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# South African Comment on the School Question.

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*By*

RIGHT REV. J. O. NASH, D.D.,

*Coadjutor Bishop of Cape Town,  
Community of the Resurrection,*

*Late Headmaster of St. John's College, Johannesburg.*



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“ Whatever may be one’s private opinion concerning religion or one’s personal attitude to it, one cannot but admit that it is a most important and outstanding feature of human life. It is, indeed, in many ways the biggest thing in the world. Whoever takes a comprehensive survey of human experience soon discovers that religion has from the earliest times and throughout the ages occupied a central place in life and history.

However crude religion may have been in origin, and however gross the superstitions with which it has often been associated, its omnipresence and centrality in the history of the race are facts to be reckoned with.

In a sense, as Comte admitted, religion embraces the whole of existence, and the history of religion resumes the entire history of human development.

We should not be far wrong in saying with Max Müller that the true history of man is the history of religion.”

Miall Edwards *Philosophy of Religion* (1924)

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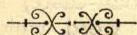
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## A SOUTH AFRICAN COMMENT ON THE SCHOOL QUESTION.



Some of us six thousand miles away are listening with keen interest, indeed with anxiety, to the renewed debate on the school question in England. We care very much for the old Mother Land, and think the future of England depends greatly on what is done about Christianity in the schools. Queen Victoria sent a letter by Dr. Livingstone to a paramount chief in South Africa exhorting him to hearken to the Message, since it was Christianity which had made England great. We who think the same, and who believe that Christianity is stronger in England than elsewhere, believe also that its power in the national life has come in large measure from the wide share it has had for centuries in the moulding and training of the children. *Lancashire* did perhaps most of all to save Church schools on two former occasions, and it may do so again.

When the Great War broke out, our Basutos in "Pitso," their tribal assembly, begged "to be allowed to throw a stone at the King's enemies." This education struggle is part of the great war for God and righteousness which is being waged in many lands. The King of Kings is riding forth, and I feel the same yearning to cast my humble stone.

The stones I would throw are what, from talk and discussion, from reading many books, from long thinking, together with years of practical observation and experience, I have come to believe are true principles; and where I would throw them is at the heads especially of those who keep saying "Education is the State's business," and "The Church is not concerned with secular education." We are sure the National Church Assembly is bent on securing Christian education to the utmost. But we know that the Church rulers, like statesmen of the nation, have often, in practical affairs, to legislate, not as they would, but as they can. To act with vigour they, too, need to have a strong public opinion behind their back. But nothing so weakens their hands as to have voices idly uttering destructive catchwords like these without much thought whether they are true or false.

It is indeed a common cause; for widely as circumstances differ, there is much that is similar in education throughout the great British Commonwealth; and should a certain line of thinking prevail in England, Churchmen in South Africa will find it harder to keep their schools and to help in steering the education policy of their new land towards a healthy religious settlement. For instance, Dr. Geraldine Hodgson writes of a

Joint Memorandum of Churchmen in England in which a unified system is assumed as ideally best, without any attempt at proof. This assumption she disputes, and, we should say, is right in disputing. For out here we have in practice a "dual control," with full consent of both parties. The education of the natives and "coloured" people (half-caste) is entirely in the hands of the Churches—that plural word which our divisions make us use.<sup>1</sup> There are not half a dozen native Government schools in South Africa. The four Provincial Governments, which control primary and secondary education, are well content to leave these schools to bodies which conduct them better and far more cheaply than they could themselves. The Churches, on their side, have made all these schools, and, believing as they do that the religious spirit is essential in the uplifting of the native, are glad to carry on unfettered in the teaching of Christianity. Relations are quite friendly between Church and State. The education departments are helpful and kindly, and the inspectors wise and sympathetic. We think, of course, seeing how much it means to the country that a great mass of five million natives should be civilised, the Government should help more, for the natives are poor and our resources limited. The Provinces do subsidise in different measure: the Cape Province, which is half South Africa, generously; the Free State meanly £4,000 a year; Natal in late years has come forward bravely; the Transvaal is improving—I remember when its grant to native education was £8,000, just as much as was spent on the upkeep of the Zoo at Pretoria. Now it is £48,000; but that still is not enough with a million natives to pay in taxes £400,000. However, there is no trouble about "dual control." Dr. Loram, one of our chief experts, in his "Education of the South African Native," speaks warmly of the missionaries' work, and more than one Government Commission has borne hearty witness to their valuable civilising influence.

With regard to white education, the position is that the primary and secondary stages are Provincial, the three universities belong to the Union. In Government schools religious teaching is, as in England, undenominational; religion so far has no official status in the universities. There has been some discussion about it, and the universities are well disposed; Grahamstown will perhaps establish a faculty soon, and Pretoria has made some beginning with lectures in theology. In Rhodesia, which, of course, is not in the Union, there is "right of entry" in all Government and Government-aided schools to ministers to teach their children half an hour every day.

Our own Church education policy has three items; to retain and extend our native and coloured schools; to develop and multiply our white secondary schools as means permit; to

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<sup>1</sup> In general throughout this article I should wish to concede to other denominations, as far as possible, facilities and privileges which we claim in the name of the Church.

co-operate with other religious bodies in order to make Christian knowledge and spirit as real as may be in Government schools.

White elementary education, as in general there are no fees and no Government grants, we can scarcely touch. But we have some boys' secondary schools whose name stands high in the land, and, chiefly owing to our sisterhoods, some excellent girls' schools; and we have one admirable training college for teachers—St. Peter's at Grahamstown. But it is not easy to found and maintain schools when we have no Church endowments, and it taxes our strength to support our clergy and build churches; when, moreover, the Government have fine school buildings well staffed and well equipped, with fees wonderfully low. In the Transvaal high schools are free.

Our co-operation with other bodies has had for result the compiling of a catechism which has been accepted by the Government (in the Cape Province) and stands as a schedule in the education ordinance. It contains the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, with explanatory questions and answers, quite good, I think; also a brief statement about sacraments, with the Scriptural account of the institution of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The statement is: "A sacrament is a means of grace appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ, wherein by outward and visible signs, inward and spiritual blessings are set forth and bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon those who rightly receive the sacrament."

Those who joined with us in drawing up this catechism were the Dutch Reformed, the oldest and strongest Church in South Africa, the Presbyterians, the Wesleyans, and the Congregationalists. The Roman Catholics stood aloof—they are well supplied with schools through their religious orders—and also the Baptists. It is deficient in teaching on Church and ministry, but it can serve as a useful doctrinal and ethical guide in the reading of the Scriptures. Its use and usefulness have been greatly diminished by two restrictions never contemplated by the Churches, but imposed at the last minute by the Government. It cannot be used in any school unless a majority of parents ask for it in writing. And it must be taught without note or comment—an echo, this, from overseas. These render the introduction of it difficult, and the teaching of it dull to the children and nauseous to the teacher. But it is used a good deal, I believe, in country districts where there is a homogeneous Dutch population. This maiming of an honest effort was not due to ill-will on the part of the Government, but to timidity. Such a syllabus was going so far beyond the undenominational model imported from England that there was some hostile criticism, and the Government became alarmed.

In the matter of white Church Schools, again we are quite good friends with the Government. The authorities are by no means obstinate fanatics on the score of unity. On the contrary,

they have told us they welcome variety and own that independent schools can often show the way in fresh developments. A recent report of the Ronaldshay Commission on railways in East and West Africa is apropos. It recommends the removal of these from bureaucratic control and the opening of the door to private enterprise. Indeed, it favours a joint control by State and companies.

In the Transvaal, Free State, and Natal, Government offers assistance to Church schools; and throughout the Union any school recognised by Government as satisfactory receives, like the others, railway "concessions" for its scholars. The fact is, in this vast new country the task and expense of furnishing schools at all is so immense that no one wants to quarrel with fellow-workers. Nor is there with us such political danger, or such suspicion of it, from the Church as induced the German Government after 1870 to enter on its Kulturkampf, or as led M. Combes to apply the Association Law to close at a stroke 15,000 Catholic schools in France.

Our practical experience, then, would favour "dual control," but surely in principle, too, it is right. I fully believe that the Manchester Memorandum is justified in the emphasis it lays on sound principles in education; and that the present Bishop of Manchester says truly that what is wanted is a great effort to convert public opinion in its general judgments on the problem. For us out here, that at present a certain practical working fits the situation gives no security unless the foundations are secure. For secure foundations two things are required: that we should ourselves endeavour to arrive at true and just principles; and that we should try to convince people in general that they are true and just. Action and legislation will then gradually follow. Here are some of the matters which face us in this education problem, concerning which we have to do our best to see straight, with courteous hearing of opposing views; after which we have to show the gainsayers, with all kindness, how wrong they are.

These points are: (1) Unified system and dual control; (2) Secular and religious instruction; (3) Place and range of religious teaching; (4) The undenominational system; (5) Training and continuous backing of the teachers; (6) Alternative schemes; (7) Religious atmosphere; (8) Relative influence of Church, school, and home; (9) General value of English education.

None of us is infallible, and I just give what I have arrived at. Nor can anyone escape from his traditions, and I write as an English Churchman. But I have been obliged to think and read about these things all the thirty-eight years of my ministry, for all the time I have had to do with schools. Where I was curate in Bethnal Green there were three huge Board schools, and I knew some teachers and crowds of children; then I was vicar of a country parish and taught daily in the village school—

there was a well-known Public School also in the parish, with which I had much friendly intercourse. Afterwards I was secretary of St. Peter's Guild, a Church guild for teachers in Church and Board schools, and that took me into most of our Church Training Colleges and many elementary schools. I trust the Guild is going strong—in the last news I heard, the membership was 5,000. Out here, at the Bishop's request, my Community of the Resurrection undertook the charge of our boys' school—St. John's College in Johannesburg—and I was headmaster for nearly twelve years. It is still managed by the Community, and has nearly 400 boys. In my furloughs of 1908 and 1914 I paid visits to several of the great English Public Schools to see something of their ways, and I have just looked into schools in France and Germany. Here in Cape Town I was acting headmaster for a time of our oldest school in South Africa, "Bishop's College." I have been on the Cape Town School Board, and am now on the council of three Church schools, "Bishop's," the Cathedral Grammar School, and a new girls' school, "Herschel." To consider, then, some of these points.

#### I. UNIFIED SYSTEM OF DUAL CONTROL.

Must we not try to persuade people that complete unification does not correspond to the facts, and is therefore a false principle? In any Christian nation there is not only one great society which is interested in education, namely, the State. There are two societies or kingdoms, the State and the Church; and a sound and healthy national education must come of a right adjustment of the interests of both. Nor ought these interests rightfully to conflict. Of course, they have done so, but it has been through human shortsightedness and misapprehension. Both Church and State have for their object the highest welfare of the people, towards which object both should contribute their share. The Christian teacher therefore occupies, or can occupy, a very honourable part as the mediator between two kingdoms. He is entrusted by both with the high twofold duty of preparing and training up citizens of his native land who are also citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. It would be a pity if any teacher should esteem the latter charge to be outside his sphere or of slight account, and should reckon it his sole dignity to be a State official.

Historically, education has fallen chiefly to the Church, and the State in the past has been satisfied that it should be so. In England it was not till 1870 that the State very seriously entered the field. I once had to go through Blue Books, and I found that in "all the Britains" it was the Church which first started schools. I think the same has been the case throughout Christendom; and probably in all Christian countries, not excepting France and America, the people in general would wish



the Christian Faith and Christian moral truth to have full place in the upbringing of the children. But the policy of modern governments—and this demand for unification is another symptom of it—aided by disunion in the Church, by German philosophy of the Absolute State, by unwise political action of some Church, by anti-Christian thought and sheer materialism, has been to reduce or even to refuse the Church's partnership in national education.

It is true the fearful events of the last years have given a sudden and fierce check to this irreligious drift, though terribly to the contrary in Russia. The nations have been violently awakened to the fact that Christian civilisation cannot stand without Christianity; though even yet I am not sure that it is recognised that Christianity itself cannot stand unless all possible is done to bring up the young as Christians. Thus, in our own Empire, statesmen have been summoning the Christian Churches to rescue a tottering world. Soon after the war five Premiers of the British Commonwealth issued an earnest appeal of this nature. In France, I am told there has been till lately considerable *rapprochement* between Church and State since the war.

Our Commander-in-Chief, Lord Haig, spoke thus in 1919:—  
“Upon the Churches will depend not merely the future of our own race, but the continued existence of that noble type of civilisation which we and our fathers have laboriously built up. Education doubtless has also a large part to perform, but in addition to lay education there must be that idealism which the Church alone can give.”

He was addressing a great educational institution, St. Andrews University in Scotland, and he was speaking in a quasi-educational capacity as Rector of that University. Yet it is significant that even he, perhaps inadvertently, sunders the Church from general education. Our contention, however, is just that: that if the Church is to inspire our people and the nations, then the Church must be given free access to the national schools and full share in the education of the young. At present every Church as a Church is barred out of the State schools of Britain and of South Africa. Individual Christians may help, no Church as a Church can meddle. You still may read Government reports and treatises on education, wherein is much discussion of method and curriculum with scarce a mention of religion, and none at all of the Church.

That is a false position, it is contrary to the truth of things, and if persisted in will lead to disaster. The truth requires mutual respect, honour, alliance between Church and State in this affair of education as well as in other matters. Whenever the State has set itself to debase the Church it has been itself debased. Misguiders, Hegelians, Whig lawyers, Erastians, Prussian bureaucrats have thought to exalt the nation by making the Church into a department of State like the Post Office, and

the clergy into civil servants. It has always meant damage to the country. The nation loses "the idealism which the Church alone can give." Instead, come the selfishness and blindness of the absolute State, and as this is not God's purpose, judgment falls. If the nation is to preserve the Christian ideals, the Christian Church as a Church must teach the children, and in the nation's schools.

On her side the Church is not to be anti-national. She is to confess that in this era of man's existence the "Powers that be" have their divine appointment and that honour is due to them. She has to remember the Lord's tears that the Jewish people in its narrow nationalism was refusing the call to be the first Christian nation; to think of St. Paul's readiness to lose salvation if so he could save his country. The Church in each land is to be united to the Church in every other land, to be a bridge across race hatreds and national jealousies. But she must confess that in this land it is that God has set her to build and cultivate. Certainly therefore she will claim full share in education, but she will educate in a spirit of understanding and reverence for the history and genius of the people of the land. In history I think it is true that the periods when a nation has been alive and vigorous are those in which Church and State have honoured and helped, not tried to humiliate or absorb or crush each other.

The unifiers, so far as I have knowledge of them, grant none of this. For them, education belongs to the State; the State has taken up the work now; the Church has done useful pioneer service in the past, but that day is over and the Church may now stand aside; or if admitted, she will be admitted as of grace and tolerance and under strict limitations as into a preserve which is not properly hers.

## II. RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR EDUCATION.

Here is another misconception, a false dualism. You can no more draw a sharp line between religious and secular in education than you can fuse Church and State in one. It is a hopeless but common mistake to call the first half-hour religious instruction and the rest secular. Religion cannot be shut up like that. I once, for my own edification, went to listen to a history lesson given in a great school in Manchester, and heard a quantity of erroneous religious doctrine taught; that is to say, I did not agree with it. In France the schools are secular, and when I was staying in Paris I was told that the municipality had withdrawn a whole set of reading books from circulation because they contained a story of a mother who prayed for her sick boy, and *sa prière fut exaucée*.

Can we not listen to theologians, philosophers, and men of science when they agree in a classification, or a "hierarchy

of knowledge"? By we, I mean Christians, for with atheists and materialists we can make no terms. There is not a dualism but a gradation, rank above rank of knowledge, all forming a coherent whole. Supreme and all-inclusive is the one complete Personality, the Reality, God. In Him are all treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid. Next to Him, yet still included, are, so far as we know, finite personalities, men and angels. Below this we have to proceed, by abstraction from personality, to organic life in animals and plants; then downwards, still by abstraction, to inorganic nature in physics and chemistry; and lastly, what is most abstract of all, to number and mathematics. Bishop Westcott, Baron von Hügel, Professor Pringle-Pattison, Lord Haldane, with his scientific brother, Professor J. B. Haldane, and Professor Arthur Thomson, the biologist, all set out a scheme much as this. This hierarchy holds together; we may and must abstract for purposes of study, and it is at its own peril if either science or theology treats itself as self-sufficient. God makes Himself known in nature, and it will certainly make a difference to a class of boys whether it is taught science in the spirit of Newton, who raised his hat when he named the name of God, or in the spirit of Laplace, who "had no need for that hypothesis." God, religion, permeates all. "Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things." That is the Christian creed.

Hence, knowledge suffers when split into fragments. But if specialist scholars lose the fullness of the vision when they exclusively specialise, much more is the danger real for the child whose life should be a unity; concerning whom all educationists consent to deprecate any premature specialising. If, for grown men, we confess that God should enter in "whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do," how are we going to rear an honestly Christian people if we teach our children that when prayers and Scripture are over they have done with religion for the day, and all the rest is secular?

### III. PLACE AND CLAIM OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

That knowledge is a hierarchy does not mean that we can teach everything at once. We must needs separate the branches of knowledge for practical purposes, and there are studies and observances specially dedicated to God. Then what place should these have in the education of a people? If God be the supreme Reality, as we Christians hold, if the laws of nature are His laws, if the knowledge of His Being, of His will and purpose for mankind, of the history of His dealings with men is the chief of all knowledge, what importance should we expect to find ascribed to this study in a Christian scheme of education? "Values," "knowledge of values" is what everyone talks of nowadays. Surely the utmost value belongs to such knowledge.

The following is surely not an over-statement. Professor Nicholas Murray Butler has recently been honourably received in England, when he came to deliver the Watson Chair Lectures of 1923 on "The Building of the American Nation." He is head of Columbia University, the largest in America. He writes that civilisation may be divided under five heads; man's science, his literature, his art, his institutional life (civics and ethics), and his religious belief.

"Into one or another of these divisions may be put each of the results of human operations and human achievement. Education must include knowledge of each of the five elements named, as well as insight into them and sympathy with them all. To omit any one of them is to cripple education and to make its results at best but partial. If this analysis is correct, and I think it is, the religious training is a necessary factor in education, and must be given all the time, the attention, and the serious continued treatment which it deserves."

Hence we find the American public school incomplete.

"The religious aspect of education and the place and influence of religion in the life of the individual are excluded from its view."

Josiah Strong, another American writer, in "Our Country," (my own copy is the 174th thousand) pleads strongly the vital necessity of religion in the public schools, and he quotes many eminent Americans to the same effect.

Then how do things stand in regard to this highest, this vital knowledge? I am not sure about England; out here, instruction in a Bible syllabus is ordered for not less than a quarter, nor more than half an hour, four days a week up to Standard IV.; after that for not more than half an hour two days a week. There is no testing of this knowledge, the inspector may not examine; he has merely to ask the headmaster if it is taught. No teacher is obliged to give, no child to receive, this knowledge. Any stranger would judge it was one of the least important subjects in the time-table. And so, I fear, teachers and scholars alike have come to regard it.

The consequences are what might be anticipated. "The Army and Religion" gives an estimate of the religious belief and practice of the soldiers and sailors of the Empire in the late war. The summary in Appendix I. is a heavy condemnation of the religious teaching in our schools, not sparing our Church and Public Schools; and this is the more serious that never has a British Army been so vast or so thoroughly a citizen army, made up from all classes in the Empire. "The one great difficulty about which all the chaplains cry out (chaplains of every denomination) is the soldier's and sailor's ignorance of the Christianity in which he is supposed to have been brought up. The greatest difficulty and deficiency is ignorance."

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<sup>1</sup> *Principles of Religious Education.*

I much want to believe that the painting is too dark; otherwise I should be dispirited about the world, for my fond trust is that there is more Christianity in England than anywhere on earth. But I am afraid there is much ignorance, for the reason that not enough time and attention are given to religious instruction. And this, so far as I have been able to observe, applies to all Government schools and to most Church schools except our primary ones. Christian knowledge is worth as much time and care as languages, science, and mathematics, and it does not get nearly as much. One reason at least why many Public School men sit lightly to religion is that, while they learnt enough of the classics, of history, science, to get thoroughly interested in them, in religious knowledge they never got beyond practising the scales. Cecil Rhodes once said to his friend, Bishop Gaul of Rhodesia: "They taught me a little Greek Testament but no religion at school. Your little coloured children would eat my head off at that sort of thing." Since Rhodes' time there has been great improvement in the English Public Schools, and the value of the sermons and services must be great. But I have often thought the worship outstrips the understanding side. In the matter of school hours given to instruction in Christian Scripture, doctrine, history, worship, personal and social ethics, have we even yet got the right proportion? All these are wanted for a grasp on Christianity; each can be fascinating when well taught; and it is quite possible to make a beginning with them in the high school stage. It is the little time, the little taught, that makes religion naturally the most widely and deeply interesting of all subjects, to be thought of as a bore with small bearing upon life. It is a mistake to think religion bores the young. "Theology is often the child's first science."

#### IV. UNDENOMINATIONALISM.

But most British children have been taught in Government schools an undenominational Christianity. The quantity, the proportion, matters greatly. What can you make of this mightiest of all subjects with some twenty minutes twice a week? But there is also the quality, and here Undenominationalism fails. I do not want to slander this compromise of expediency. Perhaps in the bitterness of the time it was the best possible. It meant that the nation did cling to Christianity in the schools. Moreover, a religious Churchman or Wesleyan with the Scriptures to teach for half an hour daily, as in England, can and will help a child to know Christ. I knew personally in St. Peter's Guild many who were doing so. But now that there is a kindlier spirit between the Churches, now that we are more awakened to "the great danger we are in by our unhappy divisions," and the peoples are calling for more living power of Christianity, is it not time to lift away the dead hand of Cowper-Temple?

Years ago Sir Charles Booth, in his great work on London, discussed religion, and gave it as his opinion that of all forms of religion Undenominationalism is the feeblest. We can see why this should be so. It is because of the matter, and the manner, and the support in such a system.

First, the matter is vague, diluted, unsubstantial; not positive, but negative. It is arrived at by elimination of anything to which any Church can object. It is hoped that all will at least accept Bible teaching, but of course there is nothing final or systematic or logical in this. And so it has proved in parts of Australia and America. The Supreme Court of Wisconsin, U.S.A., ruled that "the Bible can have no place in the public schools, since it contains numerous doctrinal passages upon which the peculiar creed of almost every religious sect is based." Quite lately the State of California has concurred in this judgment; and the same is the reason why the Bible was banned in Queensland and elsewhere. This plan of mutual proscription has only one reasonable conclusion, and Mr. Bernard Shaw draws it in his *Back to Methusaleh*.

"The test of dogma is Universality. As long as the Church of England preaches a single doctrine that the Brahmin, the Buddhist, the Mussulman, the Parsee, and all the other sectarians who are British subjects cannot accept, it has no legitimate place in the counsels of the British Commonwealth, and will remain what it is at present, a corrupter of youth, a danger to the State, and an obstruction to the fellowship of the Holy Ghost."

This is State religion *in excelsis*. We might object that a dogma may be universally valid, though some people are too prejudiced or too stupid to see it. And we may ask if Mr. Shaw is going to make Mohammedans, too, and all the others drop their distinctive beliefs. If not, it is hard on the Church of England, and, anyhow, the high mission he assigns her would be unachieved. If he does, some of them might be unpleasant about it. If he can get us all to do it, we have a pretty puzzle, and I have lain awake at nights, so to speak, trying to think of a dogma which will satisfy the conditions. Even his own tenet of "Creative Evolution" does not fit with Nirvana; nor would our fellow subjects, the Devil-worshippers, approve of any kind of Holy Fellowship. It looks as if the chart which is to guide travellers over the waves of this troublesome world will have to be, like that of the Snark adventurers, "a perfect and absolute blank."

The manner, moreover, prescribed of teaching undenominational Christianity is quite unscientific. No distinctive formula is to be used. I have mentioned how we here have set out differently to seek a greatest common measure, to get a solid framework, and how our labour was sadly frustrated. But who would think of teaching arithmetic, chemistry, Latin, without distinctive formulas? Of course, Christianity has its formulæ,

or doctrines. This is tying the teacher's hands, and encouraging him to be slipshod as he is in no other subject. It is no wonder if this teaching does not get hold.

As to support, Undenominationalism has no real friends; not even the Government loves it. This artificial State Christianity, invented fifty years ago, is nobody's child. Christianity belongs to the society, the Church or the Churches; and there are very few who call the modern State a Church. That idea is quite out of date. Christianity is the faith of Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Anglicans. To send into the world this friendless orphan, owned by no society, was to condemn it to death. It was born of mutual jealousies, and would have died ere this but that, as I said, individual earnest teachers have done their best to keep life in it; and what is more, under favourable conditions, it has become denominational. Here, in regions quite predominantly Dutch Reformed, the school committee, teachers, parents, children, are Dutch Reformed, and that is the teaching given. It was almost inevitable, for the Dutch care for orthodox faith. In my short sojourns in Scotland I gathered that something of the same kind has happened there. The Government is quite aware of the transformation, and shuts its eyes with a sigh of relief.

The training and continuous backing of the teachers is so central a matter that I hardly like to touch it in a bare note. In few walks of life does the personal factor, the human agent, count for more than in teaching, and especially in religious teaching. How shall the teacher communicate the faith except he know it? Nor is it enough to know it intellectually; he must have it. Can there be a Christian atmosphere—I must not say more than this—without really Christian teachers? Here the training college enters, and even those who despair of Church schools seem agreed that Church training colleges are essential. But if Church schools go, it is doubtful if much support will be forthcoming for the colleges, or if teachers will much want to enter them.

Certainly the young teacher ought to come well prepared in Christian knowledge and life in a religious college, but Church backing cannot end there. As the balance tips at present, I fear that in too many schools—it is so out here—success in the professional career depends very little on religious thoroughness. It has been suggested that all appointments be made by the Local Education Authority. There is devotion and unselfishness among teachers to a high degree, but if Church influence become quite subordinate, the loyalty of conscientious teachers will be subjected to a heavy strain.

#### V. THE ALTERNATIVES.

One of these is pure Secularism. In some quarters there is outcry at religious tests. Assuredly Secularism does not abolish

religious tests. Of all tyrannies, that is about the worst. It has no mercy on conscience, and that the conscience of the majority, for most men are religious. It requires every Christian to suppress his deepest convictions while in school, and every Christian parent to let the school mislead his children in their judgment of ultimate values. For Secularism, professing to be negative, is indeed most positive, asserting directly or by implication that all religion is false, or at all events unimportant. It is so inhuman that it is not likely to last long in any country, for no known country or people is without some form of religion; and it is inconceivable that religion should be permanently banished from the schools. It must be a passing phase due to temporary accident. Such is the momentary triumph of a violent atheist minority as in Russia; or the desperate resource adopted in political combat as in France; or the perplexity of educating a heathen people as in India; or of dealing fairly with conflicting religions as in America. The absurdity of trying to bar out God appears in that feat of the Paris Municipality. Whatever textbook is used, mothers are going to go on praying for their sick boys.

*Naturam expellas furca; tamen usque recurret;* you cannot entirely thrust out natural disposition; religion is sure to run back into the school, for it is part of human nature. Moreover, the manifestation of the moral consequences of the attempt soon dissipates the fog. Religion and ethics are too closely bound up for it to last. Leaders of men everywhere, George Washington in famous words, Daniel Webster, many of them practical men, not theorists, have testified that without religion the people's morals go to pieces. Sir Bampfylde Fuller, K.C.S.I., in the *Nineteenth Century* some time ago, blamed our fifty years of Government secular education for evil moral results in India. The system produced fierce complaints and a reaction in Australia, for the same reason. They tried it once before for a short time in France, and Napoleon put an end to it. And the public reason he gave, whatever may have been his own religious belief, was that men in general cannot do without religion. So he put back the Catholic religion in the schools. He said: "I have to make scholars who know how to be men. They will not be men without God. Man without God, I have seen him at work in 1793. That kind of man you cannot govern; you shoot him down."

Secularism may be dismissed as impossible in Britain and South Africa, though the experiment has been made in other parts of the Empire. The common undenominational compromise is unsatisfactory to Churchmen. The policy of many in England is to surrender the Church elementary schools—first, because they cannot be kept up; secondly, to end the dual system and attain to the more desirable uniformity; and thirdly, in order to obtain as recompense for this sacrifice the right



of definite Church teaching for all Church children in the Government schools.

As to the third reason, our experience is not encouraging. The movement is towards the German system, but with a difference. There, all grades of school are Government, and full two hours a week are set down for religious teaching, even in Gymnasium, Real-Schule, Ober-real-Schule, right up to the first class—that is, to nineteen or twenty years of age. And it is “confessional or denominational.” But then, the whole school is denominational, according to the colour of the district. In Germany this is comparatively easy, since there are really only two denominations to be considered—Catholic and Protestant or Evangelical. Is this practicable in England, with its many divisions, all locally intermixed? The English Church Union, in its declaration of policy, suggests that it is, at least partially. But the general requisition is for denominational teaching in all schools, including, as the English Church Union wisely recommends, facilities in Church schools for other denominations.

It should be recognised that this is inconvenient—Church schools, Roman Catholic schools, Wesleyan schools, and then undenominational schools is a far simpler arrangement. “Definite Teaching” involves a cross division of children, and all the problems of providing suitable and willing teachers. No doubt it can be carried out, but only by general goodwill all round. The matter is by no means finished merely by our obtaining certain statutory rights. There remains to be reckoned the attitude of other religious bodies, of the Administration, of the teachers. I fear, from what I have seen, that the powerful National Union of Teachers in England is hostile. My impression is that a vast deal of conversion will be needed to make this universal definite teaching a success. Even if all the denominations were eager for it, that would be much. But are they? Is our Church itself of one mind about the plan? If the Free Churches, the Education Department, the teachers are overborne but not convinced, I should doubt of the stability of the edifice.

We have had some experience out here, and we are burnt children. After the Boer War, the Crown Government, under Lord Milner and Mr. Sargant, Director of Education, instituted the “right of entry” in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Ministers could teach their own children two half-hours a week. It would take too long to tell all the story, but when we and the Roman Catholics began to use the opportunity, all the other religious bodies rose in arms, and the teachers, for the most part, sided with them. We did our best to conciliate our opponents by conference, by assurances against proselytising, and all else. This was in 1905-6, and I recall it vividly, for I was there and taking part. But we were beaten; they told us plainly they did not want denominational teaching in public schools. The “right” was withdrawn and replaced by the English style

of plain Bible teaching.

In Rhodesia, "right of entry" every day of the week was established in 1903, through the influence of Cecil Rhodes, who was persuaded that this was the true solution. Thus far it is a small experiment, for the white population is only some thirty thousand. (The native schools there, as well as in the Union of South Africa, belong to the different missions, with Government aid.) It is still in operation without friction, but also apparently without great success. The last Rhodesian Government Report I know is 1920. It states that some ministers do not want, or use, the "right"; others undertake it and are not regular; others are not able to manage classes of mixed standards. I am not sure how things are going in New South Wales; it was an example to which we appealed in our Transvaal controversy. The account of their "right of entry" was favourable. If I remember, we and the Romans were separate, and the others combined. It seemed to be a case of general goodwill of the denominations, and friends have told me that the system is popular with teachers, parents and children.

The management will not be easy, I think, in England, even if the regular teachers give it; and if only we demand it and the other denominations do not, we shall be looked upon as a nuisance. If mistakes, misunderstandings, sectarian bickerings occur there will be trouble, and danger of collapse.

But then there will be no recovery; *sed revocare gradum!* At present the Church holds strong assets in her school buildings; public opinion would sanction neither the highhandedness of seizing them, nor the vast expense of building rivals. But let the trust-deeds be overridden by special Act of Parliament and the situation is quite changed. The English respect property, but there would be no longer question of confiscating property. The Church would have voluntarily ceded millions' worth of property, and it is not hers any more. It would not cause the same shock to conscience that a troublesome and unpopular privilege should be revoked. Advocates of surrender point to two children in the Provided bush; but to let go the one in the Church's hand, with no certainty of capturing these two, and with a good chance of losing all three, is hazardous fowling.

## VI. RELIGIOUS ATMOSPHERE.

Some people smile at the word, and say we get heated about what is indeed light and intangible as air. My full conviction is that half-hours of the most definite teaching in all the Provided schools is no sort of compensation for the loss of ten thousand schools which alone can have Church atmosphere. For myself, I cannot see why the Church should not hold her schools, and also be allowed to teach her own children in the rest, seeing that Church people are duly taxed and rated according to their

numbers and property for the maintenance of the Provided schools.

But as to the word, these people get more grave when we explain that it means the same as the great scientific word "Environment." If, further, we can show that we are quite up to date, and can get backing for our contention in the most modern and most imperious of all sciences, the one which calls on medicine, law, religion, ethics, aye and pedagogics, to bow the knee, that makes them attend seriously.

A highly considered psychologist, Professor James Bisset Pratt, who holds no brief for Church schools, has endeavoured, in his "Religious Consciousness" (1921), to examine (chap. v.) the Religion of Childhood. He points out three factors as particularly important in forming this religion. The third is the natural development of the child's mind. "Theology is often the child's first science." "God" supplies to the child's insatiable curiosity "the two great categories of explanation—the causal and the teleological—how things are made, who made them, and why." But he warns against attempting to press abstract doctrine before the child has reached conceptual thought.

The second factor is direct teaching. This must be careful and explicit; for, as he says, a child will pick up theology of some kind, often from strange quarters, and, unless guided, his imagination will run wild riot. "Religion, if it is to be a real force in life, must be more than implicit."

But he assigns the first place in time, and "perhaps first in pervasiveness," to the indirect influence of those who surround him—that is to Environment or Atmosphere. "The child is intensely interested in people, and is a close observer of what they do, and by an inexpugnable law of the human mind he imitates their actions, and thus indirectly comes to share in their mental attitudes and feelings." When the boy does not see in those about him reverence, worship, and religious feeling, though he "be taught all the Thirty-Nine Articles," his religion will probably be superficial. "The pedagogical inferences from these facts," he adds, "are plain enough"; and he calls upon parents to consider their ways; for, "whenever children are growing up, the outward expression of the religious attitude is simply not to be replaced by anything else."

Professor Pratt does not here speak of schools. Being an American, perhaps he does not hope, maybe he does not wish, to get religious environment in schools. But we have got it, or it is shame to us if we have not, in our Church schools. In them the false barrier can be broken between religious and secular; and the teacher is helped to know himself as a minister of the Church as well as one who holds a Government certificate. I doubt if this can be ensured in Government schools. And, to my mind, it cannot be replaced by "right of entry" or by "definite teaching," or by "anything else."

## VII. RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF CHURCH, SCHOOL, AND HOME.

This mention of the home may suggest the criticism that we are isolating the school and exaggerating its importance in the matter of religion. Are there not home and Church to count?—why all this worry about school? Schoolmasters, in particular, are apt to overprice their wares. Certainly the last thing we desire is to separate school from Church and home. It is just the unnatural separation caused by the undenominational system that we desire to terminate. No home finds its own religion in these schools, neither does any Church. It interrupts the continuous harmony which should be a trio. Or, the child's being should be moved as by a three-cylinder engine, in which home, school, and Church all furnish power and motive. No one can overlook the power of the home, especially in the earliest years. And unless the Church be present and alive with its Truth and Grace from God, of course school and home alike will enter on the down grade.

What the relative value of each may be there is no occasion to seek to determine. It is enough that the religious influence of school must be great; else have Churches and Governments, friendly or hostile, been curiously in error in making such ado about this religious question. School to a boy or girl for six, it may be for twelve years, is the main business of life. Teachers and lessons, schoolmates and games occupy most of the day and fill up most of its interest.

Large numbers of scholars are in boarding schools, and only a quarter of the year at home. The priest can do much on Sunday, and perhaps something on a week-day, but if the Church as such has no place in the school and no part in the direction, he alone can scarcely counterbalance or correct its influence. Lord Bryce, in his introduction to "Cambridge Essays on Education," Benjamin Kidd, in "Science of Power," point to what in a generation can be wrought in a people by a systematic education. Bertrand Russell, in his "Prospects of Industrial Civilisation" (1923), thinks the "nationalist" teaching given in schools profoundly affects the character of the population. Positively or negatively, for evil or for good, the religious importance of the school is of serious moment, and we are justified in giving much thought and attention to this subject.

## VIII. THE VALUE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION.

In England, for many centuries, till fifty years ago, Church and school were intimately wrapt together; and was that bad for school or Church or England? Most Churchmen would hold that this union has been a blessing to all three. John Morley, in "Cromwell," Lecky, in "The Map of Life," testify to the strength the Church has drawn from her hold on education.

In the eighteenth century Edmund Burke declared his thankfulness as a patriot that England retained her ecclesiastical education.

"Our education is in a manner wholly in the hands of ecclesiastics and in all stages from infancy to manhood. We found the old institutions, on the whole, favourable to morality and discipline, and we thought they were susceptible of amendment without altering the ground. After all, with this Gothic and monkish education (for such it is in the groundwork), we may put in our claim to as ample and as early a share in all the improvements in science, in arts and in literature, which have illuminated and adorned the modern world, as any other nation in Europe."<sup>1</sup>

I think it is true that in all these departments England was even leading the world. If we want, as we do, encouragement for our own time, for Englishmen are much disposed to idolise the German or other, and despise their own system, here is a recent utterance. Professor John Burnet, of St. Andrews University, Scotland, who knows Germany well, "states his opinion for what it is worth,"

"that there is enough *Wissenschaft* in Oxford or Cambridge to set up three or four German universities, and that the English sixth-form boy is much superior intellectually and otherwise to the German *Primaner*, in spite of his being about two years younger on the average, a fact which those who compare the two do not, as a rule, think worthy of notice. The older Universities and the Public Schools do much the best educational work that is done in the country to-day, and we should be very careful not to meddle rashly with institutions which are more and more becoming the admiration and envy of Europe and America."<sup>2</sup>

The American Commissioners, at the time of the Moseley Commission, reported that the level of classics and mathematics in English Public Schools was higher than that in American schools.

These appreciations refer to higher education, but it is not amiss to cite them, because if the Church retires from the conduct of elementary education, it will be the beginning of a landslide which will drag down the rest into State tutelage. Nor is our dual elementary system unhonoured by foreigners who have studied it. An old friend, Mr. Hudson, Principal of St. Mark's Training College at Chelsea, told me some years ago he had had a visit from an education commissioner from the Argentine. This gentleman had been sent as their best expert on a prolonged tour to study the educational system in the most advanced countries. He had been in the United States, Germany, Switzer-

<sup>1</sup> *French Revolution*.

<sup>2</sup> *Higher Education and the War*, 1919.

land, and other lands, and had come to England last, because Englishmen in South America had given such a poor account of the English standard and methods. He had spent some weeks in England examining schools large and small in town and country. He said he had no hesitation in asserting that the English primary schools, for teaching, discipline, and tone, appeared to him the best in the world, and he was going to advise his Government in that sense.

Those who want to drive the Church out of the educational field and to get entire Government control are constantly trying to scare the public. They say the lack of co-ordination—chaos, they sometimes call it—is putting us behind the other nations. For myself, the little I have seen of primary and secondary schools in France and Germany would not induce me to exchange our schools for theirs. In France there are some popular schools which are avowedly copies of the English style. In general, and much more evidence could be given, there seems to be a good deal of reason for supposing that the Church character of our education, for such it has been in the main, has not retarded the progress and the culture of the nation.

But, on the other hand, in what immediately concerns this inquiry, can it be said to have maintained religion as a force in England? Mrs. Webster's leading thesis in her "World Revolution" (1921), is, I understand, not generally accepted, but at the end of her book she gives some striking testimonies from foreigners at the time of the French Revolution and in '48, that what had saved England from these convulsions was the religion of the people. The atheist, Karl Marx, numbered in Germany in 1912 some four and a quarter million male voters as his followers; and Bebel and Liebknecht both have publicly declared that they were "against every religion and every faith," and were "striving on principle to destroy the need of religion in mankind."<sup>1</sup> Holtzman reckoned, in 1908, that of the entire German population, not more than a third clung by conviction to Christianity, and that in the North German towns only 3 per cent. of the population go to church.<sup>2</sup> The Bolsheviks put up a picture or a bust of Karl Marx in every public place; Bucharin has been called Lenin's right-hand man, and in his "Programme of the World Revolution," a tract disseminated by millions in different languages, he denounces all religion as bourgeois poison. Baron von Hügel also writes that, of the forty million Catholics in France, "only about eleven millions appear to attach any value to their profession." Mr. McCullagh<sup>3</sup> thinks the educated classes of Russia have themselves to thank for their miseries: "The Russian intelligentsia themselves are largely to blame for the great weakening of Christianity and the general strength-

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Smith, *Soul of Germany*.    <sup>2</sup> Von Hügel, *Eternal Life*.

<sup>3</sup> *Prisoner of the Reds*, 1921.

ening of belief in the infallibility of science." The same was the case in France before the Revolution.

As against this, Marx cried in his wrath, "England is the rock on which the revolutionary waves are broken." Lenin lately sneered that the greatest obstacle to Bolshevism in England is the fact that the English working-man founds his ideas on the Bible. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald declared a short time ago that any attack on Christianity would split the Labour Party from top to bottom. For the first time in English history a Labour Party has been in power—what the Continentals call the proletariat as opposed to the bourgeois and the aristocracy—and it showed no disposition to take Karl Marx as its spiritual director. There is religion in other classes, too; a Dutch *predikant* here once said to me that what impressed his people about our Church is the way our big men keep to their religion, and a Dutch magistrate up-country told me the same thing. It is the case that in South Africa we have had chiefs in Army and Navy and the State who have been earnest Churchmen.

I trust no one is satisfied either with our Church or with our education, or dreams that we can desist from effort to improve both. Yet by *comparison* we need not be ashamed, as some love to be, or groan about failure. Our Church and Church schools cannot take all the credit for having upheld Christianity. There is besides the living energy of the Free Churches; and our Government schools do stand for Christian teaching—defective, we think, but in practice often bettering the instruction. No one is wise enough to apportion the praise, but no fair man would deny to our Church and her schools a considerable share in any good accomplished. It was a saying of Archbishop Temple that the word "duty" appealed to Englishmen, because for four hundred years English children had been repeating their Duty towards God and their Neighbour. Then, if there is a kindlier feeling between classes in England than in some other countries, is it folly to suppose that this is in some part due to that ideal they have learnt by heart—rich, middle-class, and poor—"My duty towards my neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me"? Only the very bitter would say that the Church has proved herself so incompetent a teacher of the English that she must withdraw from the task and the responsibility.

The issue is a vital issue. Hitherto the Church has been the principal educator of England in all stages—higher, secondary, and primary. By Church, I do not, of course, mean clergy. There have been, and still are, powerful influences, which advocate the handing over the larger portion of this service to the State, the Church to resign herself henceforth to being a teacher of religious knowledge. And this is to mean that religion covers half an hour a day of the child's instruction, the rest being secular. This is to be done in the supposed interests of education,

which they say demand a unified State control. And it approves itself to many Churchmen as an escape from the existing undenominational system, and as a house of defence against the threatened danger of Secularism.

There is no doubt this would be a revolution—a violent break with English tradition which from Saxon times downwards has admitted Church and State as joint guides of the nation. It is a further long stride towards the German ideal of the Absolute State, beyond whose interests there is no appeal; or towards the acceptance of the French tradition, which for centuries, as Fullerton points out in "Problems of Power," has been the centralisation of all power in the hands of a central Government. Certainly it would not be the first step. The tendency has been in that direction for a century, owing largely to the weakening of the Church already by excessive State limitation, and by unhappy divisions, and by the advance of materialism, and by adverse philosophy. 1870 was a clear disclosure of how far the tendency had gone. We must confess our faults and try to do better.

But are we to regard this movement as wholesome for education, for the people, and for the influence of Christianity in the land, so that we shall willingly assist it? Is not Lord Hugh Cecil right in telling us in his pamphlet, which all should read, *Nationalism or Catholicism* (1919), that the salvation of the peoples to-day requires a re-assertion of the claims of Catholicism, including in that, as he expressly says, all Christian bodies, as against this "modern (or ancient pagan) soul-destroying nationalism." It is interesting to find Bertrand Russell, from his very different standpoint, looking on "Nationalism" as the chief danger of our time, "the accumulation of horror which lies before us through the growing virulence of nationalism."<sup>2</sup> Germany has constantly been offered to our admiration as the education nation. But its education has failed, notably on its religious side, in spite of the regular religious teaching, partly because of the strong influx of rationalism into the Evangelische Kirche, but still more because of the utter subjugation of that Church by the State. Dr. Smith's "Soul of Germany" gives it as a chief reason for its loss of reputation and influence among both the more educated and the working classes, that it is regarded as a mere creature of the Government. I have no wish to deny the thoroughness and success of German education on some sides, but in those things which belong to the nation's peace and the highest welfare of Christendom many at last confess that it has been a woeful calamity. Unification was there complete; the State had swallowed the Church.

Lord Hugh Cecil's cry is but the same as Lord Haig's. It is that the Church, far from surrendering, shall now more stoutly

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<sup>1</sup> He makes the same appeal in *The Pilgrim* (Oct. 1923).

<sup>2</sup> *Prospects*, chap. xii.



than ever assert its place in the life of the nation. And if another strong voice is wanted to back them, here is one which is listened to in England as well as in South Africa. General Smuts lately sent a Christmas message to the *Kerkbode*, the powerful organ of the Dutch Reformed Church, and this is a translation of a few sentences:—

“The foundations of spiritual life have been shaken as never before. All authority is weakened, including that of religion. People believe in the power or influence of the State or they believe in money; few believe in the unseen things of the Spirit. Now, therefore, more than ever, it is necessary to hold aloft the banner of spiritual life. The ideals of individual and social life derived from the essence of Christianity remain our most precious jewels. They are the foundations on which our Christian civilisation rests.”

We are being invited, instead of holding up the banner, to evacuate what is perhaps our strongest fortress. But it may be said, “You people at a distance, you absent for many years, you do not understand the position. We do not retire willingly, but because we must. We are losing our schools; we cannot keep them up.”

But so far as that is the case, is it not just because the people do not see and know? Is it not exactly what the Manchester Memorandum means? Is there not need for a great mission of conversion? Very many Englishmen, Free Churchmen, Church of England folk, with some clergy, have to be converted. They have to be brought to see the truth and justice of our principles as making for the good of education and of England and of the nations. They have to be delivered from this encroaching State obsession, and won to fuller belief in the Holy Catholic Church through which the Lord, the Giver of Life, inspires and sustains the great ideals.

This is the end of the matter. If the Christian Church have indeed no title to educate, but merely to give definite religious instruction, then Church schools must pass. They are only a temporary convenience till the nation is ready in every place to take in hand its own proper business. But if the Church is an educator of youth, and the best educator, then it is woe to the Church if she do not maintain and develop her schools to the utmost; and it will be sorrow and loss to the nation if it shall not suffer her so to do, and if it shall not co-operate with her in the work of education.

J. O. NASH.

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“In almost every case the earliest development in missionary enterprise is along the line of Education. . . . The central aim remains always quite definite. It is to bring the people into touch with Christ, and let the divine contact work on them its wonted miracle. For this the spoken word is used, and with increasing fervency as the missionary’s mastery of the strange speech increases. But speech is at best a fleeting thing, while writing is permanent. So the written Word has to be provided in the people’s own tongue ; and for this, they must be taught to read. . . .

Quite apart, however, from this end which education serves in making the Bible an open book, the opening of the mind, among a people where it has been immemorially stunted and closed, is itself so incalculable a service that education for this general purpose also has long been assiduously encouraged by Missions. The bearing which the opening of the mind has on the creation of an open and understanding heart, remains indeed the compelling reason for missions making *a school* the first plank in the Christian edifice.”

Dr. J. N. Ogilvie

“*Our Empire’s Debt to Missions*” (1924).

Down through the ages until to-day this has been the regular procedure. This is how and why the Church gave schools to the English and the Franks, as much as to the natives of Uganda and New Guinea.

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