

SECULARIZED EDUCATION¹

Who is the agent entitled to control education? What is right education? These questions are interdependent. Two answers have been proposed to the first in history: The State, the Church. In Europe, Liberalism says the State, and insists on secularizing education, by which it means its release from the control of popery. Liberals see clearly that, under that control, there will be no true freedom. But, as they also insist on secularizing the State, their idea of a free education is of one devoid of religion, separating the mental from the spiritual culture. Thus they conclude that education must be Godless, in order to be free. Rome has herself to blame for this error, as for most of European scepticism. She claims that she alone is Christian: independent minds reply, "Then Christianity is evil." So if her education were the only Christian, freemen would have to reject Christian education. If private judgment is sin; if the hierarchy is the Church; if the teacher is a real priest and essential "proxy" between men and salvation; if his teaching is infallible; if the real end of the culture is to enslave the soul to a priesthood with a foreign head; if that head is absolutely superior to the secular sovereignty, such ecclesiastical education will be civil slavery. It is not strange that men seeking civil liberty spurn it.

The mistake is in confounding ecclesiastical with Christian education. Let the Scripture be heard: "The kingdom of God is within you," consisting, not in a greedy hierarchy, but in the rule of Truth; the clergy are not lords over God's heritage, but only "ministers by whom we believe"; it has no penalties but the spiritual, reaching no man's civil rights; its only other function is didactic, and its teaching only binds so far as the layman's own conscience responds; it is the Church's duty to instruct parents how God would have them rear their children, and enforce the duty by spiritual sanctions; but there its official power ends. It does not usurp the doing of the important task it inculcates. As a Christian private man the minister lends other parents his knowledge and virtues to co-operate in their work. But all this implies no danger either to spiritual or religious liberty.

But it will be well for the modern Liberal to pause and ask whether he secures anything by this transfer of the educating function from Church to State? Does he point to the results of Jesuit teaching, spurious, shallow scholarship, an enslaved and morbid conscience, which dares not even wish to break its fetters, the insatiable greed of the hierarchy for influence and money, the hateful perversion of the sacred task to inspire falsehood and prejudice for this end? The picture is sufficiently repulsive. But are only ecclesiastics grasping? Is human nature depraved? Is it essentially the same in all men? Then why are they not to be expected to act in similar ways, when subjected to the same temptations? And the modern Liberal is the last man to overlook this

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truth; since he is sceptical of all professions of spiritual principles in clergymen, and prone to ascribe secular motives. He should, then, expect the demagogue to show a misguided ambition exactly like the priests. What is the hierarch but a ghostly demagogue? The demagogue is but the hierarch of Mammon's altar. Does he not, for instance, pervert that other educating agency, the press, just as violently as the Jesuit the school? Now, let him become ruler in the State and the State become educator; and there is just the same risk that the education of youth will be perverted to subserve a faction, and that, by the hateful means of imbuing their minds with error and passion in place of truth and right. The result is despotism of a party instead of a pope. One may be as bad as the other.

But if the State is the educator, in America, at least, education must be secularized totally. In theory our State is *the institute for realizing secular justice*. It has absolutely severed itself from all religious equally; has pledged itself that no man's civil rights shall be modified or equality diminished by any religion or the lack of any; and has forbidden the establishment of any religion by law, and the imposition of any burden for a religions pretext on any, But the State school teacher is her official, and teaches by her authority. All school-officials derive their authority from State laws, hence all their functions are as truly State actions as those of the sheriff in hanging, or the judge in sentencing a murderer. Especially is the school fund, raised by taxation, the common and equal property of the people.

But as our people are divided among many religions, that money ought no more to be used in schools to teach one religion in preference to the others, than in a church establishment. Once the people of a small State, like Connecticut, were so homogeneous, that any dissentient minority was minute, and the dominant religion was taught "on State account," without any protest loud enough to be inconvenient. But the mixture of our people, and especially the strength and audacity of popery, now makes all this different. Papists make an effective issue, arguing that the State must not use the people's money to teach King James's version, which they, a part of the people, believe heretical. Zealous Protestants, usually zealous State school men, try to flout this plea. But would they assent to the State's teaching their children, with their money, the version which says: "Except ye *do penance* ye shall all likewise perish?" They exclaim: "That is an erroneous version, while King James's is faithful." Theologically that is doubtless true. But the very point of the State's covenant with the people is, that *the State shall not judge, either way, of that proposition*. It has been bargained that, in the State *arena*, we shall respect papists' religious views, precisely as we require them to respect ours. Suppose them, some day, in as large a majority in some State as Protestants are in New England, would we acquiesce in their forcing the study of the *Douay version* in State schools? So, unless we admit that our might makes our right, we ought not to inflict the parallel wrongs on the Jews. Mohammedans, Atheists, and Buddhists among us, because they are still few.

It is sought to parry this conclusion thus: While all religions are equal, and no one established, the State is not an atheistic institute, but must ground itself in the will of God, which is the standard of all rights. That the State is an ethical institute and for ethical ends. That hence it enjoins the Sabbath, punishes blasphemy, etc. That equally the State, while not establishing one religion to the prejudice of others, ought to teach the divine truths common to all, by the

unsectarian use of the Bible. But, whether this be the just basis of a commonwealth or not, our *States do not avow it*. And second, the question is not of the original Scripture in common schools, but of some one version, among other competing ones, which even Protestants do not claim to be infallible. Hence the question, Which version? raises sectarian issues. Third, we do not believe, any more than these reasoners, that the State can be atheistic, because it is an ethical institute, and the divine will is the only valid ethical rule. But the State finds the theistic basis in natural theology. The proof is, that pagan States, resting only on natural theism, were valid, and rightfully ([Rom. 13:5](#)) possessed the allegiance even of Christians. The evasion therefore is futile.

But be the logic of this question what it may, the actual result is certain. The papists will inevitably carry the point, as they have already done in many places. That they will triumph everywhere else that they care to try, is plain from the growing timidity of the Bible advocates, the poverty of the compromises they offer, and the spreading indifference of the masses to the value of biblical teaching. In fact, on American premises, the Bible advocates have no plea but a pious predilection, and sooner or later logical considerations, when so clear, must assert their force. The difficulty of the problem appears thus: That it agitates other free governments than ours, as the British and Holland, at this day.

For the solution there are, on the theory of State education, four suggestions. The first is the unjust one of forcing the religion of the majority on the minority. The second is what is called in Great Britain the plan of “concurrent endowments.” Each denomination may have its own schools endowed by the State, and teach its own religion in it along with secular learning. This is virtually the plan by which New York papists have been partially appeased. It is justly rejected by Protestants everywhere. First, because it offers no solution save where the several denominations are populous enough to sustain a school for each in the same vicinage. Second, because the State has no right thus virtually to assert the co-ordinate and equal value of opposing creeds, the truth of one of which may imply the positive falsehood of another. Third, because the State has no right to indicate of either of the creeds that it is, or is not, true and valuable. Fourth, because Protestantism is more promotive of thrift and wealth than the erroneous creeds; whence a given number of Protestants will pay more school-tax than the same number of errorists, so that this plan uses a part of their money to foster creeds they conscientiously believe mischievous. Fifth, it gives to error a pecuniary and moral support beyond what it would receive from the spontaneous zeal of its votaries. And last, it disunites the population by training youth in hostile religious camps. Irish and American papists have professed to approve because they gain by the plan. But who dreams that if they were in the majority they would be willing to see “good Catholic money” expended in teaching Protestant heresy?

The third plan proposes to give “unsectarian” religious instruction in the first hour of the day, while parents who dissent from it are allowed to detain their children from school until that hour is passed. This amounts to the State’s establishing a religion and using the people’s money to teach it, but *permitting dissent* without any other penalty than the taxation for a religious object which the taxpayer condemns. That is to say, it places the matter where England places her established religion, since the “Toleration Act” of William and Mary relieved dissenters of penal

pains for absence from the Anglican churches. But the thing Americans claim is *liberty* and not *toleration*. They deny the State's right to select a religion, as the true and useful one, for anybody, willing or unwilling. Those who dissent from the selected religion deny that the State may thus expend the people's money as a bait to careless or erroneous parents to submit their children to the inculcation of error.

The only other alternative is to secularize the State's teaching absolutely, limiting it to matters merely secular, and leaving parents or the Church to supplement it with such religious teaching as they may please, or none. Some Christians, driven by the difficulty which has been disclosed, adopt this conclusion. The largest number, notwithstanding the difficulty, reject it with energy. Let us see whether this plan is either *possible* or *admissible*.

This is really the vital question. It cannot be discussed until we agree what education is, and disperse deceptive misconceptions of it. It is properly the whole man or person that is educated; but the main subject of the work is the spirit. Education is the nurture and development of the whole man for his proper end. The end must be conceived aright in order to understand the process. Even man's earthly end is predominantly moral. Now, if dexterity in any art, as in the handling of printer's type, a musket, a burin, a power-loom, were education, its secularization might be both possible and proper. Is not a confusion here the source of most of the argument in defense of that theory? For instance, "Why may not the State teach reading and writing without any religious adjuncts, as legitimately as the mechanic thus teaches his apprentices filing, planing, or hammering?" Because dexterity in an art is not education. The latter nurtures a soul, the other only drills a sense-organ or muscle; the one has a mechanical end, the other a moral. And this answer cannot be met by saying, "Let it then be agreed that the State is only teaching an art, a dexterity—that, for instance, of letters." For the State refuses to be understood thus: it claims *to educate*; as is witnessed by the universal argument of the advocates of this State function, that she has the right and duty of providing that the young citizens shall be competent to their responsibility as citizens. But these are ethical. Again, if the State professed to bestow, not an education, but a dexterity, equity would require her bestowing not only the arts of letters, but all other useful arts. For only the minority can ever live by literary arts; the great majority of children have equal rights to be taught the other bread-winning arts. Thus government would become the wildest communism. No, the State cannot adopt this evasion; unless she says that she *educates*, she can say nothing.

It should also be remarked here that the arts of reading and writing are rather means of education than education itself, and not the only nor the most effective means. As Macaulay showed, against Dr. S. Johnson, the unlettered part of the Athenians were, in some respects, highly educated, while we see many minds, with these arts, really undeveloped.

But is a really secularized education either possible or admissible?

First, No people of any age, religion, or civilization, before ours, has ever thought so. Against the present attempt, right or wrong, stands the whole common sense of mankind. Pagan, Papist, Mohammedan, Greek, Protestant, have all hitherto rejected any other education than one grounded in religion, as absurd and wicked. Let Mr. Webster be heard against the Girard will,

which enjoined, in order to exclude Christianity from his college, that no minister should ever enter its walls. The argument against the will here was, that the trust it proposed to create was, in this, so opposed to all civilized jurisprudence, as to make it outside the law, and so void. So formidable did the point seem to lawyers, that Mr. Horace Binney, of the defense, went to England to ransack the British laws of trusts. It was in urging this point that Mr. Webster uttered the memorable words:

“In what age, by what sect, where, when, by whom, has religious truth been excluded from the education of youth? Nowhere. Never! Everywhere, and at all times, it has been regarded as essential. *It is of the essence, the vitality of useful instruction.*” And this was not the assertion of Mr. Webster, the politician, but of the learned lawyer, face to face with able opponents, and making one of the most responsible forensic efforts of his life. He knew that he was uttering the weighty voice of history and jurisprudence.

Let another witness be heard, of equal learning and superior character.* “It must be acknowledged to be one of the most remarkable phenomena of our perverted humanity, that among a Christian people, and in a Protestant land, such a discussion” (whether the education of youth may not be secularized) “should not seem as absurd as to inquire whether school rooms should be located under water or in darksome caverns! The Jew, the Mohammedan, the follower of Confucius, and of Brahma, each and all are careful to instruct the youth of their people in the tenets of the religions they profess, and are not content until, by direct and reiterated teaching, they have been made acquainted with at least the outline of the books which contain, as they believe, the revealed will of Deity. Whence comes it that Christians are so indifferent to a duty so obvious, and so obviously recognized by Jew and Pagan?”

We are attempting then an absolute novelty. But may not the tree be already known by its fruits? State education among Americans tends to be entirely secularized. What is the result? Whence this general revolt from the Christian faith in this country, so full of churches, preachers, and a redundant Christian literature, so boastful of its Sabbaths and its evangelism? What has prepared so many for the dreary absurdities of materialism? Why do the journals which seek a national circulation think it their interest to affect irreligion? Why so many lamentations over public and popular corruptions? He who notes the current of opinion sees that the wisest are full of misgivings as to the fruits of present methods. As a specimen, let these words, from the Governor of Massachusetts, at a recent anniversary, be taken: “He” (Gov. Rice) “lifted up a warning voice, with respect to the inadequacy and perils of our modern system of one-sided education, which supposed it could develop manhood and good citizenship out of mere brain culture.”

Second, True education is, in a sense, a spiritual process, the nurture of a soul. By spiritual, the divines mean the acts and states produced by the Holy Ghost, as distinguished from the merely ethical. The nurture of these is not human education, but sanctification. Yet education is the nurture of a spirit which is rational and moral, in which conscience is the regulative and

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imperative faculty; whose proper end, even in this world, is moral. But God is the only Lord of the conscience; this soul is his miniature likeness; his will is the source of obligation to it; likeness to him is its perfection, and religion is the science of the soul's relations to God. Let these statements be placed together, and the theological and educational processes appear so cognate that they cannot be separated. Hence it is that the common sense of mankind has ever invoked the guidance of the minister of religion for the education of youth; in India the Brahmin, in Turkey the Imam, in Jewry the Rabbi, and in Christian lands the pastor. So, everywhere, the sacred books have always been the prime text-books. The only exception in the world is that which Rome has made for herself by her intolerable abuse of her powers. Does the secularist answer that this sacerdotal education results in a Boeotian character and puerile culture? Yes, where the sacred books are false Scriptures, but not where it is the Bible which is the textbook. So that these instances prove that the common sense of mankind has been at bottom correct, and has only been abused, in some instances, by imposture.

The soul is a spiritual monad, an indivisible, spiritual unit, without parts, as without extension. Those powers, which we name as separate faculties, are only modes of function with which this unit is qualified, differentiated by the distinctions of the objects on which they operate. The central power is still one. From these truths it would appear that it cannot be successfully cultivated by patches. We cannot have the intellectual workman polish it at one place, and the spiritual at another. A succession of objects may be presented to the soul, to evoke and discipline its several powers; yet the unity of the being would seem to necessitate a unity in its successful culture.

It is the Christian ideas which are most stimulating and ennobling to the soul. He who must needs omit them from his teaching is robbed of the right arm of his strength. Where shall he get such a definition of virtue as is presented in the revealed character of God? Where so ennobling a picture of benevolence as that presented in Christ's sacrifice for his enemies? Can the conception of the inter-stellar spaces so expand the mind as the thought of an infinite God, an eternal existence, and an everlasting destiny?

Every line of true knowledge must find its completeness in its convergency to God, even as every beam of daylight leads the eye to the sun. If religion be excluded from our study, every process of thought will be arrested before it reaches its proper goal. The structure of thought must remain a truncated cone, with its proper apex lacking. Richard Baxter has nervously expressed this truth.*

Third, If secular education is to be made consistently and honestly non-Christian, then all its more important branches must be omitted, or they must submit to a mutilation and falsification, far worse than absolute omission. It is hard to conceive how a teacher is to keep his covenant faithfully with the State so to teach history, cosmogony, psychology, ethics, the laws of nations, as to insinuate nothing favorable or unfavorable touching the preferred beliefs of either the evangelical Christians, Papists, Socinians, Deists, Pantheists, Materialists, or Fetisch

* "Reformed Pastor" pp. [94](#). [96](#).

worshippers, who claim equal rights under American institutions. His paedagogics must indeed be “the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet omitted.” Shall the secular education leave the young citizen totally ignorant of his own ancestry? But how shall he learn the story of those struggles, through which Englishmen achieved those liberties which the colonies inherited, without understanding the fiery persecutions of the Protestants under “Bloody Mary,” over which the Pope’s own Legate, Cardinal Pole, was sent to preside? How shall the sons of Huguenot sires in New York, Virginia, or Carolina know for what their fathers forsook beautiful France, to hide themselves in the Northern snows or the malarious woods of the South, and read nothing of the violation of the “Edict of Nantes,” the “Dragonnades,” and the wholesale assassination of St. Bartholomew’s day, in honor of which an “infallible” predecessor of the Pope sang *Te Deums* and struck medals? Or, if the physicist attempt to ascend farther in man’s history, can he give the genesis of earth and man, without intimating whether Moses or Huxley is his prophet? Or can the science of moral obligation be established in impartial oversight of God’s relation to it, and of the question whether or not his will defines and grounds all human duty? Or can a Grotius or a Vattel settle the rights of nature and nations without either affirming along with the Apostles that “God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation,” or else denying it with the infidel ethnologist? How much of the noblest literature must be ostracized, if this plan is to be honestly carried out? The State teacher must not mention to his pupil Shakespeare, nor Bacon, nor Milton, nor Macaulay. The *Index Expurgatorius* of free democracy will be far more stringent than that of despotic Rome! But it is not necessary to multiply these instances. They show that Christian truths and facts are so woven into the very warp and woof of the knowledge of Americans, and constitute so beneficial and essential a part of our civilization, that the secular teacher, who impartially avoids either the affirmation or denial of them, must reduce his teaching to the bare giving of those scanty rudiments, which are, as we have seen, not knowledge, but the mere signs of knowledge.

Does some one say that practically this showing is exaggerated, for he is teaching some purely secular course, without any such maiming of his subjects or prejudicing of Christianity? If his teaching is more than a temporary dealing with some corner of education, the fact will be found to be that it is tacitly anti-Christian; overt assaults are not made; but there is a studied avoidance which is in effect hostile. There can be no neutral position between two extremes, where there is no middle ground, but “a great gulf fixed.”

Fourth, Of all rightful human action the will is the executive and the conscience the directive faculty. Unless these be purified and enlightened, to enhance the vigor of the soul’s other actions by training is but superfluous mischief. If in a ship the compass be lost and the pilot blind, it is better that there should not be a great force to move her machinery. The more energetic its motion, the greater is the likelihood the ship will speedily be upon the breakers. Surely this is sufficient to show to the reflecting mind that right moral inculcation cannot be separated at any point or for any time from the intellectual, without mischief.

One very obvious and yet not the weightiest application of this truth is to the discipline of the school itself. No training of any faculty takes place without some government. On what moral

basis shall the teacher who wholly suppresses all appeal to religion rest that authority which he must exercise in the school-room? He will find it necessary to say to the pupil, "Be diligent. Be obedient. Lie not. Defraud not," in order that he may learn his secular knowledge. But on whose authority? There is but one ground of moral obligation, the will of God, and among the people of this country he who does not find the disclosure of that will in the Scriptures, most often finds it nowhere. But this teacher must not inculcate this Bible. Then his mere might must make his right, or else the might of the parent, or of the magistrate, to whose delegated authority he points back. Or his appeal may be to mere self-interest!

Will this government be wholesome for a youth's soul?

But from a pupil the youth becomes a citizen. He passes under wider and more complex obligations. The end of the State schooling is to fit him for this. The same question recurs, with transcendent moment, On what basis of right shall these duties rest? As a man, it is presumable he will act as he was taught while a boy. Of course then the grounds of obligation employed with him in school should be the ones he is to recognize in adult life. In the State school a non-Christian standard alone could be given him. He cannot be expected now to rise to any better; he may sink to a lower, seeing the ground then given him had no foundation under it.

That is to say, young Americans are to assume their responsibilities with pagan morals, for these are just what human reason attains from the non-Christian standard. Will this suffice to sustain American institutions? One may say: Natural theism may deduce quite a high ethical code, as witness the Greek philosophy. So could a man who rightly construed the *data* of his consciousness be an atheist; even the atheist might find in them proof that conscience ought to govern. But he does not, nor does the pagan reason *act* as Epictetus *speculated*. Let us begin to legislate for the people *as they ought to be*, and we shall have a fine card-castle. In fact, Americans, taken as we find them, who do not get their moral restraints from the Bible, have none. If, in our moral training of the young, we let go the "Thus saith the Lord," we shall have no hold left. The training which does not base duty on Christianity is, for us, practically immoral. If testimony to this truth is needed, let the venerable Dr. Griffin, of a former generation, be heard. "To educate the mind of a bad man without correcting his morals is to put a sword into the hands of a maniac." Let John Locke be heard. "It is virtue, then, direct virtue, which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education." * * * * * "If virtue and a well-tempered soul be not got and settled so as to keep out ill and vicious habits, languages and science, and all the other accomplishments of education, will be to no purpose but to make the worse or more dangerous man." Let Dr. Francis Wayland be heard. "Intellectual cultivation may easily exist without the existence of virtue or love of right. In this case its only effect is to stimulate desire; and this, unrestrained by the love of right, must eventually overturn the social fabric which it at first erected." Last, let Washington be heard, in his farewell address, where he teaches that the virtue of the citizens is the only basis for social safety, and that the Christian religion is the only adequate basis for that virtue.

But, is not mental culture *per se* elevating? It is hard for us to give up this flattery, because hitherto education has been more or less Christian. The minister has been the American school-master. But are not the educated the more elevated? Yes. For the reason just given, and for

another; not that their mental culture made them seek higher morals, but their (and their parents') higher morals made them seek mental culture! We are prone to put the cart before the horse. Again I cite evidence. James Anthony Froude, a witness by no means friendly to orthodoxy, quoting Miss Florence Nightingale, emphatically endorses her opinion, that the ordinary, as the natural effect of the mere communication of secular knowledge to youths, is only to suggest the desire for more numerous, and, for the bulk of men whose destiny is inevitably narrow, illicit objects of desire. But they plead: In teaching the youth to know of more objects of desire you also teach him to know more restraining considerations. The fatal answer is that knowledge does not rule the heart, but conscience (if anything does); mere knowledge, without God's fear, makes desire grow faster than discretion. Says Sir Henry Bulwer: "I do not place much confidence in the philosopher who pretends that the knowledge which develops the passions is an instrument for their suppression, or that where there are the most desires there is likely to be the most order, and the most abstinence in their gratification." Again, the soul should grow symmetrically. Let the boughs of a tree grow, while the roots (without actual disease) stand still; the first gale would blow it over, because of the disproportion of its parts.

Fifth, We need the best men to teach our children. The best are true Christians, who carry their religion into everything. Such men neither can nor will bind themselves to hold so influential a relation to precious souls for whom Christ died, and make no effort to save them. So the tendency must be towards throwing State schools into the hands of half-hearted Christians or of contemptuous unbelievers. Can such be even trusted with an important secular task? Railroads persist in breaking the Sabbath; so they must be served on the track exclusively by profane Sabbath-breakers or truckling professors of religion. The consequence is, they are scourged with negligent officials, drunken engineers, and defaulting cashiers. So the State will fall into the hands of teachers who will not even teach secular learning honestly; money will be wasted, and the schools will become corrupting examples to their own pupils of slighted work and abused trusts.

Sixth, To every Christian citizen, the most conclusive argument against a secularized education is contained in his own creed touching human responsibility. According to this, obligation to God covers all of every man's being and actions. Even if the act be correct in outward form, which is done without any reference to his will, he will judge it a shortcoming. "The ploughing of the wicked is sin." The intentional end to which our action is directed determines its moral complexion supremely. Second, Our Savior has declared that there is no moral neutrality: "He that is not with him is against him, and he that gathereth not with him scattereth abroad." Add now the third fact, that every man is born in a state of alienation from God; that practical enmity and atheism are the natural outgrowth of this disposition; that the only remedy for this natural disease of man's spirit is gospel truth. The comparison of these truths will make it perfectly plain that *a non-Christian training* is literally *an anti Christian training*.

This is the conclusive argument. The rejoinder is attempted; that Christians hold this theology as church members, and not as citizens; and that we have ourselves urged that the State is not an evangelical agent, and its proper business is not to convert souls from original sin. True, but neither has it a right to become an anti-evangelical agency, and resist the work of the spiritual

commonwealth. While the State does not authorize the theological beliefs of the Christian citizens, neither has it a right to war against them. While we have no right to ask the State to propagate our theology, we have a right to demand that it shall not oppose it. But to educate souls thus is to oppose it, because a non-Christian training is an anti-Christian training. It may be urged again, that this result, if evil, will not be lessened by the State's ceasing to teach at all, for then the training of youth will be, so far as she is concerned, equally non-Christian. The answer is, that it is one thing to tolerate a wrong as done by a party over whom we have not lawful control, but wholly another to perpetrate that wrong ourselves. For the State thus to do what she ought to condemn in the godless parent, though she be not authorized to interfere would be the sin of "*framing mischief by a law,*" the very trait of that "throne of iniquity" with which the Lord cannot have fellowship.

It is objected again, that if the State may govern and punish, which are moral functions, she may also teach. If we are prepared for the theocratic idea of the State, which makes it the universal human association, *To Hav* of human organisms, bound to do everything for society from mending a road or draining a marsh up to supporting a religion, then we can conclude thus. But then consistency will add to State schools a State religion, a beneficed clergy, a religious test for office, and State power wielded to suppress theological as well as social error. Again, while secular ruling and punishing are ethical functions, they are sufficiently grounded in the light of natural theism. But teaching is a spiritual function—in the sense defined—and for teaching beings fallen, and in moral ruin, natural theism is wholly inadequate, as witness the state of pagan society. Christian citizens are entitled (not by the State, but by one higher, God) to hold that the only teaching adequate for this fallen soul is *redemption*. But of this the State, as such, knows nothing. As God's institute for realizing secular justice, she does know enough of moral right to be a praise to them that do well and a terror to evil-doers.

The most plausible evasion is this: Since education is so comprehensive a work, why may there not be a "division of labor?" Let the State train the intellect and the Christian parent and the Church train the conscience and heart in the home and the house of worship. With this solution some Christians profess themselves satisfied. Of course such an arrangement would not be so bad as the neglect of the heart by both State and parent.

Points already made contain fatal answers. Since conscience is the regulative faculty of all, he who must not deal with conscience cannot deal well with any. Since the soul is a *monad*, it cannot be equipped as to different parts at different times and places, as a man might get his hat at one shop and his boots at another; it has no parts. Since all truths converge towards God, he who is not to name God, must have all his teachings fragmentary; he can only construct a truncated figure. In history, ethics, philosophy, jurisprudence, religious facts and propositions are absolutely inseparable. The necessary discipline of a school-room and secular fidelity of teachers call for religion, or we miss of them. And no person nor organism has a right to seem to say to a responsible, immortal soul, "In this large and intelligent and even ethical segment of your doings you are entitled to be godless." For this teaching State must not venture to disclaim that construction of its own proceeding to its own pupil. *That disclaimer would be a religious inculcation!*

But farther: Why do people wish the State to interfere in educating? Because she has the power, the revenues to do it better. Then, unless her intervention is to be a cheat, her secularized teaching must be some very impressive thing. Then its impression, which is to be non-Christian, according to the theory, will be too preponderant in the youth's soul, to be counterpoised by the feebler inculcation of the seventh day. The natural heart is carnal, and leans to the secular and away from the gospel truths. To the ingenuous youth, quickened by animating studies, his teacher is *Magnus Apollo*, and according to this plan he must be to his ardent young votary wholly a heathen deity. The Christian side of the luminary, if there is one, must not be revealed to the worshipper! Then how pale and cold will the infrequent ray of gospel truth appear when it falls on him upon the seventh day! In a word, to the successful pupil under an efficient teacher, *the school is his world*. Make that godless, and his life is made godless.

If it be asked again: Why may not the State save itself trouble by leaving all education to parents? The answer is. Because so many parents are too incapable or careless to be trusted with the task. Evidently, if most parents did the work well enough, the State would have no motive to meddle. Then the very *raison d'être* of the State school is in this large class of negligent parents. But man is a carnal being, alienated from godliness, whence all those who neglect their children's mental, will, *a fortiori*, neglect their spiritual, culture. Hence we must expect that, *as to the very class* which, constitutes the pretext for the State's interposition, *the fatally one-sided culture she give will remain one-sided*. She has no right to presume anything else. But, it may be asked: Is not there the church to take up this part, neglected by both secularized State and godless parent? The answer is, The State, thus secularized, cannot claim to know the Church as an ally. Besides, if the Church be found sufficiently omnipresent, willing, and efficient, through the commonwealth, to be thus relied on, why will she not inspire in parents and individual philanthropists zeal enough to care for the whole education of youth? Thus again, the whole *raison d'être* for the State's intervention would be gone. In fact the Church does not and cannot repair the mischief which her more powerful, rich, and ubiquitous rival, the secularized State, is doing in thus giving, under the guise of a non-Christian, an anti-Christian training.

It is also well known to practical men that State common schools *obstruct* parental and philanthropic effort. Thus, parents who, if not meddled with, would follow the impulse of enlightened Christian neighbors, their natural guides, in creating a private school for their children, to make it both primary and classical, now always stop at the primary. "The school tax must be paid anyhow, which is heavy, and that is all they can do." Next, children of poor parents who showed aspiration for learning found their opportunity for classical tuition near their homes, in the innumerable private schools created by parental interest and public spirit, and kindly neighborhood charity never suffered such deserving youths to be arrested for the mere lack of tuition. Now, in country places not populous enough to sustain "State High Schools," all such youths must stop at the rudiments. Thus the country loses a multitude of the most useful educated men. Next, the best men being the natural leaders of their neighbors, would draw a large part of the children of the class next them upward into the private schools created for their own families, which, for the same reason, were sure to be Christian schools. The result is, that while a larger number of children is brought into primary schools, and while the statistics of the illiterate are somewhat changed, to the great delectation of shallow philanthropists, the number

of youths well educated in branches above mere rudiments, and especially of those brought under daily Christian training, is diminished. In cities (where public opinion is chiefly manufactured) high schools may be sustained, and this evil obviated so far as secular tuition goes. But in the vast country regions, literary culture is lowered just as it is extended. It is chiefly the country which fills the useful professions—town youths go into *trade*.

The actual and consistent secularization of education is inadmissible.

But nearly all public men and divines declare that the State schools are the glory of America, that they are a finality, and in no event to be surrendered. And we have seen that their complete secularization is logically inevitable. Christians must prepare themselves then, for the following results: All prayers, catechisms, and Bibles will ultimately be driven out of the schools. But this will not satisfy Papists, who obstinately—and correctly were their religion correct—insist that education shall be Christian for their children. This power over the hopes and fears of the demagogues will secure, what Protestants cannot consistently ask for, a separate endowment out of the common funds. Rome will enjoy, relatively to Protestantism, a grand advantage in the race of propagandism; for humanity always finds out, sooner or later, that it cannot get on without a religion, and it will take a false one in preference to none. Infidelity and practical ungodliness will become increasingly prevalent among Protestant youth, and our churches will have a more arduous contest for growth if not for existence.

Perhaps American Protestants might be led, not to abandon but to revise their opinions touching education, by recalling the conditions under which the theory of State education came to be first accepted in this country. This came about in the colonies which at the same time held firmly to a union of Church and State. The Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies, for instance, honorable pioneers in State education in this country, were decidedly theoretic in their constitution. The Reformed religion was intimately interwoven. So all the Protestant States of Europe, whose successful example is cited, as Scotland and Prussia, have the Protestant as an established religion. This and State primary education have always been parts of one consistent system in the minds of their rulers in Church and State. A secularized education, such as that which is rapidly becoming the result of our State school system, would have been indignantly reprobated by the Winthrops and Mathers, the Knoxs, Melvilles, and Chalmers, and, it is presumed, by the Tholucks and even Bismarcks of those commonwealths, which are pointed to as precedents and models. It is submitted, whether it is exactly candid to quote the opinions and acts of all these great men, for what is, in fact, another thing from what they advocated? Knox, for instance, urged the primary education of every child in Scotland by the State. But it was because the State he had helped to reconstruct there was clothed with a recognized power of teaching the Reformed religion (through the allied Church), and because it was therefore able, in teaching the child to read, also to teach it the Scriptures and the Assembly's Catechism. Had Knox seen himself compelled to a severance of Church and State (which he would have denounced as wicked and paganish), and therefore to the giving by the State of a secularized education, which trained the intellect without the conscience or heart, his heroic tongue would have given no uncertain sound. Seeing then that wise and good men in adopting and successfully working this system, did so only for communities which united Church and State, and mental

and spiritual training, the question for candid consideration is: What modifications the theory should receive, when it is imported into commonwealths whose civil governments have absolutely secularized themselves and made the union of the secular and spiritual powers illegal and impossible?

The answer may, perhaps, be found by going back to a first principle hinted in the outset of this discussion. Is the direction of the education of children either a civic or an ecclesiastical function? Is it not properly a domestic and parental function? First, we read in holy writ that God ordained the family by the union of one woman to one man, in one flesh, for life, for the declared end of “seeking a godly seed.” Does not this imply that he looks to parents, in whom the family is founded, as the responsible agents of this result? He has also in the fifth Commandment connected the child proximately, not with either presbyter or magistrate, but with the parents, which, of course, confers on them the adequate and the prior authority. This argument appears again in the very order of the historical genesis of the family and State, as well as of the visible Church. The family was first. Parents at the outset were the only social heads existing. The right rearing of children by them was in order to the right creation of the other two institutes. It thus appears that naturally the parents’ authority over their children could not have come by deputation from either State or visible Church, any more than the water in a fountain by derivation from its reservoir below. Second, the dispensation of Divine Providence in the course of nature shows where the power and duty of educating are deposited. That ordering is that *the parents* decide in what *status* the child shall begin his adult career. The son inherits the fortune, the social position, the responsibility, or the ill-fame of his father. Third, God has provided for the parents social and moral influences so unique, so extensive, that no other earthly power, or all others together, can substitute them in fashioning the child’s character. The home example, armed with the venerable authority of the father and the mother, repeated amidst the constant intimacies of the fireside, seconded by filial reverence, ought to have the most potent plastic force over character. And this unique power God has guarded by an affection, the strongest, most deathless, and most unselfish, which remains in the breast of fallen man. Until the magistrate can feel a love, and be nerved by it to a self-denying care and toil, equal to that of a father and a mother, he can show no pretext for assuming any parental function.

But the best argument here is the heart’s own instinct. No parent can fail to resent, with a righteous indignation, the intrusion of any authority between his conscience and convictions and the soul of his child. If the father conscientiously believes that his own creed is true and righteous and obligatory before God, then he must intuitively regard the intrusion of any other power between him and his minor child, to cause the rejection of that creed, as a usurpation. The freedom of mind of the child alone, when become an adult, and his father’s equal, can justly interpose. If this usurpation is made by the visible church, it is felt to be in the direction of popery, if by the magistrate, in the direction of depotism.

It may be said that this theory makes the parent sovereign, during the child’s mental and moral minority, in the moulding of his opinions and character, whereas, seeing the parent is fallible, and may form his child amiss, there ought to be a superior authority to superintend and intervene. But the complete answer is, that inasmuch as the supreme authority *must be placed*

somewhere, God has indicated that, on the whole, no place is so safe for it as the hands of the parent, who has the supreme love for the child and the superior opportunity. But many parents nevertheless neglect or pervert the power? Yes, and does the State never neglect and pervert its powers? With the lessons of history to teach us the horrible and almost universal abuses of power in the hands of civil rulers, that question is conclusive. In the case of an unjust or godless State, the evil would be universal and sweeping. Doubtless God has deposited the duty in the safest place.

The competitions of the State and the Church for the educating power have been so engrossing that we have almost forgotten the parent, as the third and the rightful competitor. And now many look at his claim almost contemptuously. Because the civic and the ecclesiastical spheres are so much wider and more populous than his, they are prone to regard it as every way inferior. Have we not seen that the smaller circle is, in fact, the most original and best authorized of the three? Will any thinking man admit that he *derives his right to marry*, to be a father, from the permission of the State? Yet there is an illusion here, because civic constitutions confer on the State certain police functions, so to speak, concerning marriage and families. So there are State laws concerning certain ecclesiastical belongings. But what Protestant concedes therefrom that his religious rights were either conferred, or can be rightfully taken away, by civil authority? The truth is, that God has immediately and authoritatively instituted three organisms for man on earth, the State, the visible Church, and the Family, and these are co-ordinate in rights and mutual independence. The State or Church has no more right to invade the parental sphere than the parent to invade theirs. The right distribution of all duties and power between the three circles would be the complete solution of that problem of good government which has never yet been solved with full success. It is vital to a true theory of human rights, that the real independence of the smallest yet highest realm, that of the parent, be respected. Has it not been proved that the direction of education is one of its prerogatives?

But does not the State's right to exist imply the right to secure all the conditions of its existence? And as parents may so pervert or neglect education as to rear a generation incompetent to preserve their civil institutions, does not this give the State control over education? I answer, first, it is not even a pretext for the State's invading the parental sphere any farther than the destructive neglect exists, that is, to stimulate, or help, or compel the neglectful parents alone. Second, precisely the same argument may authorize the State to intrude into the spiritual circle and establish and teach a religion. But the sophism is here: It is assumed that a particular form of civil institutions has a prescriptive right to perpetuate itself. It has none. So the American theory teaches, in asserting for the people the inherent right to change their institutions. Did our republican fathers hold that any people have ever the right to subvert the moral order of society ordained by God and nature? Surely not. Here then is disclosed that distinction between the *moral order* and any particular *civil order*, so often overlooked, but so eloquently drawn by *Cousin*. So far is it from being true that the civil authority is entitled to shape a people to suit itself; the opposite is true, the people should shape the civil authority.

It is a maxim in political philosophy, as in mechanics, that when an organism is applied to a function for which it was not designed, it is injured and the function is ill done. Here is a farmer

who has a mill designed and well fitted to grind his meal. He resolves that it shall also thresh his sheaves. The consequence is that he has wretched threshing and a crippled mill. I repeat, God designed the State to be the organ for securing secular justice. When it turns to teaching or preaching it repeats the farmers experience. The Chinese Government and people are an example in point. The Government has been for a thousand years educating the people for its own ends. The result is what we see.

Government powerfully affects national character by the mode in which it performs its proper functions, and if the administration is equitable, pure and free, it exalts the people. But it is by the indirect influence. This is all it can do well. As for the other part of the national elevation (an object which every good man must desire), it must come from other agencies; from the dispensation of Almighty Providence; from fruitful ideas and heroic acts with which he inspires the great men whom he sovereignly gives to the nations he designs to bless; chiefly from the energy of divine Truth and the Christian virtues, first in individuals, next in families, and last in visible churches.

Let us suppose, then, that both State and Church recognize the parent as the educating power; that they assume towards him an ancillary instead of a dominating attitude; that the State shall encourage individual and voluntary efforts by holding the impartial shield of legal protection over all property which may be devoted to education; that it shall encourage all private efforts; and that in its eleemosynary character it shall aid those whose poverty and misfortunes disable them from properly rearing their own children. Thus the insoluble problems touching religion in State schools would be solved, because the State was not the responsible creator of the schools, but the parents. Our educational system might present less mechanical symmetry, but it would be more flexible, more practical, and more useful.

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