

APPENDIX

WHO SHALL CONTROL?

[NOTE.—This statement on the Tennessee case was prepared by Mr. Bryan at Coconut Grove, Florida, in June, 1925.]

The first question to be decided is: Who shall control our public schools? We have something like twenty-six millions of children in the public schools and spend over one billion and seven hundred thousand dollars a year upon these schools. As the training of children is the chief work of each generation, the parents are interested in the things to be taught the children.

Four sources of control have been suggested. The first is the people, speaking through their legislatures. That would seem to be the natural sources of control. The people are sovereigns and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. Some seem to think that schools are excepted from the control of the people. Legislatures enact all state laws, and in most states the decision is made without the possibility of a referendum. Legislatures fix the death penalty for crime and the form and extent of other punishments. Legislatures regulate marriage and divorce, property rights, descent of property, care of children, and all other matters between citizens. Why are our legislatures not competent to decide what kind of schools are needed, the requirements of teachers, and the kind of instruction that shall be given?

If not the legislatures, then who shall control? Boards of Education? It is the legislature that authorizes the election of boards and defines their duties, and boards are elected by the people or appointed by officials elected by the people. All authority goes back at last to the people; they are the final source of authority.

Some have suggested that the scientists should decide what shall be taught. How many scientists are there? And how shall their decrees be proclaimed? Professor Steinmetz put the number of scientists at about five thousand; Professor Leuba, in one of his books, puts the number at about fifty-five hundred. The American Society for the Advancement of Science has about eleven thousand members, but that includes Canadians as well as citizens of the United States. If the number is put at eleven thousand, it makes about one scientist for every ten thousand people—a pretty little oligarchy to put in control of the education of all the children, especially when Professor Leuba declares that

APPENDIX

over half of the scientists agree with him in the belief that there is no personal God and no personal immortality.

The fourth source suggested is the teacher. Some say, let the teacher be supreme and teach anything that seems best to him. The proposition needs only to be stated to be rejected as absurd. The teacher is an employee and receives a salary; employees take directions from their employers, and the teacher is no exception to the rule. No teacher would be permitted to teach students in the United States that a monarchy is the only good government and kings the only chief executives. No teacher would be permitted to slander presidents and libel our form of government. No teacher would be permitted to go from the South and teach in a northern school that the northern statesmen and soldiers of the Civil War were traitors; neither would a northern teacher be permitted to go from the North and teach in a southern school that the southern soldiers and statesmen were traitors. These three illustrations are sufficient to show that a teacher must respect the wishes of his employers on all subjects upon which the employers have a deep-seated conviction. The same logic would suggest that a teacher receiving pay in dollars on which is stamped, "In God We Trust," should not be permitted to teach the children that there is no God. Neither should he be allowed to accept employment in a Christian community and teach that the Bible is untrue.

That is the Tennessee case. Evolution disputes the Bible record of man's creation, and the logic of the evolution eliminates as false the miracles of the Bible, including the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Christ. Christians are compelled to build their own colleges in which to teach Christianity; why not require agnostics and atheists to build their own colleges if they want to teach agnosticism or atheism?

The Tennessee case is represented by some as an attempt to stifle freedom of conscience and freedom of speech, but the charge is seen to be absurd when the case is analyzed. Professor Scopes, the defendant in the Tennessee case, has a right to think as he pleases—the law does not attempt to regulate his thinking. Professor Scopes can also say anything he pleases—the law does not interfere with his freedom of speech. As an individual, Professor Scopes is perfectly free to think and speak as he likes and the Christians of Tennessee will protect him in the enjoyment of these inalienable rights. But that is not the Tennessee case and has nothing to do with it.

APPENDIX

Professor Scopes was not arrested for doing anything as an individual. He was arrested for violating a law as a *representative* of the *state* and as an employee in a school. As a *representative*, he has no right to misrepresent; as an employee, he is compelled to act under the direction of his employers and has no right to defy instructions and still claim his salary. The right of free speech cannot be stretched as far as Professor Scopes is trying to stretch it. A man cannot demand a salary for saying what his employers do not want said, and he cannot require his employers to furnish him an audience to talk to, especially an audience of children or young people, when he wants to say what the parents do not want said. The duty of a parent to protect his children is more sacred than the right of teachers to teach what parents do not want taught, especially when the speaker demands pay for his teaching and insists on being furnished an audience to talk to. Professor Scopes can think whatever he wants about evolution, but he has no right to force his opinion upon students against the wishes of the tax payers and the parents.

And, I may add, Professor Scopes is doing more harm to teachers than to anyone else. If he establishes the doctrine that a teacher can say anything he likes to the students, regardless of the wishes of his employers, who are the parents and tax payers, it will become necessary to enquire what teachers think before they are employed. At present, teachers are not examined as to their thoughts on religion; if, however, a teacher when once employed is at liberty to rob Christian children of their religious beliefs, then atheists, agnostics, infidels, and all others who seek to undermine the Christian religion will find it difficult to secure employment as teachers in Christian communities, and the school boards will become much more important official bodies than they are now. If religion has to be protected in the election of school boards, then school board elections may become the most important elections held, for parents are much more interested in their children and in their children's religion than they are in any political policies or in the election of any particular candidates—even more interested in their children than in who shall be governor or president. Professor Scopes has raised a question of the very first magnitude and the ones most likely to suffer by the raising of the issue are those who think they can ignore the right of the people to have what they want in government, including the kind of education they want.