

They Are Picking On The Kids Again.

It was a famous French atheist who laid down the principle which his co-religionists have followed in political practice ever since in France and in the Latin countries: "Give me the ministry of education, and I care not who has the other portfolios in the cabinet. If we can keep God out of the schools, the future is in our hands." Horace Mann and his associates worked out the same principle in the United States, and we must give them credit for having done a rather thorough job - so thorough that this country is largely neutral to the idea of God, so neutral, in fact, that indifference to God and one's soul is looked upon as something respectable - even superior.

A correspondent sends us a clipping from the Chicago Tribune containing the answer of the training-the-baby editor to inquirers who want to know what to tell their children about death. After confessing that it is hard to answer since "many of us no longer have the old-fashioned 'heaven or hell' conception of death," she replied thus:

1. Don't connect death with burial, if you can possibly help it.
2. Try not to associate sickness and death.
3. If your child says a night prayer be sure there is no suggestion of death in it. "If I should die before I wake" is a rather terrible possibility.
4. Sometimes learn from the child, for "if not much has been given him in the way of belief but if there have been talks that tend to bring out what the child feels, some very spiritual, revealing and fascinating ideas will develop."

Is that a formula? Was it from the baby's tabula rasa that Dr. Watson got his behaviorism? Did the baby give Bertram Russell his fascinating scientific morality? Did Rabbi Lewis Brown steal his very spiritual religion from the cradle? Was Freud's very revealing psychopathology whispered from the perambulator? If this is the formula our modern wise men are following, we might as well quit, for infants are terrible. One never knows whether the next remark is to be sent to the bright-sayings-of-children editor or the most-embarrassing-moment desk. (We know one child, however, who would have given a new-fangled mother a dark moment, for when he first heard of the Blessed Trinity he asked his grandmother, "Does God the Father spank hard?" And that comes right back to the hell idea again.)

We agree with Miss Bevans, the editor, that "if I should die before I wake" is a rather terrible possibility, and it is exactly our reason for wanting to give the child a real and very proper idea of death. We have not had to give up the old-fashioned "heaven or hell" idea because we never had it; we have the more old-fashioned idea of heaven or hell or purgatory, and since the second and third alternatives make death, night or day, the "terrible possibility," we believe that the child has a right to know a little something about all three. (Personally, we would have difficulty finding the proper night prayer for a "neutral." Even the atheist's prayer, "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul!" throws a shadow of fear across the infant mind.)

Science hasn't yet succeeded in dissociating sickness and death, much to the discomfort of Cain's children; and the law would have something to say about the disconnection of death and burial. Yes, the question is hard to answer, but Miss Bevans has done no worse job than Spencer in attempting to answer it, because DEATH IS THE STUMBLING BLOCK OF EVERY FALSE PHILOSOPHY. If she was unwilling to face the fact that death is only the beginning of life, she should have ignored the question. Christ answered the question, and gave proof for his answer by His own Resurrection - but Christ is also old-fashioned, even if He is God. ("Of such," He said, "is the kingdom of heaven.")

PRAYERS: A cousin and two friends of Dick Tobin were killed in an auto accident last week. Mrs. Harry Luhn, wife of the first Notre Dame football captain, was also killed in an auto accident. An aunt of Paul Halbert is seriously ill. A friend of Francis Toomey died recently of football injuries. Prof. McCole thanks you for your prayers for his father and asks you to remember his brother who also died recently.