part memory, part imagination, of the earliest Christians, the idea took a form which touched the common people as it had never touched them before. To the faith of the neo-Christian, therefore, it matters little that the details of the life and death of Jesus are imperfectly reported, and that of the music of his speech only a few sweet and pregnant phrases can be distinctly recalled. The evangelists, whoever they were, were neither magicians nor creators, and their work is absolutely inexplicable, unless there survived through Christianity's golden age the memory of a strong and beautiful and adorable manhood which made beholders, when they saw and heard him, think of eternal love and life and truth. To the neo-Christian the value of a spiritual vision, or of an inspiring tradition, or a combination of both, depends more upon its suggestiveness than

The New  
Testament  
and the  
New  
Theology.

<sup>1</sup> See *The New Theology*, by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, especially the chapter on the Incarnation of the Son of God. I expressly disclaim any intention of imputing to him more than an acknowledgment that the New Testament history is fallible, and, as regards some important events, probably erroneous. See particularly pp. 101-4 in the above-mentioned work.

on its correspondence with material fact. He is not, therefore, robbed of his gospel by the victory of German learning and research over old-fashioned Anglicanism. He had long ceased to look for salvation through any *opus operatum* of supernatural beings. He is assured of that if he is loyal to the laws of evolution by which the eternal All works out the human ideal. But he is quickened in hope and faith and practice by every concentration of moral truth in an inspiring vision. And that vision of the "Son of Man" which shines, though so pathetically marred, through the pages of the New Testament like some noble but ill-kept work of genius in an ancient cathedral window, is with him always, and will be when the last fibre of dogma has been dissolved away.

This digression may be pardoned if only because of a desire to show that this Essay has not been prompted by any alienation of sympathy from the spirit of the New Testament. I believe that the book will always be a source of inspiration to mankind, and that the prime origin of that inspiration lay in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth. I am aware that only a small minority of religious people, as yet, are able to acquiesce in so entire a surrender of evangelical theory as that to which the learned doctors above referred to have seen their way. But, at any rate, it is notorious that the conventional view of the Bible as an infallible or absolutely authoritative book is now confined to ceremonial services, hypocritical social intercourse, and adherents of the great Smith compromise. How much we lose by this discord between appearance and reality will only be apparent to future generations. We talk piously about the Prince of Peace, and we glorify war. We prattle about Darwin's ideas of evolution, and we wax emotional over a great statesman's tribute to the "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." We look wise when scientific lecturers explain to us the uniformity of natural law; but when the Church thinks the season too dry it prays for a miraculous gift of rain, and when it thinks we are getting too much of that it prays for a stoppage of the gift. We read with eagerness of discoveries that carry back the arts and triumphs of civilisation at least seven millenniums before the Christian era, and then pretend to acquiesce in prayers and sermons that imply a four or five thousand year period for the whole "plan of salvation." Between our pious pretences and our real convictions there is a discontinuity which cuts off practical life from the real sources of inspiration still open in unwrested truth and the facts of the world's order. And, meantime, to ensure the reign of hypocrisy in the coming age, we compel our teachers every day to instruct the rising generation in beliefs which we no longer hold ourselves.



## INDEX

---

ABRAHAM, "life of," 28, 29, 31  
 Act of 1902, its significance, i, and failure, 59  
 Administrative nihilism, reaction against, 16  
 All the winners! 44  
 Ananias, 69  
 Anti-Corn-Law League, lesson from, 58  
 Archbishop's, an, veto on education, 57  
 Athanasian Creed, Rev. R. J. Campbell on, ix  
 Atheism, 9 *n.*  
 Australia, 56, 59

BALAAH's ass, schoolmaster on, 24  
 Balfour, Right Hon. A. J., 39, 58  
 Bank-holidays and moral training, 44, 45 *n.*  
 Belief of to-day the unbelief of the past, 51  
 Bezaleel, 71  
 Bible, as a "classic," vii, 44  
 — as a fetish, 44, 49  
 — and birch, 44  
 — degradation by insincere use, 17, 42  
 — history necessarily, in State schools, taught as fact, 40  
 — its true value, 17, 68, 75  
 — more difficult to use in State schools than in voluntary, 48  
 — not imposed now by statute, 65  
 — rate, case against, 21  
 — see Simple  
 — valued not for mere truth, but for supernatural sanction, 49  
 — word of God, how far considered so now, viii, 68  
 Bigotry of "undenominationalists," 54  
 Birrell, the Right Hon. A., his Education Bill, v, vi  
 — on the Conscience Clause, 65  
 Broad Church, intolerance of, 9

CÆSAR, things of, Nonconformists on, 33  
 Campbell, Rev. R. J., vii, viii *n.*, ix, 36, 74 *n.*  
 Canada, 56  
 Cases of conscience, ix, 5, 6, 36  
 "Categorical imperative," 53  
 Chaos of religious opinion, 73, 74  
 Church Catechism, its moral value, 53  
 Churches freer than State schools, 47-8  
 Churchmen, scholarly, Biblical criticism by, 33

Churchmen's contempt for mere morals, 53  
 — grievance a real one, xi *n.*, 60-1  
*Church Times*, the, consistency of, xi  
 Civilisation, antiquity of, 23  
 Commonwealth, meaning and rights of, 21  
 Compromise of 1871, xi, xv, 10, 24 *n.*, 41, 47, 48, 51, 54, 60, 65  
 — impossible in the future, 72  
 Concurrent endowment, when justifiable, 60  
 Conscience Clause a sham, 65, 72  
 Conscience, limit to its claims, 18  
 — no monopoly of "undenominationalists," 36  
 Conventional acquiescence stifles moral inspiration, 39, 41  
 Cowper-Temple clause, its recent interpretations, 30  
 Creation, as a school lesson, 5, 6  
 Crime, juvenile, diminution of, 45

DANIEL, Book of, 38  
*Democracy* (now *Ethical World*), letter to, 37  
 Disabilities, religious, 14  
 Dissenters, other than orthodox, 23, 42  
 Duty to my neighbour, 53

EDUCATION Bills, 1902, 1906, i  
 Education Bill, coming, i, 62, 68, 72  
*Encyclopædia Biblica*, 13, 23  
*Enfant terrible*, 40  
 Equality, see Religious  
 Ethical Societies, 16  
 Evangelical Alliance, 23  
 Evangelical Free Churches, National Council of, 24

"FALL, the," abandonment of, viii  
 — retention of in "syllabuses," ix  
 Force no remedy, 44, 73  
 Forster, Right Hon. W. E., 16  
 Free Church Catechism, 29  
 — Council, 24

GARDNER, Professor Percy, 39  
 Gehazi, 52, 69  
 Germany, false analogy of, 59 *n.*  
 Gibson, Rev. Dr. Monro, 24, 25  
 Gladstone, the late Right Hon. W. E., 59  
 Glover, T. R., on spurious religious equality, vi

# MORAL INSTRUCTION

UNDER THE

## NEW EDUCATION CODE.

---

“‘Moral Instruction’ should form an important part of every school curriculum.”—*From the Board of Education’s “Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools” (1906).*

---

### “The Children’s Book of Moral Lessons,”

by F. J. GOULD,

will be found to be of the greatest service to teachers. It is already in use in some thousands of Public Elementary Schools, and is giving the greatest satisfaction on all hands.

#### THE THREE SERIES.

First Series: “**Self-Control**” and “**Truthfulness.**” With Frontispiece by Walter Crane. 128 pp., medium 8vo, paper covers, 6d. ; cloth, 1s.

Second Series: “**Kindness**” and “**Work and Duty.**” 204 pp., cr. 8vo, cloth, 2s.

Third Series: “**The Family,**” “**People of Other Lands,**” “**History of Industry, Art, Science, and Religion.**” 203 pp., cr. 8vo, cloth, 2s.

---

By THE SAME AUTHOR.

### “The Children’s Plutarch.”

With Six Full-page Illustrations by WALTER CRANE. Cloth, 300 pp., 2s. 6d. net.

#### *Press Opinions:*

“The work has been thoroughly well done, and should be largely used in the school, and also in the home.”—*Leicester Chronicle.*

“Published with a moral aim, for the illustration of which no author could be better chosen.”—*Outlook.*

“As a gift book *The Children’s Plutarch* would be admirable. *Plutarch’s Lives* is a literary classic; as presented by Mr. Gould to the young people the work remains a classic.”—*Midland Free Press.*

“Better than any commendation of the book that I can give was the verdict of a thirteen-year-old boy to whom I gave it. He read it through at a sitting and pronounced it ‘first rate.’”—W. T. STEAD, in “*The Review of Reviews.*”

---

LONDON: WATTS & Co., 17, JOHNSON’S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.