

world requires the development of intelligence, the acquisition of knowledge. Even the old doctrine of innate ideas has been rejected. He comes simply, as the witty doctor called him, a marsupial possibility, and the teacher is necessary in order that he may realize himself. That is the aim of the schoolhouse. It has to do with the things of this world. Its realm is in the known, with facts or hypotheses that are warranted by facts. It has nothing to do with fate, nothing to do with religion, nothing whatever to do with the unknown.

This work of the schoolhouse confining itself to the things of the present world brings it into direct and everlasting antagonism with the method of religion and of the church. There is not, there can never be, harmony between the institution founded on faith and the institution sworn to be loyal to facts. Their methods are essentially different; their aims and their purposes forever and forever diverge. The church needs to care little for this world, it is the other world that it is concerned about; the schoolhouse needs to care little for the other world; it is this world that concerns it. The attempt to put education under the influence or control of the religious principle or the religious idea has always and must ever fail. There can be no such thing as religion and science, there can only be the religion of science. Any garb, or robe, or gown that proclaims and proffers any religion is out of place upon a teacher. Any book that by prejudice is above the reach of criticism, investigation and examination, has no place in the school. It is to the glory of our freethinking men, it is to the everlasting renown of the founders of this government, that at the very outset they left religion to the wisdom and the folly of the individual, and said as between the church and the state there shall never be a union. The men who today wish to put God into the Constitution, and the men who today would, if they could, determine what we should and should not do one day in seven are the men that belong to the age when the church was supreme and the schoolhouse did not exist.

It may be fairly questioned whether a man who is an orthodox believer is qualified to teach school. If a man believes in the Bible, reads the story of the creation as it appears in Genesis, and swears he believes it, how can he teach a class in physical geography? If he believes the record as given in the Bible he cannot believe the textbooks of physical geography and geology. If he does not believe the record of the Bible, but says he does and acts as if he did, he carries with him and cannot escape it,

an atmosphere of duplicity and deceit, that, whenever discovered in man or women, ought to insure instant expulsion from the innocent presence of the child. In the development of mind nothing is so necessary, so important, so large in its returns, as absolute honesty, intellectual fearlessness, mental courage. There is more religion, more morality, more of the uplift, that comes from what we call the spiritual influence in the stern, open eyed, unapologetic Infidel than there is in the hesitating, halting, apologizing, half-baked orthodox believer.

My position is that in this world where we know so little, in this world where we stand yet only upon the shore of the illimitable ocean of knowledge, in this world where, as far as we know, there is everywhere and in all things absolute rectitude, and the fidelity of eternal laws that cannot be broken or suspended, or evaded in this world of ours, which we fancy to be the expression, the out-flowering of a great and universal intelligence, a man cannot find moral health unless he is downright, upright, intellectually honest. That is the first step. And that is what the school aims at. The schoolhouse is itself in the attitude of a learner. It does not represent an authority outside of itself. It can give the child nothing except what it can persuade the child is true. It has no divine authority. It does not threaten nor coerce nor repress or bully the intellect of the child. The church does all of those things. The church says we can't know anything about what is true because we are carnally minded. There is nothing for you to do but just to believe, it does not make any difference that you cannot see that it is true. Doubt is of the devil, and all such questionings, reasonings, replies, and a desire for evidence and proof are but the evidence of your lost and undone condition. "Accept what we say; we are here divinely authorized and want to make known these blessed truths that were forever beyond the attainment of human reason in order that you might not be eternally lost."

Any man that can for the sake of salvation in this or any world, believe or profess to believe what his reason scorns, why, if heaven is made up of that kind of intellectual material and mental caliber, give me hell every time. The attitude which the school teacher assumes to the child is one of equality, absolute equality. No authority, no spirit of intellectual domination. The teacher says or implies what the Bible says and the church has never found out. "Come now, let us reason together," saith the Lord. The teacher says: "Come now, let us reason together; maybe you cannot learn this thing,

maybe you can never learn the relation of the different members of the solar systems to each other, but this is the way it is demonstrated: If you cannot learn it for yourself, if you cannot see it to be true, if you cannot make the demonstration a part of your intellectual equipment and assume for yourself an original and individual relation to that problem, then you can never know it and you don't have to believe it."

As fast as work becomes drudgery, duty irksome, toil wearing, and we rebel against it, no matter what it is or in what realm our work may be, we can no longer do our best, we cannot do even passing well. The aim, then, of the schoolhouse being to adjust man's relation in this world, it follows that whatever progress mankind makes that progress will be coincident and co-extensive with the influence of the schoolhouse. So far as the world has ascertained, no revelation from beyond has helped any in the solution of problems that now are. So far as the theories of the church go they lie directly across the way of the progress of the moral and intellectual wellbeing of mankind. It has been for nineteen centuries taught that under a supernatural plan, exploited by a supernatural church, there might be a break between acts and their consequences.

After nineteen centuries of the old teaching the world has settled almost nothing. Society is yet chaotic, government is yet in the experimental stage. There are men who believe that no society upon the earth is securely established, but that there is coming a time of cataclysm, of disaster, of destruction, and of an entirely new readjustment of the elements that have been thrown into confusion. Wherever the church has been supreme, in whatever land it has held spiritual or temporal power, that time of chaos has come. Wherever it has been supreme, people have been reduced to abject servitude and helpless poverty. A man is charged for being born, charged for being christened, taxed again for being baptized; toll is levied upon him for being married, and at last for being buried, and long, long years after he is dead, in some countries, supremely religious, tax is collected from his living friends in order that as they say, the poor dead man may be assisted to swim out of purgatory. Progress has been made, but in spite of religion, not because of it. There are religious and even orthodox believers who are kindly and noble men, but they are kindly and noble not because of their faith, but in spite of it.

This work of the school will yet persuade the world that the only decent rational way to live is to live right; that ignorance is sel-

fishness; that there is no royal way by which a man can cheat another without cheating himself more; that there is no injury man can do his fellow man in ignorance and blindness or in wilful planning without that injury reacting inevitably upon himself; that the only sensible way to live in this world is to square oneself with himself and his fellows as far as he can.

I am prepared to say that the present state of society indicates the result of the teachings of the churches. They are entitled to it; we give them credit for it and hold them responsible for its failures and mistakes. For nineteen hundred years the church and society have grappled with problems as if newly sprung, and yet which have been in existence among men from the very dawn of organized society. The church would change the heart of man; but let us change his brain let us enlarge his intelligence, let us persuade him that he was born to intelligence and that morality is good sense. In this world of ours there is room for work, happiness, and well-being for every one. I will believe that nature intended that, and is grieved, if she is capable of feeling, at our ills, our pains, and our injustices; that they are all unnecessary; that they are burdens laid upon us because we have had too much religion.

—When we have spent nineteen hundred years looking to the school room, we shall have a new order of things, a new civilization, new liberties, new justice, new happiness, new well-being for all mankind. If the Infinite had been ordaining anything (and I want you to understand that I do not hold God responsible for the church, or theology, or any of the plans, devices, or ceremonies, or rites whatsoever), but if God had been ordaining anything nineteen hundred years ago, I will believe that it would not have been an altar, nor a shaven priest, nor a divinely called preacher; it would have been some kind-hearted man or woman with a book, and a large patience and a generous love for the race, who should have gone out to persuade men, not of the efficacy of Christ's blood, but of the saving power of intelligence. When we shall have had nineteen hundred years of the school-house, what may not be? I believe in the coming of the time when every schoolhouse shall be a temple, and every priest a teacher, knowledge the way of salvation, and reason the only guide.—[Truth Seeker,

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