

by only *some* of the people. Neither can the State justly force any teacher to give religious instruction contrary to the principles of the Church to which he belongs. Rev. R. J. Porter, who moved the Bible-in-schools resolution at the Presbyterian Assembly, 1912, declared, "It is entirely the fault of the Churches of New Zealand that the Bible has not been introduced into the public schools long ago. For many years the Churches had been divided on the matter, but now they were united." This is an admission that sectarian differences, not secularism, prevented the Bible being taught in the schools. Those differences have not been removed. Rev. R. J. Porter says the Churches are now united. He means *the* Churches—*our Churches*; until *our* differences were settled and *our* principles satisfied or abandoned the children must go without the Bible. For forty-three years *our* differences "banished the Bible from the schools." *We* "robbed the children of their heritage," because *we* had not found a scheme to suit *our* views. Now *we* four Churches are united in at least an official way the problem is solved. The principles of other Churches may not stand in the way as *ours* did. To use Rev. R. J. Porter's own words, the desire of other Churches to have their principles satisfied is "an exasperating thing," "a little political consideration that would come in to attract attention."

That the secular system was not set up in 1877 in any spirit of antagonism or even of indifference to religion may be seen by reviewing the names of the men who framed the Act of 1877. They had all been brought up and taught under the religious-instruction-in-schools system, and would, if anything, be strongly prejudiced in its favour. They were not secularists. They saw the inevitable need of a truly national system was that *nothing* of a sectarian nature should be introduced into the State schools. They knew that the State could teach arithmetic, writing, geography, drawing, &c., in a way that could be utilized by children of all classes without any distinctions of creed or denomination. They knew that the State could not so give even the simplest form of religious instruction, and therefore justly decided that no religious instruction of any kind could be undertaken with justice to all. Surely this is the very opposite of a secularist attitude! It is the highest form of regard for religious equality and justice. Yet our system, thus freed by necessity from sectarian distinctions, is called "Godless, atheistic, secularistic, materialistic, and its supporters are described as enemies of the open Bible, of the children, and of religion." It is said that we regard the Bible as a leprous thing that must be kept out of the schools at all costs; that it may be read in the gaols but not in the schools; that "dogmatic secularism is taught in the schools" (Canon Garland). The Presbyterian *Outlook* declared that the opponents of the proposed scheme were either (1) agnostics, (2) Roman Catholics, or (3) a few malcontents who find fault with anything and everything." It will thus be seen that an entirely unwarranted and unjust use has been made of the mere name "secular." The name has been distorted and supporters of the present non-sectarian system maligned simply because they oppose the policy of the Bible in State Schools League, which also stands for right of entry to give sectarian instruction in school-hours, for compulsory teaching of religion, for denial of conscience to teachers, and for religion by majority-rule."

A Practical Test.

Next it is urged against our present system that it ignores the most essential element in education—*i.e.*, religious education. This begs the question, which will be examined presently, that the only religious instruction is specific instruction given in set lessons at a particular time of the day distinct from all other instruction. Meanwhile, however, we press the point that if the above charge be true, then, with such an essential factor missing, the education of our children must suffer throughout. The child's nature is a complete whole. It cannot be cut into sections. The child cannot be one kind of being at one time and another at another. A radical defect in the child's training will show throughout. Therefore, if the most essential part of the child's nature is neglected or wrongly provided for, his education will show defects throughout. Now, can those who declare that our system has so serious a defect show that, even in a slight degree, the general education of our children does not compare more than favourably with that of any country of equal resources and state of development? If they cannot they must confess that this essential element is at present in some adequate way supplied to our children either in the schools or out of them.

As stated above, the charge really supposes that only specific, direct, set religious instruction will meet the needs of the child's moral nature. This is another form of the charge that there is no moral instruction given in our schools, or that it is insufficient, or that it is on a wrong basis. Now, we reply that the necessary character element is given in our schools, and it is as closely related to religion and the Bible as the State can justly make it. The children receive their moral training through their teachers, who are men and women of high moral character, and as a general rule Christian men and women. They train the children in the most powerful way by their personal influence as well as by direct moral teaching. This goes on all day and every day, and the influence and teaching are derived from Christian ideals and principles which the teachers themselves have assimilated. This is in accord with the soundest educational principles, based on a true appreciation of child nature and development; principles which would be absolutely negated by the kind of religious instruction proposed in the Bill before the Committee. This will be proved later.

The greatest emphasis is now laid on oral teaching as distinguished from text-book teaching, and especially from mechanical text-book teaching. The teacher must assimilate a wide range of matter, take a much wider survey of the subject, know the underlying principles and the scientific explanation and basis of what he teaches. But he does not lay all this before his class. The teacher becomes the living book, far more powerful than any printed book. The more abstruse the basis of what he has to teach the more necessary is this kind of teaching. Nowhere is it more necessary than in character-training. The teacher is always training character, using