

strive to emulate without risking too much injury to old and cherished customs.

The letter is a long one, but it is spicy reading for those who dwell on either side of the Atlantic. Here is another extract:

Granted, however, that American public men and institutions have a liberal share of human and political frailty to answer for—at home—how stands the case in external matters? They are not conquerors. They do not go with the Bible to Africa to teach the commandment "Thou shalt not steal," and then, in exchange for this teaching, steal the country from the "bloodthirsty savages" who dare to resist this little Christian transaction. American government may be all it is alleged by some Englishmen to be; but it does not govern 200,000,000 of people, one-fourth of whom exist on an average income of 40 rupees a year, out of which they have to pay a tax on their salt for the blessings of that British rule which it is their proud privilege to live under.

All of which may be taken as a suggestion that when you find wholesale fraudsters, there is likelihood of meeting with individuals who have their faults as well. The rule is applicable not only to the class of people who imagine that "What's good's all English, all that isn't ain't," but can be brought much nearer home, in company with the closing suggestion of the doughty Irishman that "a townsweeping denunciation of neighbors is a blow-out-to-do-it method of bringing about a feeling of brotherhood."

### RELIGION IN SCHOOLS.

A subject that, on account of its great importance, commands attention is the effect of exclusively secular education in the schools. In France it has been the rule for nearly twenty years. Instruction has been given the children on the principle that a moral code might be taught without reference to religion, and now the question is asked, what are the results? Has the experiment proved a success? Prominent educators of France hold that the secular system to for has been a failure, and other competent judges of the matter fully agree with this verdict.

Lately a correspondent of the *Kirchenzeitung*, a German Lutheran paper, collected the views of several leading men in the republic. His article appeared in a condensed form in a recent number of the *Literary Digest*. Berenger, vice president of the republic, and for years prominent in the struggle against the growth of immorality, says:

The immorality which is increasing in France at such a terrible rate must be ascribed chiefly to three sources, namely, the absence of all religious instruction in the education of the children; the lack of moral education; and the lack of discipline. Religion must again be put into its proper prominence, and strong moral discipline must be exercised.

The editor of the *Temps*, one of the most influential journals in France, makes this telling argument:

The program has been for more than ten years, under the countenance of religious neutrality, to make the ethical education in the schools to consist in the morality of scientific positivism, i.e., in affirmation of the dignity of man, in the teaching of patriotism, in the worship of

mankind. When, then, a child thus filled with exalted ideas of the dignity of mankind entered life, and in public assemblies, in the shop and the walks of life, suddenly found out that man was a bad and wicked being (animal), that in this fatherland intrigues and injustice prevailed, that human society was full of passion and wrongs, what was the inevitable consequence? What a contrast between what it learned in school and what it learns in actual life! This is the great disappointment which the morality of positivism ever produced and will produce. Man was Auguste Comte's god; but man is a kind of a god who puts an end to faith as soon as we become acquainted with his real being.

Professor Ernst Lavisse is another witness as to the effects of secularism as a moral power. The lamentable degeneration of public morality, he thinks, is due to it. "What," he asks, "have we made out of the education of the youth? A series of teachings and examinations." He said:

But to believe that these constitute the elements of a good education is one of the lies of optimism current at school prize distribution. We have forgotten the real theory. Our whole education machinery is arranged for the manufacture of diplomas, from the child upward to the age of the doctors and licentiates; but neither our schools or lycees, and still less the faculties, have attained to moral mediocrity (*milieu*). I know this is a hard word, but the claim that neither our higher nor lower schools have attained to moral mediocrity is a true word.

Similar results are recorded from Italy, and lately it has been stated that the morals of the United States is degenerating as a result of the exclusion of religious exercises from the schools. Social impurity, drunkenness, thieving, riot, murders and political corruption of every kind are pointed out as indications of the doom that must overtake nations that forget God.

It cannot be denied that there is nothing outside of true religion that can in itself a power to generate and maintain the moral being in man. History shows that nations, notwithstanding the highest intellectual development, have been found wallowing in the mire morally. Neither philosophy nor rhetoric nor any of the other sciences and arts for which ancient Greece and Rome are celebrated could save them from the power of sin in some of its most hideous features. The same is true today, when it is evident that among the most depraved wretches of mankind are found some who have had every advantage of education.

It is also beyond dispute that the child is peculiarly adapted for religious impressions. His mind is pure; it is willing to learn and receives with trust and faith instructions whether fully comprehending them or not. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" is a declaration implying their true position in relation to religious subjects. And it will be found on investigation that nearly every prominent individual in ecclesiastical history has from earliest childhood received the impressions that made him great in mature years. But notwithstanding these facts, it is doubtful whether the separation of religion from the secular schools would in itself be a national calamity. It is well known that the more theo-

retical "teaching" of religion is as impotent for the elevation of the morals as the study of any other subject. When theology is treated in the same way as arithmetic or the dead languages its influence for good is questionable. Indeed, it may be safely asserted that it is injurious by creating doubt and infidelity instead of faith and morality. In the schools religion has often taught in this unnatural manner with the result that in some countries it was driven out of the class rooms as superfluous and useless. No person, himself not actuated by deep religious convictions and exhibiting in his life a high moral character, can teach religion to a child. His attempts to do so are worse than a failure. It is a case of a blind leading a blind to the injury of both.

The religious training then, of the children belongs properly to the home and the Sunday school and to institutions maintained for that purpose. To the influence of parents who themselves believe in the divinity of religious truth; to teachers who are inspired with a similar faith the religious instruction of the young and particularly the awakening and the guidance of their religious sentiments may be safely entrusted. The warning is surely, that without religious training education is impotent to produce a moral state, but the remedy is not so much to be looked for in the study of theology in schools as in the revival of practical religion in the homes of the children. This alone will be found effective to check the threatened inundation of immorality.

### CONFERENCE THOUGHTS.

One feature of the periodical gatherings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in this valley cannot fail to impress the thoughtful mind. At every conference the noble circle of pioneers in the cause is decreasing. One by one those who had the privilege of listening to the inspired words of Joseph the Prophet are called away to another sphere of action and their places are filled by others. The remaining veterans are spared to behold the wonders of the A mighty as manifested in the marvelous growth of the work to which they devoted themselves, and like Simeon of old, they doubtless feel, in the contemplation of the past: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people." The history of the Church from the beginning is one of victory. God has been with His people even in the hour of apparently dense darkness. And as in the past, the future will be replete with glory, come what may; for Lord Omnipotent rules.

It is well, however, for the Saints to remember that the presence in their midst of the aged veterans who through heroic faith fought the first battles of the Lord in this dispensation is a great blessing. Their lingering among their brethren and sisters this side of the veil is not accidental. Some of them may be weak physically, yet, like the first martyr of the Apostolic age, they are imbued with a "spirit" that is irresistible, and while conditions may change and new re-