

# Christianity and the character education movement 1897-1914

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# **Christianity and the Character**

## **Education Movement 1897-1914**

‘Moral principles could exist, did exist without religion; even when they were the moral principles of the religion. The complicating fact for the late nineteenth century was the claim that you could have morality without Christianity while the morality which you must have was Christian morality’.

Owen Chadwick<sup>1</sup>

‘The age is characterised by an extraordinary enthusiasm for education’.

Frederick James Gould<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

This article discusses the extent to which middle-class Christians, many of whom were progressive liberals, involved themselves in the Moral Instruction League (MIL) to intervene in ‘improving’ the moral character of the English working-class. It considers how they reconciled their motivations and underlying theology with secular goals that sought to free morality from its theological basis in late nineteenth century England. It argues that Christian members and supporters of the MIL, in a series of steps, began to distance themselves from the theological basis of their faith. This was in an age when people were overwhelmingly persuaded that religion and morality were inseparable and that moral education must be religious education in schools. It was the Christian faith, not doubt, that was widely assumed in Victorian England at all social levels. What was the philosophy that the organisation promoted in its approach to character building? What worldview or ideal was the basis of its educational approach? ‘Liberal Christian’ is used broadly to denote Christians who stress the social role of Christianity and who de-emphasise the traditional theological foundations of the Christian faith, but we should note just how heterogeneous were the possible Christian identities.

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## **Introduction:**

The late Victorian era saw the rise of three ideas running parallel to each other: first, growing acceptance of the State as a prime organiser of domestic public policy; second, the development of theories of human evolution which brought doubts about biblical passages and third, developments in society that shifted the conception of citizenship, the origins and meaning of Englishness as well as the duties and rights of the English people.<sup>3</sup> These powerful forces interacted with each other influencing the State's growing support for the new school system. Schooling which emphasised economic efficiency, commercial and technological progress and a curriculum also centred on the development of patriotism, secular civic ideals and knowledge about the nation and empire. Within this social and political mix Ethical Societies arose to better morally train the young by seeking a clearer delineation of the boundaries of right and wrong and gave a fresh focus to character building. All theories and new knowledge were welcomed by these Ethical Societies so long as they could aid the distinction between right and wrong. These societies aimed to extend the area of moral co-operation through uniting people of diverse views and beliefs in the quest of studying practical problems of social, political and individual ethics. This was the background into which the Moral Instruction League was founded in 1897.

The Moral Instruction League in the final few years of the nineteenth century sought to improve the character of the working class. Its understanding of what 'character building' meant suffered from a degree of ambiguity and imprecision in the way it was employed. 'Character building' and 'character education' together with 'moral education' were used interchangeably. Many proponents of 'character building' understood the phrase differently and in their contested use of the phrase ran together a matrix of definitions, both secular and religious, which overlapped and intersected in complex and multiple ways.<sup>4</sup> Any attempt to disentangle the various elements of this conceptual relationship between the 'secular' and 'religious' is fraught with difficulty. This is not aided by the fact that some Christians encouraged or fostered the idea that religion in any context of schooling would have to be 'sectarian'. Some joined with more secular campaigners who ultimately sought a fundamentally different kind of character education. These early proponents of more secular character building in schools, mindful of the potential Christian source of political support, were careful to suggest that secular moral and character education would be objective and

neutral and even that it could be aligned with the moral tenets of Christianity. Three essential characteristics of the MIL's secular approach can be identified. First, moral character is not necessarily intertwined with, or dependent on, Christianity. Second, politically, the MIL rejected the authority of the state church to be the arbiter of what is moral in schooling. Third, the MIL located moral character and the means for character development solely in human activities and capacities.

The Christians in question here ranged between the poles of Christian belief and overt irreligion. In practice, some identified as Christian, but for all practical purposes advocated a secular outlook. Others subscribed to the biblical Ten Commandments as a source for moral teaching, but dismissed or de-emphasised the first four concerning one's relationship to God. Yet others took flight from a Christianity tethered to morality in order to establish in the education system secular philosophies independent of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> It is not entirely clear how people at this time classified themselves on the religious and non-religious spectrum and even defining 'Christianity' is problematic given the broad and often incompatible versions of what was often declared to be Christianity. There was also, some believed, anxiety about the perceived decline of orthodox Christianity which Tim Larsen describes as 'overblown'.<sup>6</sup> The context remained one of a society that saw Christianity as both dominant and widespread, providing a sense of social cohesion.<sup>7</sup> This article examines the involvement of Christians between these poles of belief and irreligion in the movement to build the character of the working class. Additionally, it contends that there was a class-based element to the movement, one that saw the broad middle-classes of the MIL concerned with building the character of the working-classes. Using the publications of the MIL as well as bibliographies, reports and other writings of individual Christians, it establishes how they attempted to reconcile their religious faith with the secular agenda of the MIL. The MIL is thus a case study that sits at the intersection of anxieties about religion, class and character. The article adds to existing scholarship in the field by analysing what Christians contributed to the movement for secular moral instruction and why they contributed since this has not been sufficiently emphasised in studies to date.

### **The Promotion of Character Without Religion**

Growing liberalism and progressive ideas helped establish the climate that encouraged the growth of secular views of society and Christianity, particularly witnessed in the empiricism of David Hume.<sup>8</sup> This legacy was reinforced by the social transformations of industrialisation and urbanisation in nineteenth century England. The expansion of the middle-class was another transformation of the period, which came with a corresponding concern to reconcile these social transformations with sustaining public order. The Judaeo-Christian tradition dominated schooling, which was strongly associated with the development of theologically based moral virtues. Many within the middle-classes acquired both a generalised sensitivity about human suffering as well as real fears for the future social order. This fear was largely invented by the late Victorians, for whereas the population increased from 19 million to 33 million, the number of serious crimes declined.<sup>9</sup> Alongside these anxieties, however, middle-class opinion also experienced a desire to provide relief for those in situations of extreme poverty, but they rarely questioned the system that sustained this inequality which saw progress coexist with social and economic inequality. Their answer to this contradiction was ‘Victorian moralism’ or what Barnett called a ‘revolution in moral sentiments’ resulting in a sense of compassion for the poor.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century English middle-class society also witnessed an enhanced concern for moral instruction which was part of their paternalistic view: they believed they had a duty of moral guidance over the lower-classes. The new naturalism in the literature of the period was also marked by a dread of moral decay and its consequences. This is perhaps reflected in the novels of Emile Zola which suggested the idea that genetics determine one’s character,<sup>11</sup> also in the ‘National Efficiency’ movement which sought to improve the physical and mental health of the lower-classes.<sup>12</sup> The Headmaster of Harrow, J. E. C. Welldon, proclaimed that there was a need to ‘cultivate a certain hardness of character’<sup>13</sup> while Holt<sup>14</sup> illustrates how boys’ school stories reflected this stance.

The radical philosophical and political thoughts of Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882), were hugely influential in late Victorian England.<sup>15</sup> He believed that education should develop character, but he shared Hegel’s pursuit of transforming religious consciousness into a

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conceptual and metaphysical theory. Green merged the philosophical, religious and ethical life and he opposed sectarianism considering that it was wholly unnecessary for people to accept the full theological and doctrinal understanding of Christianity. Green's effort sought to provide a firm intellectual basis for religion which would be undogmatic and tangible to practical social action. He emphasised the shared goals and values of the community and believed that the common good should be promoted by the State through basic educational provision for all. The language of Green's philosophy of education was not distinct from that of the MIL. Schooling, for Green, ought to be provided by the State since without it children could not develop their character and therefore pursue morally good ends. The Church of England also saw the role of the State as not simply educating citizens in democratic processes, but in moral character terms.<sup>16</sup> Green himself was educated at home until the age of 14 by his Church of England minister father. Green's view influenced Mrs. Humphrey Ward's heterodoxy and particularly her bestselling and popular novel, *Robert Elsmere* (1888), which depicts an earnest Oxford clergymen's loss of faith in conventional Christianity and his adoption of a liberalism that stressed social action among the poor.

Progressive groups within the middle-class, together with some elements of the skilled working class, embarked upon a form of secular evangelism that had its roots in both liberal Protestant Christianity and the social liberalism of Green. It provided these groups with a sense of confidence, responsibility and a new desire to intervene and manage the lives of the poor. They believed that they had new scientific insights that justified a secular position of superiority to impose culturally specific norms, of how to live, on the poor. Some of these middle-class liberal 'Christians' abandoned their faith, while retaining strong moral standards: they attempted to ground ethics in reason rather than revelation.<sup>17</sup> They believed in a new scientific evolutionary theory (Lamarckian) as a basis for teaching moral virtues and they retained an almost evangelical zeal for moral character training. 'Character' was, however, a class-based concept which referred as much to an individual's social status as it did to their good behaviour. The MIL's teaching materials often emphasised the virtues of hygiene as part of its moral code directed at working class behaviour.

At all events, Christians found themselves campaigning with committed secularists, freethinkers, positivists, socialists, eugenicists, and atheists. The great diversity of views meant that a multitude of sometimes conflicting organisations were established. Christians

could join with them in so far as no clear battle lines were drawn between ‘secular’ and Christian morality, although the National Education Union was critical of any ‘secular education’ that ignored religion.<sup>18</sup> Many character education programmes proposed by the MIL for state schools generally ignored religion.<sup>19</sup> MIL publications reviewed Christian responses to its syllabuses and the MIL’s journal, the *Moral Instruction League Quarterly* (MILQ), changed to *Moral Education League Quarterly* (MELQ) in 1909, quoted a review that appeared in *The Christian Life*, which commended a MIL syllabus in the following terms: ‘We commend the book to teachers and preachers as a model one. The spirit of these lessons is precisely what we know as the Christian spirit.’<sup>20</sup> The MIL was keen to use sympathetic Christian sources to justify its aims. The *MELQ* in 1905 cites an article from the *Educational Times* claiming that MIL syllabuses are being taught in ‘hundreds of Church Schools without apparent trouble’.<sup>21</sup> The Bishop of Ripon while arguing against the MIL thought the ‘plan and scope’ of its teaching materials to be excellent.<sup>22</sup>

‘Secular’ was previously a term employed within Christian discourse and simply meant the concerns of daily life, including earning a living. As Michael Rectenwald has observed, ‘secular’ was never a neutral or content free term as it was always context-dependent.<sup>23</sup> In a series of letters in the pages of the *Scottish Guardian* from the mid-1830’s there is detailed discussion of the debates surrounding secular and religious education. This indicates that even at this stage there were some who wanted to ‘secularize secular education’.<sup>24</sup> Robert Owen had earlier in 1816 established a school at New Lanark in Scotland which he called the ‘Institute for the Formation of Character’.<sup>25</sup> George Combe was one of the first to relate secularity to education in his 1848 pamphlet ‘What Should Secular Education Embrace’, but he was careful to advocate that education ought to be secular without also being anti-religious.<sup>26</sup> In the late 1830s, however, the Committee of the Privy Council on Education began referring to that part of the school curriculum that was not religious as ‘secular’. It was not used in any pejorative sense, but merely employed to draw a contrast between religious

and non-religious school subjects.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, ‘secular’ could mean an education independent of religion or it could mean the advocacy of an outlook that was hostile to religion depending on the context and who was using the term. Many liberal Christians understood the term ‘secular’ to mean ‘non-denominational’, as opposed to ‘non-religious’, in spite of the ambiguity. They stressed the social role of Christianity and generally denied or de-emphasised the commitment to doctrinal beliefs. The MIL adopted a pragmatic approach by stating that all elements of the secular curriculum, including the example of the teacher, school environment and ethos, discipline, school organisation and management, as well as the home environment, contribute to character building in a ‘boundless vista’.<sup>28</sup>

While schools of the period continued to share the responsibility for moral formation with families and the church, there were specific challenges to the teaching of Christian virtues in consequence of industrialisation and urbanisation. This, through the movement of people and growth of technology and science, undermined the ability to enforce a common morality. The growing state apparatus also became an increasingly secular operation spurred on by the growing absence of religious uniformity and loosening of the Church of England’s wider social and moral influence. New secular educational philosophies also challenged specifically Christian moral sources for education. As Steve Bruce notes, modernisation created problems for religion.<sup>29</sup> In addition, battles continued among Christian denominations over the form of religious instruction in schools as well as the governance and funding of schools.

Nonconformists in particular, hostile to the Church of England, passed a declaration at their Manchester Conference in 1872 calling on the state not to provide religious teaching, however unsectarian, in any state sponsored system of national education. They adopted a ‘secular solution’, that they claimed was not hostile to religion and was restricted to secular subjects.<sup>30</sup> In the *MELQ* there is constant reference to the ‘religious problem’ in England without the MIL ever defining the phrase. There is much confidence by supporters of the MIL in the secular approach that it proposed as expressed in the claim that: ‘We are sure if systematic moral training, on the secular lines laid down by the Moral Instruction League, were introduced into the school curriculum, we should, during a single generation, see such an advance in the moral of the community as centuries of Bible reading and Bible teaching



have failed to accomplish.’<sup>31</sup> The Bible is not attacked directly, but rather seen as part of ‘the other great literature, and must be used strictly for character-giving ends, and in no sense theologically’.<sup>32</sup> The MIL Executive had already passed a resolution in July 1898 declaring that the ‘Bible comes under the head of general literature as a source of instructions and maxims for moral lessons’.<sup>33</sup> However, even this was not acceptable to the National Secular Society which withdrew support for the MIL in the following year. Despite this, members of the MIL now advocated the Bible as a text that should be taught as a piece of historical literature. Previously, the MIL had contested that the Bible was an ‘unjust text’, ‘fostering dogmatism’, and that it was ‘inexpedient as a textbook of morality’.<sup>34</sup>

The example of the South Place Religious Society illustrates the journey taken by some Christians.<sup>35</sup> The South Place was a nonconformist Protestant church that collectively rejected the doctrine of hell in 1787. The congregation then gradually rejected other doctrines of established Christian belief, including the Trinity. At each stage they lost members, though retaining enough to survive and in 1888 changed its name to the South Place Ethical Society having completely secularised their beliefs. Still, such societies were on the fringe of Christian opinion rather than indicative of the main stream. The MIL developed within a Christian context, but sought to reduce overt and explicit references to specific Christian doctrines which meant that reliance on Christianity for moral instruction, insofar as it remained, became more general and rationalised. This raises the question of whether moral virtues derived from Christian axioms can subsist in the long run. These ethical societies, including the MIL, exhibited mutating and mutually conflicting positions and ranged from religious groups advocating secular character training to eugenicists advocating the elimination of inferior moral characters. Certainly, advocates of secular moral education were not new in nineteenth century England. The general trend of the state to disentangle itself from religious institutions and denominational creeds had been part of a long tradition that had many Christian supporters.

This concern for ethical instruction had been given further impetus with the establishment of the Union of Ethical Societies in 1895, a movement that aimed to ‘disentangle moral ideals

from religious doctrines, metaphysical systems and ethical theories'.<sup>36</sup> Only two years later the Union; together with other 'progressive bodies', such as the National Secular Society and the Independent Labour Party,<sup>37</sup> founded the MIL. A pamphlet, entitled *Our Future Citizens*, published by the MIL in 1900 set forth its aims 'to substitute systematic non-theological Moral Instruction for the present religious teaching in all State Schools' and 'to make character the chief aim of school life'.<sup>38</sup> As already noted many character education programmes proposed by the MIL for state schools generally ignored religion.<sup>39</sup> The Independent Labour Party was dominated by Nonconformist Christian socialists who joined with secularists to found the MIL and their aim was to promote 'non-sectarian' character education which is how they understood 'secular'. This is why the Independent Labour Party became the first British political party to campaign for compulsory free secular education despite the religious views of many of its members, including its leader, Keir Hardie.<sup>40</sup> The socialist critique of education began with an attack on the religious moralising in the period, but it included a commitment to 'the development of Personal Character'.<sup>41</sup> The MIL campaigned for 'non-sectarian teaching' and particularly welcomed the 'Conscience Clause', otherwise known as the Cowper-Temple clause, in the Education Act of 1870 that allowed parents to withdraw their children from 'non-sectarian' religious instruction. The idea of 'non-sectarian' teaching was that of teaching and learning not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination and usually consisted of Bible reading, the recital of the Lord's Prayer and perhaps the singing a hymn. The effect of this on schools was that religious instruction was reduced to about one hour per week. It also meant that no religious group controlled the governance of the school, and the atmosphere or ethos of the school was no longer denominational in character or even definitively Christian. Even so, the MIL actively intervened to encourage parents to withdraw from this 'non-sectarian' religious instruction to such an extent that it was accused of bullying parents.<sup>42</sup> Many of the members and supporters of the MIL had been active mainstream Christians, but had to varying degrees, lost crucial elements of their faith – some had even trained for ministry in the different Churches, particularly for the Unitarian Church. Many did not reject God, but held the belief that God belongs to the private sphere.

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Felix Adler, a prominent American secularist visited in the 1890s a number of the Ethical Societies in London and wrote in 1890 defending the unsectarian moral instruction being advocated by these societies. He recognised that while there can be no complete agreement concerning the standard of right and wrong, it is possible, he believed, to see a deposit of common conscience or common residue of moral truth, upon which to build the moral unity of a people.<sup>43</sup> M. E. Sadler adopted a more moderate view concerning the diversity of views on how to connect religion and moral teaching, noting that moral instruction ‘is inherently connected with the sphere of religion’.<sup>44</sup> He recognised the interdependence between religion and moral instruction in schooling, but believed that parents should have the freedom to choose based on their religious convictions, and that this would aid the smooth administration of the education system.<sup>45</sup>

The members of the MIL redefined sin as a social shortcoming, but remained largely puritanical and highly judgemental about it. They were seen as pioneer social reformers working against the odds in challenging circumstances and often viewed as rather heroic, embarking upon missions of compassion on the model of the Good Samaritan. Some believed that human nature was essentially benign and could by virtue of reason and free will achieve self-perfection. By 1901, the MIL came to recognise that direct attacks on Bible teaching in schools were counter-productive insofar as the common discourse and vocabulary was still largely conditioned by the Bible or other religious texts. As Wright noted: ‘From very early on, the MIL courted the support of Christians, particularly those of a progressive persuasion.’<sup>46</sup> The phrase ‘non-theological’ was demoted from the main goal of the MIL’s to the infrequently quoted ‘basis’ of such goals, effectively reducing its emphasis in publicity material. Henry Harrold Johnson, the organising secretary and chief propagandist of the MIL, suggested, that this would enable the organisation to approach ‘theological bodies with better prospect of securing their cooperation.’<sup>47</sup> Johnson eventually grew disillusioned with the MIL’s secular approach, despite the MIL making increasing accommodations with Christianity, and resigned as Secretary to return to Christian ministry.<sup>48</sup>

In 1903, the MIL published its elementary school syllabus on moral instruction which was more pragmatic than radical. This restated traditional Judaeo-Christian moral virtues in

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relativistic terms and quite without theological foundations. The School Board Regulations of 1904 and the Code of 1906 both contained elements of the MIL's aims including that: 'the purpose of the public elementary school is to form and strengthen the character and develop intelligence, of the children entrusted to it.'<sup>49</sup> However, the government was unable or unwilling to say explicitly that moral education should be based on Christianity. The *MELQ* noted in July, 1906 that 'The state is dissociating itself more and more from religion ... as being outside its province, and is associating itself more and more with morals as its particular concern'.<sup>50</sup> The MIL policy was to lessen the influence of churches and place greater reliance on the State. The MIL was considered influential politically and conducted successful campaigns nationally and locally at this time.<sup>51</sup> It should also be noted that the MIL was only one of a number of organisations and events that were established at the time to improve the character of the working class. Others included the Empire Day, the Duty and Discipline Movements, as well as the Navy League.<sup>52</sup> The MIL did not advocate a particular philosophical system to justify its approach, but rather focused on the 'function of morality'.<sup>53</sup>

The November 1907 meeting of the MIL led to the establishment of the Eugenics Education Society (EES) with some of the same people as members.<sup>54</sup> The MIL values were largely shared by members of the EES, but the EES held that low moral character was something predominantly inherited and one solution was to sterilise the morally inferior and restrict marriage for the poor. The logic was clear: *biological inferiority* = *social inferiority* = *inferior moral character*. EES members therefore followed the teachings of Francis Galton who believed that character was hereditary. However, the EES had learnt from the MIL that it ought not to alienate Christians if it was to influence education policy. Similarly in 1907, the Secular Education League, was established on the basis of a concern for the moral education of the working-class and not surprisingly some prominent members of MIL joined it. One reason for its establishment was the ambiguous and confused language employed by the MIL regarding what 'secular' meant, such as: 'A secular solution to the 'religious difficulty' (in the narrow and materialistic sense of the word 'secular') we do not want; we want a sacred solution to that difficulty, and we summon Church and State to a truce on behalf of the moral

welfare of the child.’<sup>55</sup> Some clearly wanted a more secular approach and joined the Secular Education League believing the MIL had become too accommodating to Christianity. Still, it is important to recognise that the activities of all these societies were directed at the working-class. In his Presidential Address to the MIL in 1908, John Mackenzie also praised the addition of the word ‘citizenship’ to the MIL syllabuses as a move to a more civic ideal rather ‘as against any more individualistic conception of the moral good’.<sup>56</sup> In 1909 the MIL changed its name to the Moral Education League and in 1916 it became the Civic and Moral Education League. Finally, in 1919 the Civic and Moral Education League changed its name to the Civic Education League and largely deserted the moral aims of the original MIL.<sup>57</sup> The MIL had effectively begun to lose influence from 1910 onwards and gradually moved to advocating education for citizenship.<sup>58</sup>

### **Christian and Secular Origins of the MIL**

The influence and secular orientated campaigning strategies of Christian members and supporters of the MIL can be discerned in their political activities. This was especially the case with regard to Nonconformist Christians who sought equality with the Church of England regarding the provision of schooling, and the question of the election to School Boards became a political battlefield.<sup>59</sup> A number of local education authorities adopted secular approaches to character education and the MIL lists included the West Riding, Cheshire, West Suffolk and Caernarvonshire.<sup>60</sup> The MIL was not always consistent in its policy and sometimes advocated the complete exclusion of religious concerns from the school curriculum, and a limited function for the church in education generally. For example, a piece in *MELQ* noted:

‘The alliance between Church and State for the moral education of the young is at an end. Each must in future go its own way. The State is now to become, through its “unordained ministry” of teachers, the moral educator of its children. The Church may still be permitted entry to the schools, outside the ordinary curriculum, and subject to certain prescribed and limiting conditions: this is in the melting pot.’<sup>61</sup>

This political statement proposes the regulation of religion, and draws and defends lines of separation: the focus is on defining the ‘religious’ as opposed to the ‘secular’. The activities and writings of particular individuals illustrate their sceptical views and approaches. What triggered this sceptical secular approach varied enormously, but commonly included biblical criticism, Darwinism, and the problem of evil.

Frederic Harrison, who had begun to abandon his Christian faith in favour of a positivist religious position at Oxford University<sup>62</sup> before the establishment of the MIL, presided over a meeting, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1897, of ‘Fifty five delegates from various societies interested in the education of the working classes’.<sup>63</sup> A Moral Instruction School Board Election Conference was established in order to canvas candidates for the London School Board election to substitute religious instruction for non-theological moral instruction in London schools. James Picton, a Congregationalist preacher and radical Leicester MP who spoke at the inaugural meeting of the MIL on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1897, (at which he was elected a Vice-President), was also an early ally of the MIL movement.<sup>64</sup> Picton had for many years opposed religious instruction in schools and had previously been accused of heresy. He wrote a book on the secular use of the Bible in school - entitled *The Bible in School* - in which he discusses his involvement with the MIL. He argued that biblical historical ‘facts’ were questionable and therefore teachers should focus on the Bible’s moral message.<sup>65</sup> While a member of the first London School Board, he had voted against Bible reading in the city’s elementary schools, and campaigned unsuccessfully, for the Board to consider systematic moral instruction instead.<sup>66</sup> He later became a member of the Secular Education League’s Council. He had also supported Frederick James Gould,<sup>67</sup> a prominent secularist and founding member of the MIL, who wrote and taught about character building and argued for a secular approach to Bible reading.<sup>68</sup> Gould had been a Church of England teacher, but resigned after losing his Christian faith. It is interesting that Susan Budd, in her extensive archival research, found it remarkably common for Christian teachers to lose their faith in the course of preparing lessons on the Bible which led them to doubt Scripture as divinely inspired or literally true.<sup>69</sup> It often shook their confidence in the Christian faith without necessarily converting them to

atheism. Gould, was an atheist, but his teaching methods were highly influential and much praised by his religious opponents, and even appreciated in a resolution of a Synod of the Church of England.<sup>70</sup>

A schools inspector, Frank Herbert Hayward, a great admirer of Gould and a leading member of the English positivists, was also concerned with the reform and humanization of education and with the promotion of secular moral instruction in schools.<sup>71</sup> He was influenced by Johann Friedrich Herbart, a progressive educationalist, who had advocated that philosophy indicates the goals of education and that psychology might show us the way to achieve. Hayward designed a multi-disciplinary approach to moral education by bringing together different curricular perspectives on such particular themes as Empire Day, St. George's Day, or key historical figures in history in order to celebrate national identity. This 'secular liturgy' aimed to promote moral ideals and Gould believed could express, 'national, civic and social ideals through ceremonial music, recital of noble process and poetry, salutation of portraits, busts and emblems, pageant-scenes, etc. as integral parts of education, and enacted in a manner acceptable to all the citizenhood.'<sup>72</sup> It was therefore as much secular citizenship as it was secular character building. In April, 1902, as a member of the MIL, Hayward signed a petition to the London School Board, calling for systematic non-theological moral instruction in all schools 'and to make the formation of character the chief aim of life'.<sup>73</sup> He believed that the failure of the then current educational methods and the incapacity of Churches to meet the human and spiritual needs of children needed to be addressed. By this time, Hayward was a fully-fledged secularist, though he held an inclusive view and called for the wider recognition of different religions and cultures. He was not entirely anti-religious, but was certainly anti-Catholic and also sympathetic to the eugenics education movement. He published a book, *Education and the Heredity Spectre*, examining the influence of heredity on character formation which was warmly reviewed in the pages of the *MELQ*.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, many liberal Christian supporters of the MIL had effectively disassociated moral education from Christianity. However, there were few appeals to the ethical theories of the ancient Greeks as possible sources of moral authority, and it appeared that utilitarianism and social progress

were the favoured goals. The MIL defined itself as not actually hostile to religion, but distinguished between ‘ethical’ and ‘supernatural’ claims.<sup>75</sup>

Wright outlines the activities of a number of Christians active in the MIL including Stewart Headlam and Charles Pease<sup>76</sup> - the first of which eventually joined the Secular Education League. Hugh Chapman, a prominent Anglican supporter of MIL who invited Gould to give three demonstration lessons in his chapel between 1909 and 1911, was Chaplain at the Savoy. It is interesting that Gould taught a lesson on the ‘healing powers’ of St. Celia – rather less secular than the goals of MIL would appear to allow.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Gould declared: ‘I am a Freethinker, Atheist, Agnostic, Secularist, Positivist, Ethicist, Rationalist’ and his autobiography was entitled *The Life-Story of a Humanist*.<sup>78</sup> Chapman wrote in the *MELQ* in April 1912, - that he saw in the MIL’s objectives a way of counteracting the ‘clerical rut’ that dominated the training of the young. He argued that virtue could be taught independently of the various religious dogmas or creeds that he deemed ‘different means to the same end.’<sup>79</sup> He commented: ‘Surely we should welcome with profound gratitude a society whose influence ought to be immense, in gradually creating teachers whose aim shall be to bring the children throughout the world to think on “whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, or contain virtue or any praise,” independent of dogmas creeds.’<sup>80</sup>

As Chadwick notes: many of the intellectuals in this period believed that one could ‘not go on propagating a creed which you thought untrue, for the sake of preserving good conduct associated with that creed’.<sup>81</sup> John Stuart Mill<sup>82</sup> had acknowledged that Christianity expressed acceptable moral teaching, but he argued that such teaching could only have genuine warrant insofar as there was sufficient rational argument and evidence to justify its endorsement. Christianity, on this argument would no longer be necessary or required. Did members and supporters of the MIL argue along the lines of Mill in their pursuit of a ‘non-theological’ character building? We know that the MIL operated on a non-theological basis, that, ‘i.e. regards questions of supernatural sanctions and relationships as outside its scope, and concerns itself solely with the issues of character and conduct in their psychological and



sociological aspects.’<sup>83</sup> However, this prompted one member to write that the MIL should be more tolerant of Christianity, and he argued for greater co-operation with the Churches.<sup>84</sup>

John Henry Bradley, another supporter of the MIL, rejected his religious beliefs while at Cambridge University, while still maintaining ties with Christianity, through his commitments to its moral aspects. When he opened his own school in January 1893 at Bedales, near Haywards Heath in Sussex, he decided not to include the doctrinal framework of the Church. Instead of the evangelical beliefs of his childhood Bradley now believed that what was ‘real and all-important in religion was...not to be found in the doctrinal framework of the Church.’<sup>85</sup> The 1892 edition of the Bedales School prospectus states: ‘...Of religious teaching, if religious teaching means Jewish history, collect-learning, the critical study of a Greek text, or insistence upon certain ‘religious’ forms, there will be little.’<sup>86</sup> He spoke at the London International Moral Education Conference in 1908 on ‘Co-Education in its Effect on Character’, although did not speak about religion.

Edward Lyttelton, another clergyman, resigned his post as Headmaster of Eton in 1916, having undergone a spiritual crisis. This took the form of a need for self-discovery through a study of religious works. As an active member of the MIL he accepted that a ‘Belief in the teaching of morality without religion is found in practice to rest on the personification of an abstract ideal, first through the parental influence, next through other human examples. If by these means a child is enabled to apprehend an abstract ideal in any vital way he is being trained in religion as well as in morals, though there may be no profession of religion.’<sup>87</sup> Again the emphasis in all these cases is on the assertion of character building without religious belief – a secular approach. Lyttelton joined the Eugenics Education Society in 1907.

Other supporters of MIL, such as Arthur Sidgwick, were part of the revolt against the Anglican religious tests imposed on Oxbridge fellows (abolished by Act of Parliament in 1871), and in 1869 he resigned his Trinity fellowship. As J. M. Wilson says of him:

‘The characteristically Victorian and English qualities recalled by obituarists implied that he had outlived his time, representing an intuitively literary tradition of

scholarship and a high-minded devotion to duty rooted in a religious faith that deserted him by stages, as the unorthodox but devoted Christian who bore witness in his Rugby School Homilies turned into a humanist or 'naturalist'.<sup>88</sup>

Page Hopps was a radical Unitarian minister, who had been an advocate of secular education during his time as a School Board member in Glasgow in the 1870's, and he spoke at the MIL's inaugural meeting.<sup>89</sup> He also joined the Secular Education League in 1907.<sup>90</sup> Another supporter of MIL, Alice Ravenhill, became involved with the MIL after questioning her faith. She was an educationist and supporter of the household science movement who travelled globally promoting her beliefs on the importance of home economics. She experienced: 'A period of recuperation in Bournemouth following an attack of rheumatic fever in 1887 brought her into the care of a doctor who challenged her religious faith, and, although she never rejected Christianity, she later valued the experience for enabling her to question religious dogma and to weigh carefully the arguments on both sides of a vital question.'<sup>91</sup>

By the early 1900s Professor John Muirhead at the University of Birmingham had already begun to lecture to trainee teachers on the importance of character and ethics and had encouraged other university and college training courses to do the same.<sup>92</sup> The MIL had considerable influence on the training of teachers and by 1901 trainee teachers in London, Manchester and Cambridge were being asked in examination questions: 'In what does character consist? How would you cultivate it?' These questions were premised on a secular understanding of character.<sup>93</sup> Three Scottish professors of philosophy, John Mackenzie, President of MIL (Cardiff University), John Muirhead, Vice President of MIL, (Birmingham University) and John McCunn, (Liverpool University) produced texts of intellectual note on what a secular moral education might look like.<sup>94</sup> McCunn published the highly praised *The Making of Character*, which was re-printed nine times between 1900 and 1931.<sup>95</sup>

There appears to have been minimal involvement in the MIL on the part of Roman Catholics, with the exception of Fr. Sydney Smith who did pay attention to MIL activities.<sup>96</sup> There were

a number of articles and discussions on and of the Catholic theory of moral education in editions of the *MELQ*.<sup>97</sup> Two Catholic books on character education published in 1909 and 1910 make no reference to the work of the MIL. The first was by the French Dominican Martin Gillet, entitled *The Education of Character*, and translated into English in 1909 and the second *The Formation of Character*, was published in 1910, by the English Jesuit Ernest Hill. Both texts promote the idea of character building in schools through the nurturing of virtue, but within a wholly Christian theology of moral education. Both texts are more theoretical than the works produced by the practitioner members of the MIL which largely defined character building in practical terms.<sup>98</sup> These Catholic texts were read almost exclusively within the Catholic community in England and did not much influence the wider debate.

In summary, many of the members of MIL had unusual combinations of beliefs on a spectrum from orthodoxy to irreligion that largely resulted in their support for various secular education policies. Nevertheless, the MIL attempted to negotiate a somewhat different path from both the Secular Education League and the Eugenics Education Society and this is perhaps best described by A. J. Waldegrave, Chair of the Executive Committee of the MIL, in the pages of *MELQ*. Waldegrave outlined a new vision of what non-theological moral instruction might look like by emphasising that the MIL thought it necessary to disassociate moral ideas from an exclusively Biblical setting: ‘Gross superstitions and crude theological conceptions were being taught, on the assumption that they were necessary to the welfare of the child and the nation; and the League set itself to overturn all that’.<sup>99</sup> Waldegrave noted that the actions of the MIL were at first scarcely distinguishable from that of the Secular Education League, but he recognised that: ‘The real problem has been obscured by the controversy between the secularists and the sectarians no less than by that between the several sorts of sectarians themselves’.<sup>100</sup> The issue had clearly changed from defining MIL as a purely secular organisation to recognising rather different concerns. However, while the MIL warmed up its approach to religion, its members still saw Christianity serving a ‘makeshift’ purpose and ultimately character education is still considered by the MIL to be

part of the secular curriculum. Mackenzie recognised that members and supporters of the MIL had very different approaches to ethics and called for a common basis for ethics.<sup>101</sup>

## Conclusion

The MIL approach to moral character was clearly both practical and largely secular in nature; it sought to provide advice to schools on non-denominational secular moral instruction. Moreover, the advice was premised on a non-religious worldview. The organisation eventually limited its concerns for the educational promotion of character to education for citizenship. The middle-class members and supporters of the MIL saw themselves as the moral guardians of society<sup>102</sup> and they ‘idolised morality, giving it that supreme importance which they were increasingly unable to accord to God’.<sup>103</sup> It was also a period which saw the rise of ideas on minimal conditions for human flourishing. The traditional association of morality with religion obscured the fact that the mainstream Churches deplored the substitution of secular morality for religion and often severely criticised the MIL. As early as 1905, many prominent Christians in England issued a statement to all local education authorities demanding that moral training be conducted ‘on a Christian basis, and inspired by Christian motives’.<sup>104</sup> Wright’s conclusion that the MIL was a secularist movement seems accurate.<sup>105</sup> The growing polarisation of views on moral questions also led to a sharper divide between secular and religious notions of moral education by the 1920s. For some members of the MIL, Christianity might have been contributory to morality; for others, the absence of a belief in Christianity might have ensured an outward conformity with religiously based moral standards. Character building within the MIL was largely conceived as moral education without the theological origins and implications of Christian beliefs. Religious values could be hidden under secular language which meant that while some Christians could interpret its work religiously, others interpreted it in more secular moral terms.

Still, while Wright<sup>106</sup> concludes that the MIL adopted a secular teaching approach, it seems that the organisation itself used the word ‘secular’ in ambiguous ways to describe its activities. There is always a danger of being misunderstood when we use the word ‘secular’ in the context of nineteenth century educational approaches, insofar as some believed that

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid* and see *Church Times*, March 18<sup>th</sup> 1905.

‘secular’ was simply another, softer, term for atheism while for others it represented a version of character building that was suspect. Was it possible for ‘secular’ to be used in non-religious terms which was at the same time not anti-religious? If not, then from elsewhere did the MIL derive its ‘secular’ approach? The members and supporters of the MIL were largely Christian’s with doubts, few were atheists. Many were unclear about the ideological nature and connotations of a ‘secular’ approach and for some losing or questioning their Christian faith was often both agonising and traumatic. This raises the question of whether it’s syllabuses for use in schools were really a form of Christian moral teaching or something more distinct, yet with Christian roots. The MIL certainly emerged from within Christianity and from the early secular movement and it is worth noting that many of the secretaries to branches of the MIL abroad were Christian ministers.<sup>107</sup> This practical secular approach to character building still seems shaped by Christian morality, hence any thoroughgoing secular approach to moral education remained nascent and suggestive. Indeed, as Larsen shows: ‘the Secularist movement lost a far greater percentage of its top leadership to reconversion than the Christian ministry lost to a crisis of faith’.<sup>108</sup>

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were certainly significant developmental stages towards conceiving character education, or more accurately in development of the language of character in England. This was a time at which character education encompassed a broad range of ideas, beliefs and practices, not all of them compatible or reconcilable. Tensions abounded in the usage. First, the language was significantly class-inflected and, for many, character building was but training in the manners expected towards those considered their elders and betters. Second, liberal Christians, predominantly but not exclusively of the nonconformist type, opposed ‘sectarian’ education. This chiefly meant Church of England schooling, and therefore they joined with secularists to campaign for non-sectarian, or more precisely, ‘secular’ character education. Third, more secular members and supporters of the MIL used a non-theological language as the basis for character education, and sought the removal of religious influence on education. These contrast with their liberal Christian supporters who took both ‘secular’ and ‘non-theological’ to signify a neutral approach. Secular advocates aimed to secularise the ‘secular’ understanding of liberal Christians while nonconformist Christians appeared more concerned to remove the influence of Anglicanism

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<sup>107</sup> See *MELQ* no 18, 1<sup>st</sup> October, (1909) for a list of branch secretaries in the UK and Abroad.

<sup>108</sup> Timothy Larsen, *Crisis of Faith: Honest Faith in Nineteenth Century England*, *Ibid*, 241.

from the national education system. Clearly, these tensions represented mutually conflicting positions on the question of what constituted ‘secularity’ in character building.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 237.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick J. Gould, *Stepping Stones to Agnosticism*, (London: Watts and Co, 1980) 78.

<sup>3</sup> Terrence Bell and Richard Bellamy, R, (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 9-10, also Brian Harrison, *The Transformation of British Politics 1860-1991*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 58, and Stephen Heathorn, 'Let us remember that we, too, are English: Constructions of Citizenship and National Identity in English Elementary School Reading Books 1880-1914', *Victorian Studies* 38, (1995): 395-427, 423.

<sup>4</sup> James Arthur, Secular Education and Religion, in *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, in (eds.) Phil Zukerman and John R. Shook, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 401. See Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 94, and also Susannah Wright, 'Educating the Secular Citizen in English Schools 1897-1938', *Cultural and Social History*, 6 (2018) (Online, January 2018).

<sup>5</sup> See H. T. Mark, *An Outline of the History of Educational Theories in England*, (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1898) for a discussion of the emergence of educational theories that split religion from moral education.

<sup>6</sup> Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930*, *Ibid*, 64 and 75 and Timothy Larsen, *Crisis of Faith: Honest Faith in Nineteenth Century England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Callum G. Brown, *Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, (London: Routledge, 2009) 169 who shows how Christian identity remained central to British popular culture.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Harrison, *'Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002) and Roy Porter, (2000) *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, (London: Allan Lane, 2000) 95ff. John W. Burrows, *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought 1848-1914*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) traces the development of materialism and the scientific method on English thought during the period.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey R. Searle, *A New England?: Peace and War 1886-1918*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) 198ff.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011) 51, see also James Arthur, (2003) *Education with Character: The moral economy of schooling*, (London: Routledge, 2003) 12-24.

<sup>11</sup> Zola adopted naturalism in his writings which was influenced by Darwinism. He writes a series of 20 novels which illustrate how the vices of one generation flow into the next indicating that character building is futile as the working class are predestined to failure.

<sup>12</sup> See Geoffrey R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought 1899-1944*, (University of California Press, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> Cited in John M. Mackenzie, (ed.) *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) 130.

<sup>14</sup> Jenny Holt, *Public School Literature, Civic Education and Politics of Male Adolescence*, (London: Routledge, 1986).

<sup>15</sup> See Peter Gordon and John White, *Philosophers and Educational Reform: The Influence of Idealism on British Educational Thought*, (London: Routledge, 2010) for a discussion of Green's influence on educational reform.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew Grimley, *Citizens, Community and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State between the Wars*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Peter Harrison, 'Religion' and the Religions in the English Enlightenment, *Ibid* and Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> James L. Garvin, (1932) *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, (London: Macmillan, 1932) 98.

<sup>19</sup> *A Graduated Syllabus of Moral and Civic Instruction for Secondary Schools*, prepared by MIL, (London: MIL, 1903) and *Youth's Noble Path: Moral Instruction*, by Frederick J. Gould, London: MIL, 1912), *Moral Instruction in Elementary Schools in England and Wales: a Return Compiled from Official Documents by Henry Harold. Johnson*, (1908) and A J. Waldegrave, (1906) *Teacher's Handbook of Moral Lessons*, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1906).

<sup>20</sup> *MILQ* no 1, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1905): 3.



<sup>21</sup> *MILQ* no 3, 1<sup>st</sup> October, (1905): 3.

<sup>22</sup> *MILQ* no 4, 1<sup>st</sup> January, (1906): 6.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Rectenwald, *Nineteenth Century British Secularism*, (London: Pegrave Macmillian, 2016) 4.

<sup>24</sup> In *The Spirit of Sectarianism, Morally Tested by means of certain Speeches and Letters*, (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1837).

<sup>25</sup> See James Arthur, *Education with Character: The moral economy of schooling*, *Ibid*, 11-12 and Robert Owen, *The Life of Robert Owen*, (London: Frank Cass, 1967) (re-printed).

<sup>26</sup> A C. Grant, (1968) 'A Note on 'Secular' Education in the Nineteenth Century', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 16, no. 3, (1968): 308-317, 312.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Ely, 'The Origins of the Debate over 'Secular' Instruction', *History of Education* 9 no. 2, (1980): 143-157.

<sup>28</sup> *MILQ* no 3, 1<sup>st</sup> October, (1905): 2.

<sup>29</sup> Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: secularization of the West*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) 2.

<sup>30</sup> See David W. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics 1870-1914*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982) and especially 'An Appeal by Nonconformists to Nonconformists' Tract 13, Secular Education League, (1907): 26.

<sup>31</sup> *MILQ* no 5, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1906): 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>33</sup> *MILQ* no 5, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1906): 2.

<sup>34</sup> *MIL*, *Our Future Citizens*, London, (1900) 11-13.

<sup>35</sup> Ian MacKillop, *The British Ethical Societies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 58, 41-3, 48-9, 49-53.

<sup>36</sup> Ian MacKillop, *The British Ethical Societies*, *Ibid*, 71, 144-5

<sup>37</sup> Susannah Wright, (2016) *Morality and Citizenship in English Schools: Secular Approaches 1897-1944*, (London: Pelgrave, 2016) 83.

<sup>38</sup> Moral Instruction League, *Our Future Citizens*, London, (1900) 1.

<sup>39</sup> *A Graduated Syllabus of Moral and Civic Instruction for Secondary Schools*, (London: Moral Education League, 1903) *Youth's Noble Path: Moral Instruction*, by Frederick J. Gould. (London: Moral Education League, 1912), *Moral Instruction in Elementary Schools in England and Wales: a Return Compiled from Official Documents by Henry Harold Johnson and A. J. Waldegrave*, *Teacher's Handbook of Moral Lessons*, (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1908).

<sup>40</sup> Bob Holman, *Keir Hardie: Labour's Greatest Hero*, (London: Lion, 2010) 126.

<sup>41</sup> Kevin Manton, *Socialism and Education in Britain 1883-1902*, (London: Woburn Press, 2001) 6-9. See also, Sidney Ball, 'The moral aspects of socialism', *International Journal of Ethics* 6 no. 3, (1896): 291-322.

<sup>42</sup> Ian MacKillop, *The British Ethical Societies*, *Ibid*, 167.

<sup>43</sup> Felix Adler, 'The freedom of ethical fellowship', *International Journal of Ethics* 1 (1890): 16-30, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Michael E. Sadler, Introduction, *Moral Instruction and Training in Schools Report of an International Inquiry*, (London: Longmans, 1908) 25-26.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

<sup>46</sup> Susannah Wright (2006) 'The Struggle for Moral Education in English Elementary Schools 1879–1918', PhD thesis, (Oxford Brookes University, 2006) 9.

<sup>47</sup> Gustav Spiller, *Ethical Movements in Great Britain*, (London: Farleigh Press, 1934).

<sup>48</sup> Susannah Wright, 'The Struggle for Moral Education in English Elementary Schools 1879–1918' *Ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> School Board Regulations 1904 and Code of Education 1906, London: Department of Education.

<sup>50</sup> *MILQ* no 6, 1<sup>st</sup> July, (1906): 4.

- <sup>51</sup> Pauline M. H. Mazumdar, (2011) *Eugenics, Human Genetics and Human Failings*, (London: Routledge, 2011) 25-26.
- <sup>52</sup> Susannah Wright, S., (2006) 'The Struggle for Moral Education in English Elementary Schools 1879–1918', *Ibid*, 51.
- <sup>53</sup> *MILQ* no 8, 1<sup>st</sup> January, (1907): 4. This edition outlines the MIL worldview on moral education.
- <sup>54</sup> Geoffrey R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics in Britain 1900-1914*, (Leyden: Kluwer Academic Publishing, 1976) 10.
- <sup>55</sup> *MILQ* no 11, 1<sup>st</sup> October, (1907): 4.
- <sup>56</sup> John S. Mackenzie, 'The Problem of Moral Education', *International Journal of Ethics* 18 no 3, (1908): 273-291, 279.
- <sup>57</sup> Susannah Wright, (2016) *Morality and Citizenship in English Schools: Secular Approaches 1897-1944*, *Ibid*, 84.
- <sup>58</sup> John S. Mackenzie, (1917) Civic Moral Education, *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 27, Issue 4, 446-463. The MIL was eventually subsumed within the civics teaching department at the LePlay House in 1924.
- <sup>59</sup> N. J. Richards, 'Religious Controversy and the school boards 1870-1902', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 18 no 2, (1970):180-196.
- <sup>60</sup> *MELQ* no 2, 1<sup>st</sup> July, (1905): 2. See also Edward Royal, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain 1866-1915*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980) 316. Henry Harold Johnson details a full list in his *Moral Instruction in Elementary Schools in England and Wales*, (London: David Nutt, 1908).
- <sup>61</sup> *MILQ* no 6, 1<sup>st</sup> July, (1906): 2.
- <sup>62</sup> Frederic Harrison, *The Creed of a Layman: Apologia pro fide mea*, (London: Macmillan, 1907) 3-4. Harrison (1831-1923) was a positivist and prolific writer.
- <sup>63</sup> Cited in N. J. Richards, 'Religious Controversy and the school boards 1870-1902', *Ibid*.
- <sup>64</sup> *MELQ* no 20, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1910): 7.

<sup>65</sup> James A. Picton, *The Bible in School: A Question of Ethics*, (London: Watts and Co, 1901) 95.

<sup>66</sup> Paul White, *Thomas Huxley: Making the 'Man of Science'*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 124.

<sup>67</sup> Frederick Gould (1855-1938) had been a chorister at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and Anglican teacher. See Robert N. Bérard, 'Frederick James Gould and the Transformation of Moral Education', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 35 no 3, (1987): 233–47.

<sup>68</sup> Ian MacKillop, *The British Ethical Society*, *Ibid*, 164-165.

<sup>69</sup> Susan Budd, (1967) The Loss of Faith: Reason and Unbelief Among Members of the Secular Movements in England 1850-1950, *Past and Present* 36 no 1, (1967): 106-125, 110.

<sup>70</sup> *MELQ* no 16, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1909): 8.

<sup>71</sup> Rosalind Rawnsley, (1998) The Celebration Movement and the influence of J. F. Herbart on moral education in England through the work of Frank Herbert Hayward (1872-1954), University of Manchester PhD and Bhimani, N., 'F. H. Hayward: A Forgotten Educationalist or an Ethical Failure,' MA, (*University of London, Institute of Education* (2015)).

<sup>72</sup> Frederick J. Gould, (1921) *History the Teacher: Education Inspired by Humanity's Story*, (London: Methuen, 1921):12.

<sup>73</sup> Susannah Wright, 'The Struggle for Moral Education in English Elementary Schools 1879–1918', *Ibid*.

<sup>74</sup> *MILQ* no 14, 1<sup>st</sup> October, (1908): 9-13.

<sup>75</sup> *MELQ* no 21, 1<sup>st</sup> July, (1910): 2.

<sup>76</sup> Susannah Wright, *Morality and Citizenship in English Schools: Secular Approaches 1897-1944*, *Ibid* 53, 94.

<sup>77</sup> *MELQ* no 19, 1<sup>st</sup> January, (1910): 1ff. This entry outlines the actual lesson delivered by Gould.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Nicholas Walter, *Humanism: Finding Meaning in the World*, (London: Rationalist Press, Association, 1994) 69. See Frederick J. Gould, *The Life-Story of a Humanist*, (London: Watts and Co, 1923) 72-80 which outlines his secularist thinking.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 13

<sup>80</sup> *MELQ* no 28, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1(912): 2

<sup>81</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*, *Ibid*, 230-231.

<sup>82</sup> John S. Mill, *Autobiography*, in *Collected Works* 1, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1981) 210.

<sup>83</sup> *MELQ* no 19, 1<sup>st</sup> January, (1910): 6.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>85</sup> *The Educational Innovators: Volume II: Progressive Schools 1881–1967* By William A. C. Stewart and W Phillip McCann, (London: Pelgrave Macmillan, 1968) 272, and 274.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>87</sup> In Gustav Spiller, *Ethical Movements in Great Britain*, *ibid* 17

<sup>88</sup> J. M. Wilson, (1915 and 1916) (ed.) 2 vols. in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>89</sup> *The Times*, 14 October (1897): 8; R. K. Webb (2004) Hopps, John Page (1834 – 1911), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>90</sup> See *Secular Education League Council Minutes*, 1907 Appendix I list of the members of the Council.

<sup>91</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, entry for Alice Ravenhill.

<sup>92</sup> John Muirhead, (1908) The religious foundation of moral instruction, in Michael. E. Sadler, Introduction, *Moral Instruction and Training in Schools Report of an International Inquiry*, *Ibid*.

<sup>93</sup> Nathan Roberts, Character in the Mind: citizenship, education and psychology in Britain, 1880-1914, *History of Education* 33 no 2, (2004): 177-197, 177.

<sup>94</sup> See *MELQ* no 24, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1911).

<sup>95</sup> John McCunn, *The Making of Character: Some Educational Aspects of Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900).

<sup>96</sup> Susannah Wright, (2016) *Morality and Citizenship in English Schools: Secular Approaches 1897-1944*, *Ibid*, 124-125, and 91 shows how in 1906 three Catholic MPs supported the MIL in Parliament. See Sydney Smith, 'The Moral Education Conference', *The Month*, November, (1908): 449-463.

<sup>97</sup> See especially the edition of *MILQ* no 8, 1<sup>st</sup> January (1907).

<sup>98</sup> John Muirhead, Chair of the Ethical Society, notes in his *Reflections* (ed. J. W. Harvey), (London: Routledge, 1942) 74. That the ethical movement was more interested in the practical than in the philosophical.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid* no 24, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1911), this edition is devoted to an academic consideration of character education

<sup>101</sup> Daniel J. Kelves, *In the Name of Eugenics*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004) 4, and Richard Lynn, (2001) *Eugenics: A Re-assessment*, (Praeger: Westport, Connecticut, 2001) 4.

<sup>102</sup> Basil Mitchell, *Morality: Religious and Secular*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 161.

<sup>103</sup> *MILQ* no 1, 1<sup>st</sup> April, (1905): 1 and the Statement was printed in full *The Times*, 21<sup>st</sup> January 1905.

<sup>104</sup> Susannah Wright, *Morality and Citizenship in English Schools: Secular Approaches 1897-1944*, *Ibid*, 88-113.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid* and see *Church Times*, March 18<sup>th</sup> 1905.

<sup>106</sup> See *MELQ* no 18, 1<sup>st</sup> October, (1909) for a list of branch secretaries in the UK and Abroad.

<sup>107</sup> Timothy Larsen, *Crisis of Faith: Honest Faith in Nineteenth Century England*, *Ibid*, 241.