

space. Will the reader please re-read that quotation carefully. Is there any evidence in it of the truth or falsity of the nebular hypothesis? Not a scintilla. We used to gaze at the "Milky Way," and thought that it consisted in a lot of nebulous unborn worlds in process of gestation. Later, it was demonstrated to be composed of myriads of distant stars. That pictures have now been made of "wonderful clouds of faintly glowing gasses, vast spirals, immense gulfs of blackness surrounded by luminous walls and the like, indicates that the new telescope has got into another "Milky Way." When more effective instruments have been devised, this "Milky Way" will doubtless be converted into Edam Cheeses, or, rather into a multitude of spherical bodies, rotating in space, just like the rest of them. This universe is pretty old. There is no material for enlarging it. Even the repairs continually going on, have to be made by a readaptation of the old stuff. There is no planet building going on, that we know of. There never was.

It is a good deal easier to get up a hypothesis than it is to prove its truth. When it was found that the hypothesis of Moses, that divine scientist, concerning the creation of the earth and "the stars also," could not be confirmed by the affidavits of eye witnesses, it was thought desirable to account for the creation in some other way. This was very natural. A hundred years ago Laplace, a great French astronomer of that time, projected the cosmic scheme known as the nebular hypothesis. He beat Moses most decidedly, for there are many things in nature which seem to conform to its truth. It should be remembered, however, that just one demonstration directly antagonizing a hypothesis, completely upsets and destroys it. A considerable number of such have already been produced, as is completely shown in my pamphlet, "The Earth not Created."

It is known to scholars that the atmosphere of the earth, for many miles in altitude, is filled with atomic and chemical representatives of every element of which the earth is composed. No doubt the atmosphere of the sun and other celestial bodies is in like manner laden. When the solar spectro-scope is brought forth, to determine the elements of these distant bodies, the lines produced are simply indicative of the atoms floating in the atmosphere of the earth. No two products are just alike, but there is a general resemblance between them all. It is just possible that the atomic ingredients of the distant atmospheres may produce the same effect also. But as the whole has to pass through our atmosphere this must necessarily be the controlling element, influencing the

spectral lines. Light and heat do not proceed from distant bodies, through absolute cold and darkness for millions of miles, and reappear here as heat and light again, nor are the electric currents proceeding from those bodies to us, laden with atomic dust or any thing else. They are not freight carriers.

The electric theory of heat and light is now pretty well established in the minds of many modern scientists and the theory of Laplace necessarily overthrown. But it dies hard. Scientists have their creeds and dogmas, as well as the churches. Some of them are very reluctant to question anything found in "the books." Though science is infallible, the scientists are not.

I have written this brief article because Brother Wakeman, of the Torch of Reason, has been wrestling with the subject, and though apparently concurring with my conclusions, wants to hear from me concerning the recent cloud pictures of the Lick reflecting telescope. So I have thus briefly spoken.

[From "The Earth not Born of the Sun," Nov. Free Thought Mag.]

The Bible in the Public Schools.

[From the Catholic Sentinel, of Portland, of Dec. 6.]

The unjust and illogical decision of Attorney General Blackburn, in which he upholds the reading of the Bible in the public schools, is most severely condemned. An editorial on this subject from the Oregonian of last week will repay careful reading, as it covers the ground from a non-Catholic standpoint.

Several months ago some Catholic children refused to be present when the Bible was read during class hours at a public school in Piermont, N. Y., whereupon they were expelled, until State Superintendent of Education Skinner decided that such reading was a religious exercise and therefore not permissible in the public schools.

Almost at the same time the State Superintendent of Education for Ohio was making a similar decision to meet the case of the public school at Fulda, whose parents are all Roman Catholics. By the advice of the Attorney General of Ohio, to read the Bible in the public schools is an unlawful diversion of the public school funds of the State and should be prohibited! How can Blackburn reconcile his puerile attempt at argument with this eminent jurist of Ohio?

A like decision was given in Harrisburg, Pa., and excepting in the preacher-ridden schools of Oregon, we have the universal admission of our State authorities that Bible reading or any religious exercise can have no place in the education given in the public or common schools. It seems very inconsistent on the part of bigots like Blackburn

to contend for the reading of the Bible in our "free" schools so-called, now that their ministers generally are disputing so much about its authority and value as an inspired or revealed rule of faith. How shall they explain to pious minds all the human errors, perversions, and contradictions which the critics,—and what protestant, by right of private judgment is not a critic,—choose to find in it? Nor have they any substitute on which they can agree among themselves, even the civic, unsectarian or undogmatic lesson in morality.

It is conceded by Free Religionists, by the ablest of the secular press, by many representative ministers of the Evangelical churches, and by large numbers of the people, that, to tax Catholics, Jews and Infidels, for schools in which the Bible is read and religious exercises are held, is a wrong, an act of injustice, a form of tyranny. So understanding the case, the cities of Troy, Rochester, Cincinnati, New York, and Chicago, have forbidden religious exercises of any description in their common schools. Mr. Beecher declared years ago: "It is not right or fair to tax Catholics or Jews for the support of schools in which the Bible is read." His congregation applauded the saying. If it is not right, it is wrong, and Catholics who are thus taxed are, to the extent of the taxes they pay, punished—persecuted for religion's sake.

Parental rights precede State rights. The child belongs to its parents and not to the State. The doctrine coming into vogue, that the child belongs to the State, is the dressing up of an old skeleton of spartan paganism, with its hideousness disguised by a thin cloaking of Christian morality. The rights of parents are strongly and clearly defined by Judge Ellis Lewis, in Commonwealth v. Armstrong, Lycoming County, Pa., August session, 1842. In this opinion Judge Lewis says: "It is the undoubted right of the father to designate such teachers either in morals, religion, or literature, as he shall deem best calculated to give correct instruction to his child. He is, by the law of God, exempt from interference both from individuals and from society."

We do not insist enough on the rights of parents to control the education of their children and to resist the efforts of the State, or rather of politicians like Blackburn who manipulate the resources of the State to wrest from them this control.

We are amazed by the ignorance of the Attorney General of the State of Oregon when he states that all religions accept the Bible as the sole rule of faith. The Catholic Church says that the Bible is the word of God, but that God has appointed

an authority to give us its true meaning. It is not necessary to explain the reasons upon which this dogma is grounded. The Jews do not accept the New Testament. Hence the argument of Blackburn is not admissible. The Bible, moreover, is the product of the Church. It was written by different men at different periods of time and in different languages; and as history shows was not compiled until the Church had been in existence about three hundred years. In the early ages of the Church, Christians got their faith precisely as we get it today, from the authoritative teaching of the Bishops and priests of the Church.

The real reason for the exclusion of Biblical selections from the curriculum of the public schools is that in a school system which is supposed to be divorced from religion of all kinds, no collection even of literary gems from the Bible can be used from which the personal element of the teacher can be eliminated. That personal element must necessarily be influenced by his own religious training, and consequently there is sure to be sectarian teaching in spite of one's self. It is true that this gives us a system of Godless schools, but this is the defect of the public school system anyway. So long as it lasts it will have that defect. But so long as it lasts it should not be allowed to become sectarian according to anyone's idea.

The result of such unjust action by bigoted State officials should arouse Catholics to a sense of their duty to support their own schools, academic, collegiate and university, so as to enable them to give their pupils a complete and thorough education. It is time that the true Catholic spirit should be manifested, and the Catholic voice heard from our pulpits and lecture platforms, from our magazines and newspapers, and, in due time, in our ballot-boxes. We need to cultivate a thorough Catholic sentiment on subjects which concern our religious interests and the true freedom of all our fellow citizens as well; and when necessary, we need to give the so-called statesmen, who are forever attempting to limit our religious rights and political liberties, the only expression of our sentiments which they deem unanswerable; whether as a Catholic party or not, we do sadly need to cast in matters that affect us as Catholics, a united Catholic vote.

We therefore protest against the "decision" of Attorney General Blackburn as unjust and in opposition to the Constitution of the United States.

So long as the Secular State endures, so long the public school will stand intact.