

Melbourne 4th of 9th month 1852

To Geo W Walker
 My dear friend,

Thy Letter with enclosure arrived safe; the same Post brought me another Letter from the St. Governor which I have read & did essay a reply, being willing to comply with thy suggestion. but after having so done I thought the better way would be to send it to them, as after all the Council will decide on the Education Bill. It will I trust do us harm to send thee my ideas on paper ^{giving} in thy evidence before the Committee of the Legislative Council.

The St. Govt. says Education is to train a child up in the way he should go! we may turn round on him and ask him - what way - a Stoic would say that is - he? - He also introduces the doctrine of 'Original Sin' which I did not name in my Letter to him: it is well he did not make reference to Purgatory. I do not see it is my plan to combat doctrines - seeing I am labouring for pure Religion - not Doctrinal opinions - and in words Education

Thou wilt have read Bishop Nixon's Letter in the 'Courier' & far. There is no mistake in it - Well Popery is nothing to it. - There they ~~are~~ consecrate a wafer - a piece of the body of the Saviour - which is ~~to~~ do every thing for him - provided he have complied with all their ritual - if he have not - he cannot swallow this wafer - so they say - it only remains in his mouth - ^{and so does not benefit him} - But here we have Bishop Nixon to the full - expressing his entire belief in Baptismal Regeneration - the Child comes to the Font ~~consecrated~~ ^{the font} regenerates. Nothing at all of ifs! Is it possible that the human mind can believe such nonsense? - What shall we come to next? It was said - that Baptism succeeded circumcision - they did not circumcise female infants. but the Bishop regenerates all male and female who come to his font. to have ^{the} light water sprinkled in his or her face. he creates him or her - a child of God - and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Must not such a Church as this - either become incorporated with the Romanists - or fall to pieces? One, or the other, surely must result. In the mean while we may hope that the humble and sincere Christian within her pale will be brought to the light of the Lord, and from a deep error or error, and that the present movement will ultimately tend to the dawning of clearer light throughout the length and breadth of professing Christendom.

Prorate that could not make it convenient to see Eliza & Harriett
the more - in many not. We are acquainted with the American Board
of Education - in Boston - in fact through Mr. Peckham's education and
an immense yearly sum is expended in public education and
of our civil former details - it might be of some assistance to
our Legislative Council - I am glad to hear of George Brown
success of the Legislature and that he has returned in health - my kind

Genl. W. Walker
Savoy, Ark.
Robert Shaw

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4/9/52

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remembrance to him. - We have letters from Mr. John - it appears he
was so ill treated by Capt Kemp as to leave the vessel in California and
went down to Sydney, thence to Melbourne, and thence to the Diggins. Where
I hope he will join his Brothers as he was digging with them for miles of them
when he wrote. - My wife's health has been much better lately - though not
quite so well today - she writes with me after a long letter Sarah and all
- she bids me say she is always glad to have a letter from you and to

hear of your school. He is sorry to hear of an amount of parochial schools - He will know what the trouble of a numerous family is.

The plan as proposed if I understand it rightly is to raise a fund of £ 17,000. per annum to which all pay, and which all may avail themselves of. at their option. The fund will probably enable the Board, or Boards who work out the plan to give that amount of salary calculated to procure the services, as Teachers, of men of competent talent and moral character. - this is so far well.

But must the poor pay their 5/- per head, for themselves and their families? will there be no clause vesting discretion in the local Boards to forego the claim, where poverty is evident?

Again, are Parents - these Parents especially who may not pay, - are they to indulge an apathy, if so inclined, in regard to the Education of their children? would it not be right so far to improve on the liberty of the subject, as to compel the attendance of children of this class from say 5 to 12 years of age in all places where a public school is within a reasonable distance?

With regard to Education as a whole, it cannot be too religious; - and I am sorry to agree with the St. Ignace to the full, that we see far too little of upright conduct in the world among all classes, thus evincing that whatever their education, practically religious principles have little or no influence on their every day lives. - a plan of Education that would religiously influence all its recipients would be a desiderata indeed.

But whilst the majority declare in favor of Religious Education, how very few agree as to what that Religious Education shall be. Is there so plan that all sects can patronize as common ground? - To compare one thing with another, there is the British and Foreign Bible Society. - in this all Christian sects unite harmoniously, - except - Papists and some High Churchmen. Can we expect that such men as these will agree to any Religious school instruction wherein they are not dominant? - They will concede little or nothing to others, and of the two I fear the High Churchmen are the more inflexible.

What I have desired to portray is a truly religious education Catholic in its spirit, and free from sectarian bias - the Religion in fact of the New Testament. - now - surely this can be brought to bear on all - or all but those who will concede nothing, - and these should pay

for their schools. themselves.

A Catechism might be compiled, the answers in which would be texts of Scriptures - and by Question and Answer it would be seen how far the learner comprehended. Scriptures History; moral and Religious Duties; his own responsibility; - his fallen state as a descendant of Adam; - the necessity of the new birth, or new Creation. in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; - the deadly nature and deadly consequences of sin. &c. &c. - Questions of this sort could be so arranged as to lead the learner step by step in the good and the right way, so far as human means can affect this. We should thus have a sound Religious basis - and what then remains - to indoctrinate the pupil according to the views his friends take of Religious truths? - this is no business of the State, - the other I would submit. - We may observe what our Saviour said to the Scribes, and the Scribes Reply. Mark XII. 28-33. - So if we thoroughly imbue the young mind with the love of God, and the love of his neighbour, we have done all we need, we may leave the superstructure to the Divine Being himself, as regards Religion. Let learned theologists say what they may. - Happily, true Religion is a very simple affair.

This is the point I have been aiming at in this letter - and now would most respectfully inform the Lt Governor, that a plan of the kind herein set forth, will receive the hearty support of the Society of Friends; - but if schools are established under the authority of the State, to teach formularies of Religion, whether Popish, Prelatical, or Presbyterian, they will I fear be constrained from actually supporting such, and I trust the Lt Governor will not expose them to suffering on this ground. - Whatever a man conscientiously objects actually to support, he he - Papist - Jew - or Quaker (so called), that he ought not to be compelled to pay for, nor ought others to accept, nor even desire his money - knowing well his scruple of conscience. - Some may think little of scruples of Conscience who do not see eye to eye with those who have them, and I have read of a Miller who was treating such lightly - but see received as a reply - that though a scruple is a Miller's scale might be very little - a scruple in the scales of the Sanctuary was a scruple.

Some time ago in reading Lyell's Travels in North America I was struck with the large amount spent in Massachusetts on public Education. Sir Charles Lyell does not enter into details but I have written to a friend in Tour to call on the American Consul, and see if information can be obtained from him how they manage State Education in America, as I believe no State support whatever is given to religious Sects of any name; - Religion standing very properly on its own firm basis, among our transatlantic brethren.