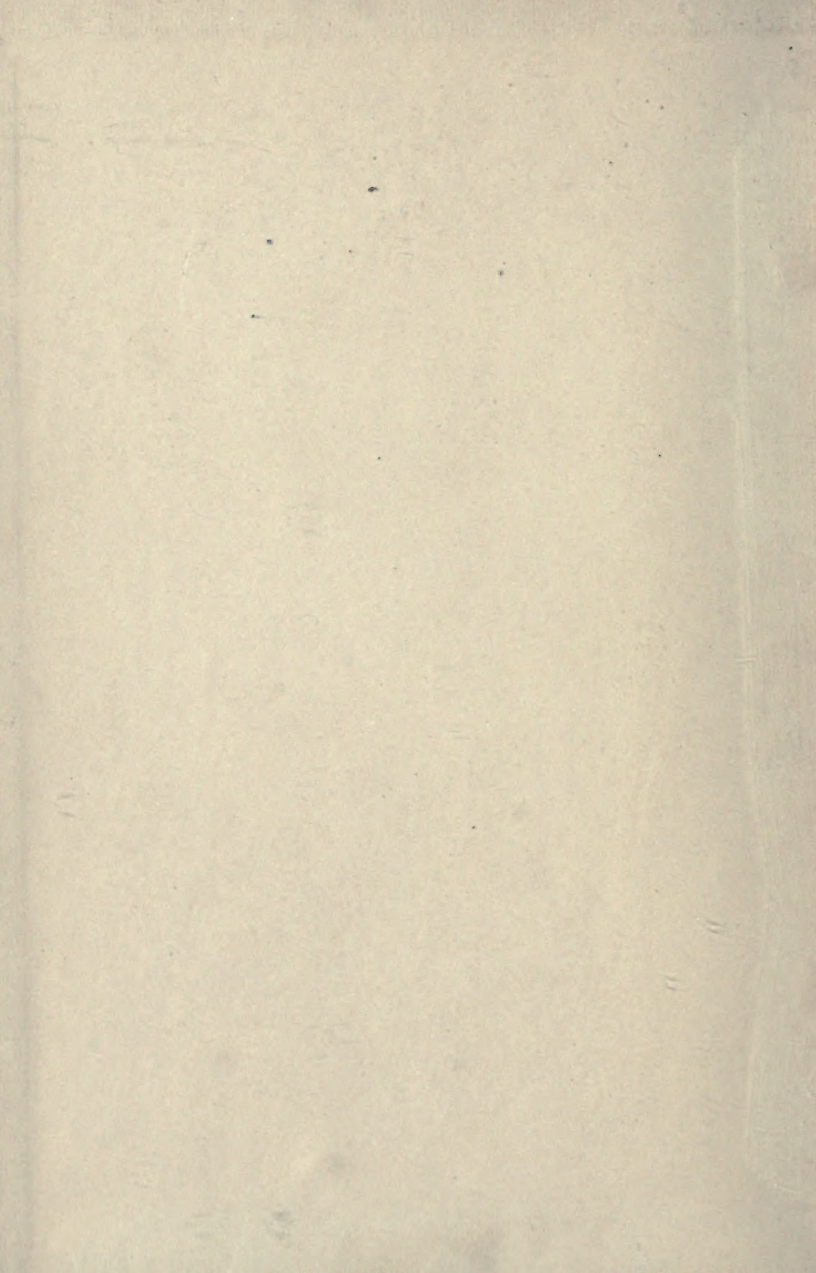




CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION  
IN THE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ONTARIO

JAMES MIDDLEMISS





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J. K. Macdonald, Esq.,  
with kindest regards of  
The Author.

Toronto: - 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1902.



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# CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

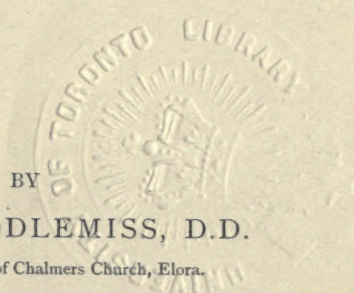
IN THE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ONTARIO

BY

JAMES MIDDLEMISS, D.D.

*Emeritus Minister of Chalmers Church, Elora.*



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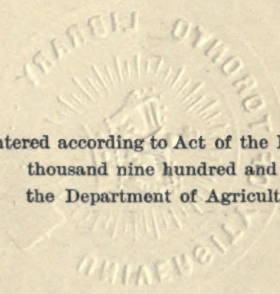
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TO

**The Honourable George W. Ross, LL.D.,**

*Prime Minister of the Province of Ontario,*

*To whose zeal, energy, and administrative ability our Educational interests owe so much, this volume, issued in the hope that it may contribute to the furtherance of the Christian interests of the Province, in which no one can be more in sympathy with the writer than our Honourable Premier, is with his kind and courteous permission inscribed, with the highest respect, by*

THE AUTHOR.





## PREFACE.

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THE writer's contention in the following pages is two-fold. It is contended, in the *first* place, that Ontario being a Christian province or state, and its people generally recognizing the essential importance of the religious instruction of their children, its authorized teachers, whose certificates of eligibility as Public School instructors are given, in all cases, only on their profession of a Christian faith, should be qualified and required to instruct their pupils in the teachings of the common Christianity of the Protestant population of the Province, if, as we think it can be sufficiently shown, there is no objection to their doing so, either valid in principle or practically insuperable. This involves the subordinate contention that, while the educational authority of the Province professes its persuasion that "Christianity is the basis of our school system, and that therefore its principles should pervade it throughout," its obligation, as a Christian authority, is not adequately met by an arrangement which the experience of many years has proved to be impracticable. We refer to the relegation, by the Education Department, of Christian instruction to the ministers of religion, by a *permission* which suggests their doing in the Public School room

what they, with their helpers, are always doing, and will doubtless continue to do, with more convenience of time and place, while it has no regard to the Christian instruction of those who are most in need of it, besides being, as we shall see, objectionable in several other respects.

It is contended, in the *second* place, that the hope, at one time entertained, of securing the co-education of the children of Roman Catholics and Protestants, by the exclusion of positive religious instruction from the school programme, having been disappointed; and our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, who strenuously objected to the absence of religious instruction from the day school, having secured, as a constitutional right for all time to come, the establishment of Separate Schools, in which their children have instruction imparted to them, by legally qualified and salaried teachers, not only in the doctrines which they hold in common with Protestants, but in those in which they differ from them, it is a matter of simple justice that the Protestants of Ontario should have equal privilege, by the introduction into its Public Schools of instruction in their common Christianity—instruction, that is, in what they believe in common to be the teaching of the Word of God.

Leaving it entirely to the parties immediately concerned to determine the character of the Christian instruction to be imparted in Roman Catholic Separate Schools, let us here say that we plead for no Protestant teaching in our Public Schools except that which, while sufficiently positive and definite, shall be strictly non-controversial. We would not, even though we could, allow of any reference in text-books, or by teachers, that might be offensive to our fellow-citizens of the Roman Catholic persuasion, or of any

other persuasion, except such as a regard for truth, Scriptural or historical, might imperatively require. Nor would we permit, on the part of teachers, any ungenerous reference to those whose religious views are not in accord with the common Christianity of the Province. At the same time, we are under constraint to give prominence to our conviction that the present educational situation of the Province is a strangely anomalous one. That a right acknowledged by the legislative authority of the Province in relation to a comparatively small minority of the people, and even engrafted on the constitution of the Dominion, should be denied to the large majority, could not fail to be regarded as a very grave injustice were it not that the circumstances that have led to a situation so exceptionally anomalous forbid our characterizing it in such strong language. But account for it as we may, we cannot but regard the continued existence of the present situation as being altogether indefensible. Against a situation so anomalous and so injurious, as we believe, to the best interests of the community, we can never cease to reclaim, till it shall have become a thing of the past.

While we have no desire that the right or privilege which has been accorded to our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens should be withdrawn or curtailed, we think it is well that it should be borne in mind that, in countries in which Protestants constitute a comparatively small proportion of the population, they have generally, if not always, been well contented with having the permission of the civil authorities to educate their children in schools maintained at their own expense, without looking for Government recognition or assistance; whereas in Ontario,



where they are the large majority of the population, circumstances have resulted in the unprecedented anomaly, that, while teachers of the minority are at full liberty to indoctrinate their pupils in every distinctive tenet of the Roman Catholic Church, the teachers of the majority are absolutely forbidden to make any doctrine of Christianity a subject of instruction, properly so-called. It is only as being professing Christians that they receive certificates that make them eligible for appointment by Public School trustees. And we may assume that if, being what they profess to be, they cannot but make their teaching savour of Christianity, they will not be rebuked for so doing, but rather commended. But to *teach* any distinctive doctrine of Christianity, not only however important in the view of Protestants, as, for example, Luther's article of the standing or falling Church, but however important in the view of Roman Catholics and Protestants alike, as, for example, the Supreme Deity of Christ and the sacrificial character of His death ; or, in other words, to present any of these doctrines, or the like, to their pupils as matters of faith because divinely revealed, is absolutely forbidden.

One cannot wonder if there are many who are not a little grieved in view of the persistent continuance of a state of things which they cannot but regard as being, in a high degree, discreditable to a Christian province, and especially to its Protestant profession. The writer, who was, almost from the beginning of his long ministry till after its close, officially connected with the educational institutions of his locality, has, from time to time, called attention to the anomaly referred to, and endeavoured to meet the objections which some respected brethren offer to his views on the subject of Christian instruction in the

Public Schools. He cannot, at his advanced age, hope to rejoice in seeing the success of the efforts that have been made, though intermittently, for a number of years, to secure justice to the Protestants of Ontario. But he does not know how he can so well employ the leisure of his retirement from the active duties of the ministry, as in putting into permanent form, as a legacy to his adopted country, the views that he has taken his part in urging not unfrequently in the press, and especially at a time when political feeling ran high in connection with the action of the Education Department—a time which cannot be remembered without extreme regret on the part of those who were then pleading hopefully for the introduction of Christian instruction into the Public Schools. He cannot, however, renounce the hope that the anomaly which some have so long and earnestly pleaded against shall, after marvellous persistence, exist only in remembrance. This hope is to him reason sufficient why he should to the end persist in protesting against it, in the interests of posterity, only to which he, and many others of us, can pay the debt which we owe to our fathers, in our inheritance from them of the inestimable privilege and benefit of the stated religious instruction of the day school, which is now denied to our children, notwithstanding frequent and earnest remonstrance, and in the face of accumulating evidence that an education in which Christian instruction is conspicuous by its absence, is no boon to its possessor.

That the writer is known as a supporter of the party that has so long held the reins of the Government of Ontario will, he trusts, ensure his being credited with the total absence of a disposition to attach blame to it, in pleading, as he purposes to do, for what he cannot but

regard as simple justice to the Protestants of the Province. It can hardly as yet be entirely forgotten that when, some years ago, unworthy attempts, as he regarded them, were being made to prejudice the electorate against the Government, in connection with the action of the Minister of Education, he was constrained to expose himself to unfavourable notice, in the hope that his note of warning, in reference to endeavours to allure electors from their allegiance, might not be uttered in vain.

If the following contention shows that his views are, no less than they have always been, different from or (let it be admitted) opposed to the expressed views of the Minister who now worthily occupies the place of Premier of the Province, he is fully persuaded that his free handling of the views and action of the educational authority of the Province will not be regarded as inconsistent with loyalty to his party. Its leaders do not claim infallibility; and while they cannot but desire to know the mind of the people, and may be expected to give practical effect to popular conviction, in the interests of the community committed to their rule, he cannot but think that the pleadings of one whose loyalty cannot be questioned will have more weight with them than those of one who is less pronounced in his political sentiments.

JAMES MIDDLEMISS.

ELORA, 30th April, 1901.



# CONTENTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Undesigned exclusion of religious instruction from the Common Schools—Establishment of Separate Schools to be regarded as giving to Protestants a special propriety in the Public Schools, and claim to instruction in them of the common Christianity of Protestants—No blame to be attached to Roman Catholics ; but the Public Schools not justly characterized as “godless” . . . . .	15
---	----

## CHAPTER II.

The great bar to the success of our contention—The apathy of many and the opposition of some . . . . .	30
--	----

## CHAPTER III.

Opposition on the ground of principle—Religious instruction in the National Schools not to be identified with the national endowment of religion— <i>Reductio ad absurdum</i> —Rights of majority and its generous regard to minority—An inconsistency of opponents . . . . .	38
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

Charges of the <i>Educational Journal</i> —Inconsistency—The question misapprehended—Unreasonable apprehensions .	60
---	----

## CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
The <i>Journal's</i> inconsistency further exhibited—Appeal to Scripture in opposition to our contention—Reference to the Congregational churches . . . . .	78

## CHAPTER VI.

State of the question—Objections of Christian brethren endorsed by the educational authority—The one alternative	93
--	----

## CHAPTER VII.

Relegation of Christian instruction in the Public Schools to Protestants ministers an inadequate fulfilment of the obligation of the civil ruler, and otherwise objectionable . . . . .	112
---	-----

## CHAPTER VIII.

Practical difficulties—I. Differences among Protestants—High order of their unity, and their differences a trifle . . . . .	124
---	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

Practical difficulties—II. Charges of skepticism, defective knowledge and want of sympathy—A great injustice to teachers as a body—The Protestant Church is equal to the full perennial supply of Christian teachers . . . . .	138
--	-----

## CHAPTER X.

Review and summary of previous argument . . . . .	151
---	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

Misapprehension of the action of Protestant ministers—Charges of clerical agitation in the interest of sectarianism repelled . . . . .	160
--	-----

CONTENTS.

13

CHAPTER XII.

PAGE

The essential importance of parental interest—Parental neglect an argument in favour of our contention—Permanent value of Christian knowledge—The Apostle Paul's valuation of its diffusion . . . . . 183

CHAPTER XIII.

Specific objections to the use of the Bible in the Public School  
—I. Alleged indelicacy of some of its utterances—II. Destruction of the Canaanites . . . . . 197

CHAPTER XIV.

Instruction in the evidences of Christianity - . . . . 211

NOTES AND ADDENDUM.

Notes . . . . . 227  
Addendum on the memorizing of Scripture by the young . . 232





# CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ONTARIO.

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## CHAPTER I.

Undesigned exclusion of religious instruction from the Common Schools—Establishment of Separate Schools to be regarded as giving to Protestants a special propriety in the Public Schools, and claim to instruction in them of the common Christianity of Protestants—No blame to be attached to Roman Catholics; but the Public Schools not justly characterized as “godless.”

MUCH as we may be dissatisfied with the present educational situation of the Province of Ontario, and much as not a few cannot but feel that it is greatly to be deplored, characterized as it is by its intense and persistently exclusive secularity, Separate Schools excepted, no one who knows anything of the history of our educational system would think of appropriating the blame of what we regard as its great defect. No considerate person would think of allocating the responsibility for a state of things into which, we believe, the Province may be said to have drifted

unconsciously, and without due consideration of the possible issues of a well-meant endeavour to secure the co-education of the children of all denominations of Christians, and especially of the children of Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Up to the time when, fifty years ago, the Government of Canada West or Upper Canada (now Ontario) introduced the system of public education, whose steady development, especially in recent years, has made the Province rank very high in the matter of education, probably no one ever thought of the exclusion of positive Christian instruction from the day school. While the Bible was a class-book in almost every school, in many cases the catechisms of different churches were used in the instruction of the pupils. And even after the time referred to, the same instruction continued to be given, in accordance with the general desire of parents, who are always, with rare exceptions, more or less strongly in favour of religious instruction in the day school. But besides this, as many yet remember, the reading books that were in use for some years after the introduction of the present system, in 1850, contained a large amount of Old and New Testament Scripture history, and were not deficient in the presentation of the distinctive teachings of Christian morality. It could not, indeed, be otherwise than that Christian instruction should be the reverse of conspicuously absent from the Public School, as it is now, when the Regulations issued at the time say, "As Christianity is recognized

by common consent throughout this Province as an essential element of education, it ought to pervade all the regulations for elementary instruction."

In accordance with this pronouncement, the Regulations made provision for the opening and closing of the daily lessons of the school with distinctively Christian prayer; for the teaching of the Decalogue; for the reading daily of portions of Scripture, with such explanations by the teacher as were necessary to a right apprehension of the meaning on the part of the pupils; and for "weekly instruction by the clergy of each persuasion."\* These provisions were, indeed, not *mandatory*, but *recommendatory*, and gave authority to trustees to *require* teachers to give Bible instruction to their scholars, as well as to open and close the school with prayer. No direct attempt to

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\*It seems almost incredible, not so much that men of affairs should, without consulting the ministers of religion, have *imposed* upon them the task of doing once a week, in the day school, what they are, all of them, always doing with greater convenience of time and place; as that they should, after the experience of half a century of the *impracticability* of what they seem to regard as the bestowal on clergymen of a great boon and privilege, *persist* in expecting them to accept an obligation, their fulfilment of which one who is beyond others qualified to pronounce judgment on the subject, declares in strong terms to be impossible. The writer, deprecating all severity of language, and laying it upon himself, at the outset, to avoid it in the following discussion, will now only say that he trusts the sequel will show that a great mistake is committed by our rulers, in their relegation of Christian instruction in the day school to the members of another profession, in the belief that such relegation is a full discharge of their obligation to see to the Christian instruction of the youth of the Province.

exclude religious instruction from the Common Schools, as the Public Schools were then called, appears to have been made. But, step by step, the great anomaly of the exclusion of Christian instruction from the day schools of the Province reached its present height of entire absence. And now, for many years past, the Public School teacher may not give Christian instruction to his scholars, even to the extent of explaining to them a sentence of Scripture that he is permitted to read in their hearing; the Government, it seems, believing that its acknowledged obligation in relation to the Christian instruction of the youth of the land is fully met by its allowing the use of the school-room, once a week, to any minister of religion who may choose to give a Christian lesson to the children of his congregation, *in addition* to the instructions he is giving them on Sabbath and other days, as a dutiful Christian pastor.

After a while, objection was made to the use, in Common Schools, of the *Protestant Bible*, the Authorized version of the Scriptures being so described by some, to whom it requires no little Christian charity not to ascribe the evil purpose of trying to make ignorant people believe that Protestant scholars are unworthy of confidence, intellectually or morally, in translating into the vernacular the Word of Divine inspiration. To avoid offence to Roman Catholics, priests and people, its use was discontinued. And the reading books above referred to (the Irish National) were superseded by others which, as many



thought, were greatly inferior to them in adaptation to pupils between nine and fourteen years of age, and were certainly in marked contrast to them, not only in respect of their poverty of the general information which characterized the superseded books, but more especially in respect of the absence of distinctively Christian teaching. Then again, "Regulations" were issued in relation to obligatory studies, in which no place was given to Bible (or Christian) instruction; and according to which Scripture knowledge was of no account, either in contributing to the success of the candidate for the teacher's office, or in the promotion of the pupil. The result was that, in due time, as we may say, without any direct or avowed endeavour, or even thought of it, to exclude religious instruction, it gradually disappeared from the schools of the Province.

Such had become the actual state of things, when some felt constrained to reclaim against our school system as "godless," while others, some of them prominent educationists, and supported by the press, in unlikely quarters, vigorously maintained the opinion that the teaching in the national schools should be *exclusively secular*—an opinion which, we rejoice to believe, many who then maintained it have now frankly disavowed as being fraught with evil issues.

In 1863, or nearly forty years ago, the Roman Catholics of Ontario (then Upper Canada, or Canada West) succeeded in their contention for the establishment of *Separate Schools*. The Act establishing them

declares, in its preamble, that "it is just and proper to restore to Roman Catholics in Upper Canada certain rights which they had formerly enjoyed,"—the reference being, of course, to their having their children instructed day by day in the religious doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, by teachers authorized and salaried in accordance with legislative enactment. But nothing was then done, or has been done since, to restore the same right to the Protestants of the Province. On the contrary, the Protestant contention for it has been continuously resisted. That in the circumstances, there should be, in some quarters, manifest indications of a persuasion, that the proper way of rectifying what many not unreasonably regard as a great wrong, is to renounce the hope of a *national* system in which instruction in the common Christianity of the Province should be given its proper (that is, a *prominent*) place, and to resort to a *denominational* system, like that of the *Voluntary* Schools in England, is only what might be expected.\* But, if we are not greatly mistaken, the general Protestant mind of the Province is strongly averse to any such system, and would, in accordance with the spirit of the times, as manifested these last fifty or sixty years, infinitely prefer, even at the cost of some sacrifice, a *national* and *non-sectarian* system, under which only the *common Christianity* of the great body of Protestants would be taught, as it can be, without even a suspicion of denominationalism, by any qualified

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\* Reference is had to the action of Lawrence H. Balwin, Q.C., and others.

teacher possessed of common sense, as every teacher is supposed to be. In other words, we believe our Protestant people generally would infinitely prefer a system under which the civil authority assumes the responsibility, and asserts and exercises the control, of the daily education of its youth, to the *sectarian* system of the English *Voluntary* Schools, under which every church or religious body has full and all but exclusive control of the education given in its own schools, the Government contributing to their support as an obligation and a privilege. At the same time, we cannot believe they are ready to submit to so great a sacrifice as the entire exclusion of Christian instruction from the National Schools. *That*, we are sure, they would regard as far too great a price to pay for their preference of a *national* to a *denominational* system. Nor can they see that the differences among them, in matters of comparatively little importance, however magnified by some, should be regarded as a reason why their children should be denied the inestimable benefit of the religious instruction of the day school. The differences referred to necessarily spring up from the exercise of the infeasible right of private judgment claimed by Protestants, and the denial of which, they believe, can be defended only by reasoning *in circulo*. And they are, at the same time, the occasion of rendering more conspicuous a unity of a higher order than that which can be claimed by their Roman Catholic fellow-citizens.

That there is, on the part of the Protestants of the

Province, a general preference of a *national* system of education; and that Protestants generally see no reason why the system of their preference should be maintained only at the cost of the exclusion of positive Christian instruction from their schools, is sufficiently evident from the fact of the incessant agitation of the subject by the three largest Protestant churches—Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian—with a view to the reintroduction of Bible or Christian instruction into the Public Schools of the Province. These schools they reasonably regard as having become the peculiar property of the Protestant profession of the Province, in virtue of the legislative action that has given to Roman Catholics Separate Schools, in which their children are taught the distinctive tenets of their Church, by teachers whose salaries are secured by legislative authority. Fully persuaded that the agitation referred to needs no vindication, we continue to take part in it, in the hope of its eventual success. It may be we cannot hope to rejoice in seeing the final extinction of what we cannot but regard as a great anomaly; but we cannot renounce the hope that the time will come when our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens shall no longer be alone in the civil recognition of a claim to the religious instruction of their children in schools, and by teachers, sustained and controlled by civil authority.

No one, we think, can charge us with having given an unfair statement (however imperfect), in explana-



tion of the present educational situation, much as we may be dissatisfied with it. And we trust we shall be credited with the entire absence of a disposition to impose on any party the responsibility for what we may regard as being open to objection and censure, in connection with the educational arrangements of the Province. The present situation is manifestly one into which, as has been said, the Province has unconsciously drifted; there having been no fixed purpose to expel from our Public Schools the Christian instruction of earlier days, and no desire on the part of parents that the instruction of the day school should be exclusively secular. No one can say that the co-education of the children of the different religious denominations, and especially of Roman Catholics and Protestants, is in itself undesirable. Nor can we allow that the co-education of the children of Roman Catholics and Protestants, except by the total exclusion of Christian instruction, is an impossibility. For, leaving out all such religious teaching as would not be acceptable equally to Protestant and to Roman Catholic parents, we would have left to us, as part of our school programme, "all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us unto glory and virtue" (2 Peter i. 3)—all the lessons of Christian piety and good citizenship. Whatever may be their differences, the teaching of all Scripture history, including the narratives of our Lord's ministry on earth, His life, His miracles, His moral teachings, His sacrificial death, His resurrection

and ascension, His coming again to judge the world, and much more, is accepted equally by Roman Catholics and Protestants. And if there are some parents who are neither Protestants nor Roman Catholics, and who do not wish their children to receive Christian instruction, their children are, in these days of complete religious toleration, not in Great Britain only, but in Greater Britain, amply protected against teaching to which they are opposed. But trial has sufficiently proved the hope of the co-education of Protestant and Roman Catholic children to be a vain hope, as indeed many who were not unwilling to make the trial expected it would prove to be. These, however, and probably others, to whom the failure of a well-meant endeavour has been a disappointment, will think that it is not altogether a matter of regret. For considerations are not wanting that tell in favour of their *separate* education in the primary schools. In particular, humiliating as it is, and much as we may regret and deplore it, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that boys are, many of them, if not generally, so wanting in generous feeling, and so disposed and pleased to play the tyrant, that the co-education of Roman Catholic and Protestant children would too frequently occasion youthful experiences of a painful and permanently injurious character. Happily a few years see the development of generous sentiment, so that our last remark does not apply to higher co-education.

That it is thus, in some obvious respects, not

undesirable that provision should be made for the separate education of the children of Protestants and Roman Catholics in the primary schools, or up to the age of the development of the generous sentiments of youth, should surely forbid the ascription to our Roman Catholic fellow-Christians of a claim to be so much *sui generis* in religion, that they cannot allow their children to mingle in the school-room with the children of Protestant Christians. But we have not now to deal with the Separate School question in the abstract. It is no longer a question whether, by the exclusion of religious instruction from the day school, the co-education of the different religious denominations may be secured. That question is permanently settled for Ontario. No one can now contend for an exclusively secular education in the Public Schools of the Province as a means of the co-education of the children of Protestants and Roman Catholics. The latter have succeeded in securing all that they can reasonably contend for in the matter of the religious education of their children in the day school. But unhappily, as we regard it, though, as is well known, Protestants generally are no less interested in the Scripture instruction of their children than their Roman Catholic fellow-citizens are, their right to identical privilege has, for many years, been practically denied, a variety of plausible reasons being pleaded in vindication of the distinction—reasons the insufficiency of which it will be for us to show. This, we believe, can be done

without reflecting severely on those to whom some may be disposed to ascribe the responsibility of the present strangely anomalous situation.

It is not for us to attach blame, as some do, to Roman Catholics as being mainly responsible for the failure of the endeavour to secure the co-education of the children of all the Christian denominations of the Province, sympathizing with them, as we do, in the persuasion that to secure such co-education, by the entire exclusion of Christian instruction, is to pay too high a price for it. And yet we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the present actual educational situation, that has resulted from their agitation, is a singularly anomalous one. Protesting against a Public School education exclusively secular, and having succeeded in their contention for the establishment of Separate Schools, in which instruction in the doctrines and practices of their Church is imparted by teachers whose salaries are provided for by Government authority, does it not seem reasonable that their condemnation and renunciation of the Public Schools, and the setting up of a separate establishment in their interest, should be regarded as making the Public Schools the special and exclusive property of the Protestant profession of the Province, and fully open to instruction in its common Christianity? And yet, strange to say, Protestants continue to be told, as they have been for more than a long generation, that there are reasons why they cannot be accorded the privilege granted by statute



to Roman Catholics, and now secured to them in the constitution of the Dominion.

But while we cannot attach blame to Roman Catholics in connection with our unhappy and anomalous educational situation in respect of religious instruction, neither can we but protest against the use of the strong language in which some have allowed themselves to indulge in characterizing the education given in our Public Schools. They are not "godless" schools. No one can justly deny that they are really, and not in name only, Christian schools. The teachers are required to be Christians, in a well understood and not improper, if mitigated, sense of the term. The Lord's Prayer, or some other Christian prayer, opens the school for the day, and a few verses are read by the teacher, either from the Bible or from the Lectionary which, after having been the occasion of much unhappy criticism and controversy, has been reissued in an amended and much improved form. And we presume the teacher will not be denied the liberty of explaining the Decalogue to his pupils, so as to aid them in the application of its precepts to their conduct in their relation to God and to one another. And thus, notwithstanding the meagreness of anything that can with propriety be called Christian teaching, not a little good Christian influence is exerted by teachers who realize their responsibility as Christian men and women, which, we believe, most of them do.

Freely and gladly, however, as we acknowledge the

Christian character of our primary schools, we are constrained to ask, Who can deny that Christian instruction, properly so called, is conspicuously absent from them? Let any one examine the last Report (for 1898) of the late Minister of Education; and full as it is in relation to all branches of secular instruction, he will not find, in all its three hundred and forty pages, any reference to Christian instruction in our schools, beyond a brief statement, on page 21, indicating that, while in almost all the Public Schools a few verses are read from the Bible or the Lectionary, religious instruction is imparted in thirteen per cent. of them, presumably because the Trustees require it, in accordance with the wish of the parents. But one would like to know *what amount* of religious instruction is given in the schools in which it is reported as being imparted, and to be assured that it is not merely nominal; seeing it has become well understood that it is not required of the Public School teacher that he shall be competent to give Christian instruction, and that he is, according to present arrangements, practically, if not positively, forbidden to give instruction in any distinctive doctrine of the common Christianity of the Province.

The Roman Catholics having, as we have seen, reclaimed against the absence of Christian instruction from the Common (now Public) Schools, and having agitated successfully for the establishment of Separate Schools, in which it is their privilege to have their children daily instructed in the principles of the

Christian religion, according to their views of it, by teachers whose salaries are secured by State authority, it is surely become a reasonable contention on the part of Protestants, in which Roman Catholics may be expected to sympathize with them, that their children who resort to the Public Schools should have equal privilege in religious instruction accorded to them, now that it is seen that the exclusion of religious instruction has failed of its purpose.

We may be reminded that Separate School legislation may be taken advantage of, in certain localities, in the interest of Protestants. But no one will deny that it was solely from a regard for the convictions and claims of Roman Catholics that the Separate School arrangement was introduced. This is sufficiently evident from the fact that while there are in Ontario three hundred and forty Roman Catholic Separate Schools, the number of Protestant Separate Schools does not exceed half a score.\* It may be that there are yet some who cannot be reconciled to the existence of Separate Schools in Ontario, and would be pleased to see them abolished. We believe, however, that there is no longer a desire on the part of any to deprive Roman Catholics of the privilege, which they regard as a right, or to limit or curtail it in any way. At least, it may be regarded as certain that no attempt will be made in that direction, seeing that to make such an attempt would be to assail the constitution of the Dominion of Canada.

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\*See also quotation from the preamble of the Act establishing Separate Schools, p. 20.

## CHAPTER II.

The great bar to the success of our contention—The apathy of many and the opposition of some.

It is pleaded in favour of the exclusion of Christian instruction from the Public Schools of Protestant Ontario, that while our accepted principles of national action forbid religious instruction in all educational institutions aided by public money and under national control, there are difficulties in the way of Christian instruction in schools resorted to by the children of Protestants, that do not exist in connection with the week-day education of the children of Roman Catholics. We are not unaware of these alleged difficulties. But while, as we believe, we fully realize them, we cannot attach to them the weight that some do. After many years of, we cannot but believe, unprejudiced consideration, and of occasional controversy, in which it has been our endeavour to deal with candour and courtesy toward those from whom we differ, we cannot say that we have met with anything fitted to affect our strong persuasion that the difficulties referred to are very far from being insuperable.



If, however, we cannot but attach little weight to the objections that are the commonplace, in the vindication of the exclusion of Christian teaching from our Public Schools, there are, we regret to say, hindrances of a serious kind to the success of our contention—perhaps, we should say, the only hindrances which no merely human effort can avail to remove. We refer particularly to the want of interest of many and to the interest of opposition on the part of a few. In other words, to be more specific, we refer to the *apathy* of many of our people who favour our contention, and to the *opposition* of some excellent and highly respected Christian ministers; the former due to the well-known *inertia* of our nature, in relation to the exertion which the promotion of every good cause demands, and the latter arising from, what we believe to be, a mistaken persuasion that infringement of generally accepted principles of national action is essentially involved in the communication of religious instruction by teachers, whose salaries are provided for by equable taxation, instead of being left to the uncertainty of school fees.

Referring to the apathetic inertia, which it is so hard to overcome, it will not be questioned that it only calls for the more earnest effort on the part of those who are persuaded of the great and urgent necessity of the daily Christian instruction of our children. Some may think that, in so speaking, we are reflecting ungenerously on those to whom our young people owe so much in the way of Christian

instruction. But those who think so are greatly mistaken. For, though the Christian good of the young people of the Province is largely promoted in connection with the instructions of the different branches of the Christian Church, none know so well as the most devoted Christian workers do, that their labours, being for the most part confined to a small portion of the Lord's Day, are altogether insufficient to reduce the prevailing poverty in Scripture knowledge, which is already grown to such an extent as to occasion anxiety in many minds, in view of the increasing frequency of crime on the part of some who are highly educated in everything except the teachings of Christianity. None know so well as they do that many parents allow their children to spend their time in neglect of the provision made by the Church in their interests, and that many more leave the Christian instruction of their children to the short and inadequate endeavour of the Sabbath School teacher. And, therefore, they realize as others do not, and cannot do, that their utmost endeavours leave much to be done by other instrumentality than theirs, if an adequate and influential acquaintance with Christian truth, on the part of its population, is to be, what nothing else can be, the glory and the safety of the country.

And here let us say that we cannot but rejoice and be encouraged in seeing, from time to time, indications of a growing conviction of the necessity of giving to Christian instruction its former place in the

day school, and making it no less prominent. We find, for example, a grand jury ascribing a prevalence of crimes among the educated classes, to the absence of religious instruction from the Provincial Schools. We find also that the larger proportion of crime to population, in the United States, as compared with Great Britain, is ascribed by many thoughtful men, after making all due allowance for other causes, to the absence of moral and Christian instruction from the Public Schools of that great country. For, as every one knows, who is interested in the subject of elementary education, not only has Scotland been distinguished for over three centuries by the prominence given in its schools to religious instruction; but in England, while the *denominational* schools (or *Voluntary*, as they are called) make Christian instruction prominent, with more or less of a denominational tinge, as might be expected, any attempt that has been made to exclude religious instruction from the *Board* (*i.e.*, the properly *national*) schools, introduced by the Foster Act of 1870, has been met with such strenuous opposition, as to prove that the English mind is totally averse to an exclusively secular education. Let any one read Dr. Hodgins' Report of the State of Education in England (Appendix N. of the Report of the late Minister of Education, referred to above), and he will find a wealth of information respecting religious instruction in the *Board* or *National* Schools, which is fitted to humiliate us, in the contrast that it presents to the state of things in

Ontario, and by its showing that the practical English mind is (to avoid the charge of disrespect, let us say not *above* but) *incapable* of being affected by what it would doubtless regard as the needless apprehensions that sway the minds of some respected Ontario Protestants, lay and clerical, in opposition to the allowance of Christian instruction by teachers whose salaries are secured by the action of civil authority. But while ourselves humiliated, in no small degree, by the contrast between England and the Ontario of the last and the present generation, we cannot but be equally pleased and encouraged in seeing the determination of England to give Scripture instruction a prominent place in its National Schools, while compelling none to receive it, and strictly prohibiting even the least approach to *denominational* teaching. And in this connection, we shall surely do well to remind our readers of the striking testimony to the value of the Bible in public instruction of an eminent scientist, who could not be charged with being prejudiced in his testimony. We refer to the late Professor Huxley, who, speaking some years ago, as a member of the London School Board, did not hesitate to express his conviction that the exclusion of that great "English Epic," as he described it, the English Bible, from the Public Schools, would be a great national calamity. In view of these and the like favourable testimonies, we cannot but be very hopeful in relation to the place that Christian instruction shall ere long occupy in the schools of the Province. Regretting that the popular



mind is opening so slowly to the conviction that there is a very serious defect—the most serious conceivable—in our educational system, we cannot but believe that it *is* opening. Nor can we but believe that the unanimity of the three largest Protestant churches of the Province—a unanimity which cannot but compel the attention of our rulers—is of itself sufficient to warrant even now a forward movement, on their part, in the direction of the introduction of distinctive Christian teaching into the Public Schools of the Province. One thing is certain that the more protracted the delay in supplying the great defect of our educational system, the more will the welfare of the rising generation and of the generations following be imperilled.

In referring more particularly to the other hindrance to the success of our contention, that, namely, arising from the belief that the contravention of important principles is involved in the communication of religious instruction by teachers, whose salaries are secured by legislative enactment, we believe we cannot be wrong in saying that it is perhaps, if not probably, the greatest of the hindrances that bar the way to the restoration of Christian instruction to its place in the day school. It is not so much, or at all, that there is, to our mind, any difficulty in showing that this belief is a mistaken one. It is that the opposition of those who hold it so greatly reduces the weight and weakens the force of Protestant public opinion, which, were it unanimous, or

inclusive of all the leading Protestant bodies, as it is of the three just referred to, could not fail to constrain our rulers to yield to our contention. Speaking frankly, our reference is to the Congregational churches, Pedobaptist and Antipedobaptist, whose ministers, we have reason to believe, if they were polled, would be found to be, with few exceptions, if any, strongly persuaded that the communication of Christian instruction by teachers, whose salaries are provided for by legislative authority, involves an infringement of our settled principles of national action—an infringement of the principle of religious *toleration*, which is held universally by us, and of the *voluntary* principle, which, though not universally assented to in theory, is understood to have full sway among Protestants on this side of the Atlantic. Well aware, as we may be, that we can entertain only a very slender hope of changing the attitude of brethren who have fully and publicly committed themselves in opposition to religious instruction in the day school, on the ground, as they believe, of great principles, we are not without hope that we may be able to satisfy the minds of some interested parents that those are in error who would exclude Scripture instruction from the day school on the alleged ground of the contravention of principle, and that the position held in these pages is the only one that is sound and safe—sound in principle, and safe in contrast with our present educational situation, which we can never cease to reclaim against as

fraught with danger in relation to the best interests of our people. And may we not expect that, if it can be shown, as we believe it can, that there is no insuperable difficulty in the way of the introduction of positive Christian instruction into what are now called the Public Schools, our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, who objected to them and renounced and abdicated them, on the ground of the absence of such instruction, will, after having had accorded to them a privilege which they highly prize, sympathize with us and aid us, in our continued agitation for a privilege in the interest of our children, which the great body of Protestants value not less than they do themselves?

### CHAPTER III.

Opposition on the ground of principle—Religious instruction in the National Schools not to be identified with the national endowment of religion—*Reductio ad absurdum*—Rights of majority and its generous regard to minority—An inconsistency of opponents.

WE have referred to indications of the growth of a conviction that the absence of Christian instruction from the Public Schools of Ontario is the great defect of its otherwise excellent and exemplary system of elementary education. These indications, endorsed, as they are, for the most part, by the press in presenting them, are no small encouragement to us, in resuming our contention of former years, when we were called to defend the position that the objection made to Christian instruction in our schools, on the ground of its contravening generally accepted principles of national action, is invalid—a position in which, we believe, the great majority of the Christian people of the Province are in agreement with us.

Reference, however, has been made to the fact that there are some who are opposed to religious instruction in the National School, on the alleged ground that the



communication of such instruction by teachers whose salaries are paid by money raised by the action of civil authority, is equivalent to the endowment of religion. We have for many years been accustomed to hear that to require the giving of Christian instruction by the qualified teachers of the Provincial Schools involves a breach of the principle of religious *toleration*; and that the payment by legislative authority, of teachers who impart religious instruction is an infringement of the *voluntary* principle, and practically equivalent to the national endowment of religion. And we are confidently warned that in requiring, or even permitting or not disallowing, our teachers to give a Scripture lesson, however short, to their pupils, we are paying them *in the interest of religion*, and introducing the thin end of the wedge of *State churchism*, and of *Ecclesiastical domination*, under the *ægis* of the State. Believing, as we do, that respected brethren, who charge us with pleading for the contravention of our established principles of national action, when we contend for the introduction, or rather, the reintroduction, of distinctively Christian instruction into our schools, are entirely in error, we are called, in the first instance, to show that those are under a serious misapprehension of the question at issue, who think that any contravention of accepted principle is involved in our contention.

There is such a general agreement among us on the subject of religious toleration that no one will plead for anything that he believes to be, even by the

remotest implication, inconsistent with it.\* And, though we are not all agreed in reference to the *voluntary* principle, we are, all of us, practically a unit in our opposition to anything of the nature of *State endowment* of religion in this Province. It may not be entirely out of place to say that the writer was, in his early days, strongly in favour of the *voluntary* principle, when, over sixty years ago, it was the subject of earnest discussion in Scotland—the country, above all others, of the discussion of ecclesiastical questions. But later consideration has led him to believe, as many others do, that, as there were times in the history of Christendom, when the civil authorities of its several States could not do otherwise than interest themselves in the religion of their subjects, or feel otherwise than bound to see to the maintenance of the arrangements that were necessary, in existing circumstances, for their people's Christian welfare; so there are even now conceivable circumstances in which the civil ruler may with propriety, while recoiling from the endowment of religious institutions, give of the money under his control, with a view to the promotion of the success of Christian effort. But there is no need to debate the *voluntary* principle in connection with the question that is *really* at issue in our present contention. The simple statement of it should, we believe, go far to show that, while the communication of Christian instruction by the teachers of our Public Schools is

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\*See next chapter, for charges of contravention of principles.

in no way inconsistent with the most complete religious toleration,\* it cannot properly be identified with the national endowment of religion. Familiar as we are compelled to be, by constant reiteration, with the assertion that there is no difference in principle between the payment, by civil enactment, of teachers who give a portion of their time to Christian instruction, and the support of the ministers of religion from the public treasury, we cannot but think that the assertion is, to say the least, an ill-considered one. For, assuming the soundness of the voluntary principle—assuming, that is, not only as we all do, that the Christian religion has no need of help from the civil authorities, but also, as some do, that their interference, avowedly in the interest of religion is *always* unwarrantable, and fitted to be only injurious to the interests of religion, as, all must admit, it has often been—admitting all this, is it not carrying the voluntary principle too far, when it is held to *debar a Christian nation, as such, from making use of its own religion for its own benefit?* For this, let it be observed, is the real question at issue. If it is really so that the voluntary principle forbids the Christian people of Ontario, or, what amounts to the same thing, the great *majority* of them, to employ their common Christianity in a way which, they believe, is not only desirable but necessary, in the interests of its youth, so much the worse, we say, for the principle. But let us frankly and calmly argue the

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\* See pp. 51, 57.

matter with brethren, with whom, to our great regret, we are compelled to be at variance.

Though to some, as we have said, the mere statement of the real question at issue will be sufficient to show that no accepted principle of national action is contravened in the giving to our common Christianity a place in the daily lessons of our schools, there are others who having, as we believe, an *exclusive* regard to the fact that our teachers are paid by what is called *public* money—money, that is, raised by *taxation*—can, as we have said, hardly be persuaded that there is any difference in principle between securing by civil action a decent maintenance to the teacher who gives a Christian lesson to his scholars and the maintenance of the Christian ministry from the treasures that are under civil control, or the endowment of religion. Though to us, and probably to most others, the identification of the two things, is a manifest error, it should not excite surprise or occasion discouragement to those who are seeking to further what they regard as an important interest, to find that there are others who are slow to yield to their pleadings. If we confess to some disappointment in finding that our best efforts fail to further the design of them, and are, as it appears to us, quietly ignored by some, we cannot allow ourselves to be discouraged. Rather must we persevere in our efforts, in the hope that eventually the reasonableness of our claims will be acknowledged. In this hope, we now repeat what we have, from time to time, insisted on for many



years, but have not seen fairly met by those who have opposed us, on the alleged ground of the inconsistency of our views with the voluntary principle.

It is then, we cannot but admit, a simple matter of fact that, in the communication of Christian instruction by qualified teachers, whose salaries are, as a matter of expediency, secured by legislative enactment, *national homage* is done to Him whom we should and, we believe, do with few exceptions sincerely adore as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That, however, will not be regarded as an objection against it; neither do we plead for it on that ground. What is more to the question at issue between our brethren and us is, what is equally true, as a matter of fact, that by such instruction, the *hold* that Christianity has upon the community is greatly *strengthened*. This must, of course, be the result of the good effects of Christian teaching by sympathetic instructors. But if it appears to some that, because Christianity is thus strengthened in its *hold* on the community, the payment by taxation of those who impart its lessons as a part of their work, is identical with, or equivalent to, its endowment from the national treasury, we can only marvel at, what seems to us, a conspicuous instance of the "turning of things upside down," or the confounding of things which cannot properly be identified. For does it not constitute even a radical and essential difference between the two things affirmed to be identical, that the support, or the maintenance and promotion of the

Christian religion is not *the object that is aimed at* in the making of Christian instruction a constituent part of the work of the Public School teacher? The *object*, and the *one* object, *directly* in view is, not the aiding of religion, but the promotion of the moral well-being of the youth of the community, by the teacher's basing on Christian principles the moral lessons which he is expected to impart to his pupils. The interest of the Christian religion cannot but be advanced, the more it is instrumental in promoting the public welfare. But the fact that the Christian religion is *incidentally* strengthened in its hold on the community by the good that it does, cannot be justly pleaded as a reason why the community should not employ it as an instrument in the promotion of the good which cannot be so effectively promoted by any other instrumentality. We cannot allow ourselves to believe that our people generally, with the views they have of the design of Divine revelation, and of the value of it in relation to national as well as to individual interests, will permit themselves to be deterred from a use of it that is nothing short of essential to the national welfare, by the needless dread of rendering an improper aid to religion. They have no thought of seeking to aid religion which, as they very well know, has no need of aid from the *State*, and which, they may also believe, will prosper better without it. They are seeking not to *give* aid to religion but to *receive* benefit from it—the benefit which, they are persuaded, is essential to the national

well-being, and which is not to be had from any other source. And no one in this land of perfect religious equality, who is unhappily opposed to its common Christianity, and does not wish his children to learn its lessons, need have any fear of their being compelled to learn what he does not regard as desirable in their interests. But more than this no one who is opposed to Christianity can reasonably demand; for more the principle of religious toleration does not require. No one can reasonably expect that a majority—in this case, a very large majority—shall forego what they regard as an important benefit, because a few think the majority are mistaken in their appreciation of Scripture. To yield to such a requirement were to consent to the setting up of a practical oligarchy—to make the few, even the smallest few, the rulers of the many.

Some who have been accustomed, without due consideration, as we think, to identify the payment by civil action of teachers who give a few minutes daily or, it may be, only weekly to Christian instruction, with what is called State churchism, will probably here object that the advocacy of religious establishment and endowment by the civil authorities has *always been grounded* on the alleged essential dependence of the welfare of the nation on the religious character and practice of its people. And this, they may think, is sufficient to obviate our distinction between the *aiding* of religion and our *receiving* from religion the benefit that is essential to our well-being as a

nation. To this, we apprehend, it may be enough to say in reply that, if the civil authorities had never concerned themselves with religion beyond the employment of it for the promotion of the welfare of the community, there could have been no reasonable objection to their action. On the contrary, it would have been worthy of highest commendation. But unhappily, sometimes even for themselves, as was proved in the fate of the infatuated Stuart dynasty, whose assertion of the divine right of kings "in *all causes* civil and ecclesiastical," after bringing one king to the block, drove another from his throne, rulers have been prone to go far beyond the legitimate and laudable endeavour to promote the welfare of their subjects by caring for their enlightenment, by instruction in the principles of Christianity. Nay, rather we might say, indifferent or opposed to the Christian enlightenment of their people, they have been prone, in the hope of making them submissive and subservient, to arrogate to themselves the rule of the Church of God, and cannot even yet be persuaded to renounce their claim. Following the traditions inherited from our heathen ancestors, they have demanded, under pains and penalties, submission and conformity on the part of their subjects.

But shall we, while reclaiming as our fathers did, even unto death, against the assumptions of "the princes of this world," the successors of those who "crucified the Lord of glory," disclaim and cast away our right, as the Christian citizens of a Christian Province,



to employ for our children's good the religion to the possession of which we owe all our most valued privileges? Should we not rather rejoice that our rulers, disclaiming all right to interfere in what we regard as Christ's own arrangements for the government of His kingdom in the world, are ready to carry out our wishes, in the giving of Christian instruction its proper place in our schools, if only we agree among ourselves and make our wishes known to them? What need is there to be keeping up an incessant cry of alarm of encroachment on our religious liberties by a personification named *Cæsar*? Not objecting to the figure, we have surely abundant reason to be continually thankful to God that our *Cæsar* is a fairly good *Christian Cæsar*, who, while he knows that he has no place, as *Cæsar*, in the administration of the affairs of Christ's kingdom, knows also that Christianity is the safety and glory of his country, and that the surest way to make his subjects good citizens is to make them good Christians.

To those, then, who appear to think that the objection under consideration is based upon a principle which has all the force of an axiom, our reply is, that in pleading for the introduction of Christian instruction into our schools, we are not asking our rulers to give aid to the Christian religion, which, we are fully persuaded, needs no such aid as the voluntary principle objects to. We are not asking our rulers to give a dollar in aid of religion, which not only does not need what is called State aid, but can

flourish and prosper in spite of the State's enmity and opposition. We are pleading with the State to "be wise for itself" by seeking to *secure from* the religion of its people the aid which it proposes to give, and which it alone can give. The Christian religion is neither a beggar nor a borrower. No, truly, but as we often sing,

"It gives a light to every age,  
It gives but borrows none."

What we plead for is not the support and extension of Christianity by public money, but the promotion of the welfare of the community by an instrumentality which is believed to be, beyond all others, fitted to promote it, and the employment of which is believed by Christian people to be nothing short of essential to individual and national well-being.

We are all agreed that the education of its youth is a matter within the sphere of the action of the State, and that the civil ruler is guilty of a gross neglect of duty who does not care that it shall be no fault of his if his young subjects, from want of proper provision, grow up to be men wanting in intelligence or immoral in character. But if our rulers cannot, as some aver, discharge their duty in this respect, without excluding from their schools the common Christianity of their people, it becomes a serious question, in the judgment of those who realize the importance of giving the lessons of Christianity a conspicuous place in the daily education of their

children, whether it would not be well that our rulers should consider themselves incompetent to charge themselves with the education of our children and leave it, as it was left till recently in England, to the voluntary efforts of the churches and their wealthy members.\* But we must insist that there is no need of such action on the part of our rulers on any generally accepted ground of national action. That the credit of religion is advanced, and the hold that it has on the community strengthened by the good that it does, beyond what anything else can do, cannot, we must insist, be reasonably pleaded as an objection to its being employed in promoting the good which it is the only surely effective agency in the promotion of. The civil authority (or the State), in assuring by legislation a decent maintenance to the teacher who, besides educating his pupils in the ordinary secular subjects, gives them lessons in the facts and principles of the Christian Scriptures, is not, in so doing, seeking to render aid toward the maintenance and diffusion of Christianity, although, doubtless, that should be the desire and aim of every one of us, in whatever position we may be placed in the Providence of God. If the interests and the influence of the Christian religion are greatly advanced, as they cannot but be, by its doing the good which nothing else can do, no one can reasonably connect this result with the *payment* of the teacher by legislative enactment. If the credit of the Chris-

tian religion, its hold upon the community, and its influence are even mightily increased by its being a power for good, in the presenting of its lessons by our teachers to their pupils, it cannot reasonably be said that we are, in our national capacity, guilty of the great enormity of giving aid to religion, by assuring a generally miserable pittance of salary to the men and women who are engaged in the work, which is in its importance second to none, that, namely, of the education of our children. The brethren who, we believe, should be with us in our contention, will credit us with the entire absence of a desire and purpose to introduce State churchism into the Province. But we fear they regard us as blind to the fact that we are pleading for its *equivalent*, when we contend for religious instruction by teachers whose salaries are ensured by State action. If so, we must be allowed to retort the charge of blindness, that, namely, which prevents their seeing that what we plead for is not to be identified with what they condemn whether justly or unjustly. For knowing, as we do, that the common Christianity of the Protestants of Ontario needs no State aid, we are actuated solely by the conviction of the State's essential need of the religious element in the education of its youth, and animated by a conviction, no less strong, of the inherent power of the Christian religion to promote, by God's promised blessing, the national warfare. We cannot but see that, while the religion which our people profess can dispense with



the aid of the State, and can even prosper in the face of the State's opposition, the State *cannot dispense with the aid of religion*. Be it so that religion needs *nothing* from the State, the State needs *everything* from religion, without which its very existence is imperilled.

None of us can deny, what has been already referred to, that civil rulers—"the princes of this world"—have, in times past, been prone to arrogate to themselves the rule of the Church of Christ, and the right to enter into the domain of conscience, and to deny to their subjects the right of private judgment. But that surely is no reason why the Christian rulers of Ontario, none of whom would claim any place in the Church of God, except that of subjection, as members or office bearers, to its divinely constituted arrangements, should be forbidden to promote the welfare of the community, by giving the teachings of their people's common Christianity a prominent place in the schools of the Province. If the Christian religion is a peculiar power for good to individuals and to communities, must its employment for good be forbidden, simply because by its doing good, its interests are *incidentally and indirectly* strengthened in public estimation? Were not this to affirm that because of its divinely-given inherent power to promote the highest human interests, and by doing so to increase its own influence, it should be allowed no place in the National Schools? And does not this involve the further implication that if the

Christian religion were a morally colourless thing, destitute of all power, like arithmetic, etc., to affect beneficially the best and highest, that is, the moral and spiritual interests of our children, there would be no objection to its having a place in our Provincial Schools? And does it not seem like a *reductio ad absurdum* against our opponents, when it is made to appear that their opposition is not properly based upon the rendering of State aid to religion by the imposition of a moderate tax to keep the teacher alive, but upon the simple fact that Christianity cannot but establish itself more and more as a power in the community, by the good that it does as an element in the instruction of our children?

It will, of course, be understood that we assume the Christianity of the people of Ontario—an assumption which, we believe, will be readily allowed. It may be, indeed, that very many of us are conspicuously wanting in conformity to an ideal Christian standard. But no one will question our right to be classed among Christian nations. The great majority of us, whether more or less intelligently or “by tradition from our fathers” (and we thank God for both), accept the Christian Scriptures—Old and New Testament—as God’s own revelation of His mind and will in relation to us, for our good. We believe, or at least we profess to believe, and our profession is not insincere, that our possession of the Scriptures is the outcome of His good-will, designed, as they are, to be our guide in the way of Christian righteousness, which, we also

believe, is the only way of national prosperity, as well as of individual happiness. And it is perhaps at this point that we may most appropriately ask our readers to bear in mind that we owe it to the Scriptures that we have a system of government under which, while the interests of the people are supreme, it is a fixed principle that the *majority shall rule*, but shall do so under obligation to God not to rule oppressively, but with a just and even generous regard to the rights and to the convictions and the feelings of the minority. It is reasonable, as it is necessary, that the minority submit to the majority: for otherwise, as we have said, legislation and government would be impossible. The majority may be in the wrong, as majorities often are. But the responsibility is theirs; and sooner or later the Providence of God will make the wrong apparent, the minority in the meantime dutifully submitting and using all proper means to persuade the majority of their error or their sin.

In reference to what we have just now said of the rights and duties of majorities and minorities, we think we may justly claim on behalf of the Protestant majority of Ontario that, whatever may be the educational difficulties with which we are confronted, they have not been wanting in a regard for the views and feelings of the Roman Catholic minority. Owing to circumstances already referred to, while in the Separate Schools Christian instruction is given to the young, in accordance with the views of our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, no distinctively

Christian, not to say Protestant, instruction is allowed to be given in the Public Schools of the Province by its duly qualified teachers, although these schools have, by the establishment of Separate Schools, become the peculiar property of the Protestant majority. Being condemned, renounced, and forsaken by Roman Catholics, they are now open to the religious instruction, which they never would have been closed against but for the vain attempt at co-education, the failure of which is, in the estimation of many not entirely, and, in that of others, not at all regrettable, considering the immense sacrifice at which it was made, and other objections.\* And, strange to say, while we have ceased to hear of any charge against our rulers, on the ground of, what some would call, the endowment of the Christian religion in its Roman Catholic form, by taxing the supporters of Separate Schools, we are called to contend with our own brethren, in pleading for identical privilege as the right of Protestants. Silent in what they should, as a matter of consistency, regard as the endowment of what they may call *Popery*, and ignoring the action of our rulers in the establishment and maintenance of Separate Schools, they reserve their artillery for us, and launch against us the charge of urging our rulers to renounce their attitude of religious neutrality, and to introduce State churchism, Cæsarism, and what-not into the Province. Of course, we are

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\* See pp. 21-24.



now only calling our attention to an *inconsistency*. For we trust it has been already sufficiently shown that the payment, by the action of the civil power, of the teacher who gives a Christian lesson to his scholars, is not to be regarded as the giving of State aid to religion, or to be identified with the national endowment of religion, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant.

That we have greatly erred in allowing the programme of Public School instruction to become, and to continue for more than a generation, so intensely and exclusively secular is, we have reason to believe, becoming generally more and more manifest in the judgment of competent observers. Reminding our readers of references already made,\* we quote now from an article in the *Toronto Globe* at a time when circumstances compelled attention to a condition of things not creditable to our boasted civilization. Referring to these circumstances, an unprejudiced public journalist bears testimony in the following words to what appears to have been, at the time, a growing persuasion, accompanied with growing anxiety, in relation to the absence (by authority, be it remembered) of Christian instruction from the National Schools, the *Separate*, or, as we may without impropriety call them, the Roman Catholic, Schools alone excepted: "The thoughtful both in the United States and in Canada seem of late to have awaked somewhat

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\* See pp. 33, 34.

suddenly to the consciousness of a very grave defect in their hitherto much vaunted Public School system ;”—the “grave defect” referred to being no other than the absence, by authoritative exclusion, of Christian instruction. We cannot but rejoice and be encouraged, in believing that the great majority of the people of this Christian Province, while they cannot see any force in the objection that has been dealt with, are becoming more and more uneasy, in view of the evil results which “thoughtful” men ascribe to the defect referred to in the last quotation, and in the weighty pronouncements to which attention was called in our last chapter.

What, we often ask ourselves, can it be that prevents our rulers from seeing that it is only by their making instruction in the common Christianity of Protestants by properly qualified teachers, a constituent part of the work of the Public School, that they can adequately meet their obligation in relation to the education of their young subjects? Hitherto our contention has been unsuccessful, except in so far as it may have contributed to supposed improvement of the arrangement which originally permitted ministers of religion to give an hour’s Christian instruction, once a week, within the walls of the school-room, to the children of their own congregations. This arrangement, however much there may be, in the opinion of some, to recommend it and to oblige Protestant ministers to accept it as a boon and a privilege, will, we believe, be shown in the proper place, to be

essentially unreasonable and generally impracticable, and beyond the possibility of being rendered otherwise by any supposed improvement. After years of discussion among ministers themselves, and of repeated endeavour in various places to take advantage of the arrangement and to make the best of it, there can now be but few who regard it as anything but an *evasion of responsibility, instead of the meeting of an obligation* which, as we shall see, is freely and in the strongest terms acknowledged by the late head of the Education Department (now Provincial Premier), as it was by his predecessors in office. It can hardly be doubted that the relegation (by *permission*) of religious instruction in the Public Schools to Protestant clergymen, was thought to be an unexceptionable way in which an acknowledged obligation might be met, without contravention of any accepted principle of national action. But could not an ordinarily subtle-minded *voluntary* object to the arrangement on the very same ground on which religious instruction by the teacher is objected to? For, if religious instruction by the teacher is objected to on the ground that his salary is secured by State action, *i.e.*, by taxation, it may, with equal reason be objected against religious instruction in the school-room that it is built and maintained by the same State action, or by taxation.

In reference to the fact that, notwithstanding his party attachment, the writer is constrained to differ very seriously from the late Minister of Education, as

will appear in the course of his pleading for Christian instruction by the Public School teacher, he will only say that he believes it will be generally agreed that educational matters should be regarded as being outside the sphere of politics, and that nothing could be more to be deprecated than that any important educational interest should become a party question or a political issue. And while he cannot think that a mere change of Government would advance the cause he is trying to plead, he cannot renounce the hope that the time will come when both parties shall equally acknowledge the justice of his contention, that a right accorded to a minority should not be denied to a majority. Reference has indeed been made\* to a time when the advocates of Christian instruction by duly qualified Christian teachers had to deplore the almost daily utterances of the exigencies of party politics, as being fitted to injure the cause in which they had been hopefully labouring. That time has passed away, as we hope, never to return. And to say nothing of the hard words applied to us and others when we sought peace in a time of trouble, may we not hope that, in view of the important interests involved, we shall see all parties united in a sincere and sustained endeavour to obviate the *practical* difficulties which confessedly stand in the way of our making our educational institutions distinctively Christian, really as well as nominally? There is very much to make us hopeful. Now that Roman

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\* See pp. 64, 94, 133.



Catholic Separate Schools are regarded as Provincial institutions not to be meddled with, the difficulties referred to are, we hope to show, neither numerous nor formidable. If, as a Protestant nation, we give to our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens beyond what our co-religionists look for, and are content to receive in Roman Catholic countries, let none indulge in vain regrets, or in worse than vain recriminations. For, if anything is Christian, it is a generous regard for the weaker party—such a regard that they cannot doubt that their interests are as safe in our hands as they could be in their own. But believing as, we are fully persuaded, the great body of our Protestant people do, that while our common Christianity needs no State patronage and no help from the public purse, the welfare of our country demands that all our children be early well instructed in its essential principles, let us both as Protestants, and as Christian patriots, calmly and patiently persist in pressing our reasonable demands.

## CHAPTER IV.

Charges of the *Educational Journal* — Inconsistency — The question misapprehended—Unreasonable apprehensions.

SOME may think that enough has been said in reference to the error, as we regard it, of identifying with State churchism the communication of Christian instruction by teachers whose salaries are raised by State authority ; and that we might now proceed to deal with the practical difficulties that are understood to stand in the way of its introduction into the Public Schools of the Province. But we must be patient, if we would hope to convince or convict of error those who have been, perhaps long, accustomed to regard their conviction as being based on the impregnable rock of an important principle which, while it is to them axiomatic, others who do not so regard it, are not concerned to dispute. It should never surprise us, but should be a warning to us lest we ourselves be guilty of the same tenacity of error which we condemn in others, if we find that while we need no argument in favour of a conviction which we have long held, without a suspicion of its being an erroneous one, there are others who adhere to the opposite conviction with

a tenacity which cannot be easily overcome, especially if the conviction is believed to be based on the rock of axiomatic principles. We trust we shall be pardoned if we say we can hardly but think that such is the mental attitude of some with whom we are in conflict, in relation to the subject now under discussion; so that we cannot expect that they should, without great difficulty, be led to divest themselves of a persuasion which they have very long cherished, and perhaps been accustomed to vindicate by voice or pen. We must therefore be borne with in prolonging our argument, adapting it, however, to particular styles of representing our contention by its assailants. In doing so, without being sanguine in the hope of convincing of error those who have been long accustomed to vindicate the exclusion from the Public School, of Christian instruction by its salaried teachers, we may at least entertain the hope that we may quiet apprehensions that can hardly fail to be awakened by representations that are being made from time to time, as they have been for the last five-and-twenty years or more, of the tremendous evils which may be the result of allowing Christian instruction to be communicated by Christian teachers, whose salaries—generally very inadequate—are secured by moderate taxation, instead of being left to the uncertainty of school fees.

Before proceeding, however, we cannot but refer to the unpleasant fact that there are some whose utterances upon the subject do not, we are grieved to say,

call for serious treatment, except, it may be, some will think, in the way of stern rebuke. For, when we are charged, as we have been by teachers, at meetings of the Provincial Association, with "proposing with ruthless hands to lay sacrilegious hold upon the sacred ark of our liberties," and being "the clerical representatives of the stake and fagot," etc., etc., it is evident that the utterers of charges so extremely foolish are, for the time being, outside the pale of reason, and not open to conviction, by any reasoning. They may pride themselves, as probably they do, on their genius in the fine art of *vituperation*, which occupies a place in some of the older logical treatises, under the caption of *De Vituperando*, but has not, for a century or two, been regarded as a proper subject of scientific instruction, though the *practice* of it has not fallen into desuetude, and is not likely soon to do so, because of its convenience and value as a substitute for fair argument. But so long as they allow themselves in the use of such improprieties of language as we have quoted, they must be regarded as impervious to reason. Leaving to their best friends to administer to them appropriate reproof and counsel, we would confine ourselves to giving them kindly advice, by assuring them that those who, like them, are doubly entrenched in conceit of themselves, and in contempt of their elders—especially clerics—cannot be reasoned with till they have unlearned the evil habit of composition by sound without regard to sense, and have learned that the use of



“great swelling words,” whose sound is their only recommendation, is not only outside of logic proper, but very bad rhetoric. Their vituperation, like the abuse of the counsel who finds he has “no case,” can influence the mind only of those who have no mind; it cannot fail to discredit its utterer in the estimation of all whose judgment is of any value.

There are others, however, whose utterances demand serious consideration: because they are the expression of the convictions of those who stand deservedly high in the estimation, not only of their own denominations, but of all Christian people who know them. We have already referred to the ministers of the churches of the Congregational order as being, many of them, if not generally, opposed to the views in which, we believe, the great majority of the Protestant Christians of the Province, as well as our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, are at one with us. Indeed it is, with rare exceptions, only from brethren of position and name in those churches that utterances have come from time to time strongly vindicating\* the exclusion of Christian instruction from all schools under Government control. Some years have now elapsed since, towards the close of our ministry, we took our part in the public vindication of the right of instruction in the common Chris-

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\* We mean, on the ground that, as they believe, great principles demand it. There are those who would exclude Christian instruction from the day school because of their aversion to Christianity. But our present contention is not with non-Christians. It assumes the Christianity of the Province.

tianity of Protestants to a conspicuous place in the Common Schools of the Province. In the course of the discussions of that time, while vindicating the Minister of Education against what we believed to be unjust aspersions, we were called not only to maintain our views in opposition to those of our respected brethren, but to defend ourselves against the criticisms of the *Educational Journal* of the day, which to our especial regret was committed *editorially* to the advocacy of what we believe to be the great defect of our educational system—a defect which constitutes an anomaly discreditable to us as a Christian Province, and fraught with peril to its best interests. The *Journal* has ceased to exist. But there are not a few who still hold the views which, at the time referred to, it propounded—not uncourteously, we are pleased to say, but with an air of superiority, which some will agree with us in regarding as being at least amusing, whatever may be thought of its representation of our contention.

A writer in the *Journal*, whose views are endorsed by the Editor, if the Editor is not himself the writer, after expressing his belief of “the supreme importance of the religious element in the education of the young,” which, he says, “will be almost universally admitted”; and after expressing sympathy with us in seeking the authoritative introduction of Christian instruction into the Public Schools, gives it out as his opinion that, while “exemplary in our aims, we are *intellectually astray*,” our error being such that he is

“greatly surprised and perplexed.” His surprise and perplexity are not to be wondered at, when, as he tells his readers, he believes we are “advocating *State churchism* and *Ecclesiastical domination*.” We are, he charges, advocating “*compulsory* devotional exercises,” “*compulsory* use of the Bible,” “*compulsory* religious instruction”; and we are thus pleading for the contravention of the principle of religious toleration in general, and of the voluntary principle in particular. And, as if all this were an inadequate expression of the reprehensibility of our contention, it is further charged against us that, like the piling of Ossa on Pelion, we are, in an unholy war, crowning the error of our contention by “asking an earthly government to enter the realm sacred to the individual conscience,” “to interfere with the relation existing between God and the individual soul,” and “to put a premium upon formality and hypocrisy.”

These are very grave charges, expressed in very brave words, closely akin to the *sesquipedalia verba*, which we have already referred to, as indicating that those who indulge in them are outside the pale of reason. But, if we are not greatly mistaken, the words quoted are those of a very highly respected Christian gentleman. That, however, must not be allowed to prevent our dealing frankly with charges which we regard as, to say the least, gratuitous and unreasonable. The proprieties of controversy forbid that we should characterize them in terms which some might regard appropriate. But there can be no

impropriety in the retorting of the expression of surprise that brethren who are justly held in the highest respect should be so terrorized by the *bogey* of *State churchism* and its mate, *Ecclesiastical domination*; especially when we are pleading for the use of the very best means of rendering our experience of these things impossible. But the charges referred to, being not a mere tirade of senseless vituperation, but the calm and not uncourteous expression of sincere conviction, call for respectful treatment, and shall, we trust, be dealt with by us not otherwise than in the way of fair argument. For this, we think, we are now sufficiently prepared.

Courtesy does not forbid, and candour requires, that we should, at the outset of our reply to charges such as those of the *Journal*, frankly say that they are based upon a *total misapprehension* of the question at issue, as indeed may be already sufficiently apparent to the considerate and candid reader of the previous pages.

The *Journal*, from which we have quoted, as representing in words big, bold, and brave, the views of respected brethren, who believe that the success of our contention carries with it the most tremendous public evils, and involves violence to individual conscience, quietly assumes the question between us to be, "Is it right or is it wrong, that our rulers should *compel* a teacher who may be conscientiously an *infidel* in relation to Christianity—an *agnostic* or an *atheist*—publicly to offer up Christian prayer, and to impart



Christian instruction to his pupils, and *that*, when the minister" (*i.e.*, of Education) "may be himself an agnostic or an atheist?" But we must be allowed to say with all emphasis, *That it is not* the question, and that it is nothing less than a very gross pen caricature of the issues involved in our contention. And we must be pardoned for saying that it is more than surprising that a leading writer in the *Journal*, if not its distinguished Editor, should be oblivious to the fact that his high-sounding assumption of the question at issue is based upon the deeper and tremendously false assumption that the *teacher's interests*—his temporal interests—his livelihood—*are supreme*, and should be the determining element in our present contention; or that no regard is to be had to the interests or the convictions of any or all the other parties concerned; but that those of the teacher should be exclusively respected. But this surely is toleration in unreasonable excess: some would say toleration *run mad*. Is a man to be charged with a breach of the principle of religious toleration, because, as a parent, he would no more allow an agnostic or an atheist to be the teacher of his children, than quietly let a mad bull run amuck in the street where the children are at their play? We shall see immediately that the *Journal* not only justifies the parent, as it does also the trustees, in declining the *appointment* of a teacher who is not in sympathy with Christianity, but earnestly counsels all who have to do with the *appointment* of teachers that they be

careful to appoint only genuine Christians. It would seem, therefore, that it is *only the civil ruler* that must have a delicately tender and supreme regard for the interests of the agnostic or atheistic teacher. He must, on no account, as he would not infringe the most important principles of national action, require a religious profession (Roman Catholic or Protestant) as a qualification for appointment as a Public School teacher; but no legal eligibility is to be had respect to by parents or trustees in the appointment of the teacher, unless he is, besides being neither an agnostic nor an atheist, "a broad-minded and true-hearted Christian."

We cannot, of course, but admit that, if men and women were *compelled by conscription* to be teachers, as men are, in almost all countries except Britain, compelled to be soldiers, such a question as that of the *Journal* might reasonably be propounded. But so long as a man is at liberty to choose his own vocation, he cannot reasonably reclaim against the conditions which, according to the mind of the community, qualify him or unfit him for any special calling in its interest. To propound, therefore, the question that the *Journal* does, is simply to set up the proverbial man of straw. The question with which we have to deal is an entirely different one, as we shall endeavour to show, believing that we may do so without unduly trespassing on the patience of our readers, who will, we believe, see that the adaptation of our argument to the charges of the *Journal* is far from being unnecessary.

We assume, then, that, setting aside the Roman Catholic minority, for whom, in deference to their determination to be no parties to a system of education exclusively secular, separate provision has been made, and constitutionally and permanently secured, the remaining majority of *four-fifths* of the population of the Province are properly classed as Christians, according to a well-known and not improper, if mitigated, use of the term. That is, they accept the Christian Scriptures as the divinely given guide in the way of righteousness for man in all his relations. To an extent that some will regard as surprising, they are at one in their views of the teachings of Scripture, the *common* Christianity of *95 per cent.* of the Protestant profession being that of the well-known Presbyterian catechism, which contains over *four hundred* statements of Scripture truth and duty, all of which, with the exception of *three or four*, are the expression of the views of faith and duty held by the larger Protestant churches—the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational (Pedobaptist and Antipedobaptist). These all, we may further assume, believe that practical conformity to the teachings of Scripture is at once the elevation of the individual and the exaltation of the nation, and that want of conformity to them, whether from ignorance or aversion, is the sure road to individual and national degradation and ruin. If the Protestant people of Ontario actually stood related to the Scriptures otherwise than we assume they do,

we could not, of course, expect them to desire the Christian education of their children, either in the day school, or in the Sabbath School, or anywhere else. In such a case they would have to be left to the consequences of ignorance of Christian truth or of aversion to it, whatever these consequences may be. But our assumptions being granted, the question between us and our respected brethren is, On what ground can it be regarded as wrong in principle that the lessons of Christianity should be imparted under the authority of the Christian Government of a Christian people who, with a view to the moral welfare of their children, would see to their advancement in Christian knowledge by skilled and sympathetic Christian teachers? Or, more briefly, on what ground or principle is a Christian nation like Ontario forbidden to promote the best interests of its youth, by the teaching of its own religion, in its own schools, by properly qualified teachers? The reply, in the first instance, according to the *Journal*, is that when we plead for Christian instruction in the schools of the nation by its legally qualified teachers, we are asking a government whose Minister of Education, the *Journal* supposes, may be an *agnostic* or an *atheist*, to *compel* a teacher, who may be also an *agnostic* or an *atheist*, to teach in opposition to his own personal beliefs or convictions. We cannot, of course, deny the possibilities affirmed in this reply. For we cannot draw the line beyond which it is impossible for the depravity of our fallen nature to carry a man,



be he a minister of His Majesty the King of England, or a minister of the Gospel, or an instructor of our children. Nevertheless, the reasoning of the reply must be regarded as unsound. If the Government of a Christian country is *anti-Christian*, it is what it *ought not* to be, and what we trust the Government of Ontario never will be. And were a Christian Government to appoint an infidel as head administrator of its Education Department; it would do what it *ought not* to do. And the same is true of the selection and appointment of our teachers, not less being the implication, when the *Journal*, before the ink is dry in the pen that charges us with pleading for *compulsory* prayer, compulsory religious instruction, and other gross improprieties, counsels Christian ministers and parents, and trustees as representing parents (by legislative authority) to use their best endeavours to prevent the appointment of any teacher who is not a "*broad-minded and true-hearted Christian.*" With all due respect to brethren who are in our judgment seriously in error, we submit that the question under discussion cannot depend for its settlement on the mere *possibility* of the Government, or its Minister of Education, or the public teacher, being what *none of them ought to be*. Surely we are not to forego the employment of an instrumentality that is in itself replete with nothing but good, merely because of a possibility of some unworthy hand taking hold of it for an evil purpose. Cannot we protect ourselves against such a possibility? Is

it not the duty of a Christian people who, as in Ontario, have the appointment of their rulers in their own hands, to see that the national administration is Christian, based, that is, on Christian principles, and conducted in accordance with them? If our "liberalism" forbids our laying it down as a rule that a man who cannot honestly express Christian convictions should not, however otherwise qualified, be allowed a place in the legislative body of the Province, or should not, at the least, be excluded from its executive, we cannot see anything inconsistent with our political sentiments in the expression of our conviction that, the great body of our people being Christian, its Government should, as a whole, be distinctively Christian. No one, we think, can reasonably dispute the assertion that its rulers, and its teachers as well, should represent and reflect its sentiments as a community that is in profession distinctively Christian.

The Christian people of Ontario, instead of allowing themselves to be dominated by a groundless dread of our rulers, under whatever portentous name they may be personified, should rather rejoice that *our Caesar* is not an irresponsible, arbitrary, despotic, and dangerous autocrat, whose disposition to encroach upon our rights and privileges must be guarded against by ceaseless vigilance, but, as we have already said, a *good Christian Caesar*, who knows his proper place and its duties. Or, if the people think him wanting in this respect, they can remind him that his

rule is a service in their interest; and, if he will not be admonished, they can replace him by another who will promise to conduct himself with propriety, as their faithful and devoted servant—the servant of the Christian people. For it belongs to them, under our Scriptural form of government, to see that their rulers, whose service is, or ought to be, a ministry in their interests, are men whose public action is regulated by the principles of Christianity. And not less is it their part to see that the education of their children is committed to men and women who frankly accept the Christian Scriptures as a Divine revelation for man's welfare, individual and national. This is not only admitted but strongly urged by the *Journal*, in so far as the *appointment* of teachers is concerned. And we may presume that objection will not be made to what we have said respecting rulers. For surely no Christian will now say that the *State*, as such, should be *atheistic*, and should have no respect to the coming of Christ into the world, or to His teaching, or to His investment with all power in heaven and on earth. We have long ago—sixty years ago—in the days of heated controversy, heard assertions to that effect: but we do not expect ever to hear them again.

With the *Journal's* admissions and counsels its charges of *compulsion* and of the invasion of the territory of conscience vanish as a vapour. There is no *compulsion* in our people's requiring, whether directly or by their trustees, or by their rulers, that the

teachers of their children shall be qualified, by knowledge and sympathy, to give Christian instruction, any more than there is compulsion in the requirement that a Christian minister shall teach and preach in accordance with the doctrines of the Church, in whose teachings he has professed his belief, as the condition of his reception into its ministry. As no one is compelled to enter the ministry of any church, so no one is under compulsion to be a teacher. And our people surely have the right to determine what qualifications are indispensable in the instructors of their children. Beyond all absurdities would be the allowing of the teacher to determine his own qualifications. He may, of course, teach on his own responsibility, no one forbidding him or requiring of him the slightest recognition of Christianity either by prayer or by instruction. But our contention has respect not to a man's teaching on his own responsibility, but to his occupancy of a position in which the nation is responsible for his teaching. This being well understood, we cannot but think that the *Journal* expresses the general sentiment of our opponents, when it even strongly insists that it is the duty of parents and of trustees, as their representatives, to see that none but a "true-hearted Christian" be appointed to the work of their children's instruction. And if, besides seeing that the teacher of their children is a "true-hearted Christian," they also require, what it is equally their right to require, that he shall give them Christian instruction, there is, to



express it mildly, no propriety in saying that a teacher is, or may be, *compelled*, by that requirement, to teach what he does not believe, and tempted to act the hypocrite. Either requirement, by whomsoever imposed—whether by the Government as representing the people, or more directly by the people themselves, through their trustees, whose authority is conferred by the civil ruler—does nothing more than *shut out the unbeliever* from the occupancy of a position for which he is not qualified, in the judgment of the Christian people, whose property the schools are, and who have the chief interest in them.

The exclusion from eligibility as teachers in our Provincial Schools of those who are opposed to the common Christianity of the Province, or out of sympathy with it, may be reclaimed against by some as a hardship to *honest* skeptics. And some may raise a cry of intolerance, and denounce us, as proposing to bann and prosecute men on account of their *sincere religious convictions*. But a charge of *intolerance* is equally baseless with that of *compulsory* Christian teaching and compulsory Christian prayer. For, as we have said, the interests of our children, whatever these may be in the convictions of their parents, are *supreme* in this discussion, and not the interests of those who think to make a livelihood, for the time being, by teaching, or who, for any reason, desire to enter the profession. The law, as it stands, licenses only Christian men and women. The *Journal* and, we presume, those whose views it represents,

would, as a matter of course, or rather of consistency, have the law altered in this respect, so as to admit of the licensing of the agnostic and the atheist. But such a change would only aggravate the greater inconsistency to which we have already referred. For while it is pleaded that the door should be opened wide to *agnostics* and *atheists*, parents and trustees are earnestly counselled to *exclude* them, in spite of their legal qualification, and to be careful to appoint "only broad-minded and true-hearted Christian teachers." We uphold the law as it is, believing that it needs no vindication. And we contend for the removal of the inconsistency which we cannot but regard as being the great blot of our otherwise admirable educational system. Our reference is, of course, to the fact that notwithstanding the homage that is done to Christ in the requirement that only those who profess to be Christian men and women shall be regarded as qualified to teach in our Public Schools, Christian instruction is not allowed in them, except in so far as a limited permission is given to others than the legally qualified Christian teachers to do what the experience of many years has shown to be impracticable. And, what will not unreasonably be regarded by some as the most glaring incongruity of all, the Protestant Province of Ontario is, in this disallowance of Christian instruction in its schools, denied a right that is freely accorded to its Roman Catholic minority, and permanently secured in the constitution of the Dominion.

The views maintained by the *Journal* and others, including the unreasonable representations, as we cannot but regard them, of the evils to be apprehended from the civil ruler's practical recognition of his responsibility for the religious education of the youth of the Province, cannot, considering the interests involved, be dealt with too relentlessly. We, therefore, devote another chapter to an endeavour to show how untenable these views are. And we shall close our argument in relation to the objection to Christian instruction in our schools on the alleged ground of principle, by dealing particularly with the expressed views of Congregational brethren, with which the late Minister of Education appears to be largely, if not entirely, in sympathy. We trust, in so doing, to combine entire frankness with Christian propriety of expression, believing, as we do, that we have to deal with the sincere convictions of those who are, in our judgment, dominated in this instance by serious error, fraught with evil to the community.

## CHAPTER V.

The *Journal's* inconsistency further exhibited—Appeal to Scripture in opposition to our contention—Reference to the Congregational churches.

IF we could not but greatly regret that the *Educational Journal* was editorially committed to the exclusion from our schools of Christian instruction by the authorized teachers of the Province; and if we have still to regret that the weight of some greatly respected names is cast against our contention, we cannot but be pleased and encouraged, not only by the sympathy that is accorded to us, but by the highly important admissions that are made in reference to the character and qualifications of the public teacher. Not only is it admitted that the teacher of our children should be a Christian, in the highest sense of the term; but all parties concerned in the education of the young, with the sole exception of our rulers, are counselled to exercise the utmost carefulness in the *appointment* of teachers. Christian ministers are counselled to impress upon their people "the great, the incalculable value of religious character in the teacher." Parents are counselled to



“see to it that trustees are selected who rightly appreciate this first and highest of all qualifications.” And trustees, who represent the parents, by the authority of the civil ruler, are counselled “to show the same appreciation in their appointment of teachers.” They are told that they are “not only at liberty, but in duty bound, to seek teachers of the highest moral and religious, as well as intellectual qualifications.” As to the character of the teaching, all concerned, we are assured, may “trust broad-minded and true-hearted Christian teachers, when appointed, to build freely upon the deep foundations of Christian morality.” Without offering any strictures on what some would call the *high-sounding*, but which we would prefer to call the *high-toned*, character of the requisitions of our quotations, and without retorting charges of intellectual error, or expressions of surprise and perplexity, let us deal soberly and patiently with the inconsistency of demanding of the civil ruler that he shall not disallow the *eligibility* of the agnostic or the atheist as the teacher of our children, and of requiring at the same time that all the other parties concerned, Christian ministers, parents, and trustees, shall on no account allow the *appointment* of a teacher who is not a Christian in the most unmitigated sense of the term.

We may assume that one so Christian in his sentiments as the writer whose views we have placed before our readers fairly and with sufficient fulness, is persuaded that all to whom the Gospel is preached

ought to be Christians; and that God, who knows, and has provided for, all difficulties that may be in the way of the acceptance of Christ by those to whom He is preached, will hold no man excused, who in the midst of such light as we have, rejects Him, or fails to receive Him. He believes, that is, as we assume he cannot but do, that all our people without exception ought to be Christians, in the highest sense of the term. At the same time, we can hardly doubt that, with the views he has of the essential elements of personal Christianity, he may feel constrained to think that comparatively few of our people are what they ought to be—genuine Christians. Be that as it may, however, or judge as he or we may, one thing will be freely allowed, namely, that if we are not a nation of genuine or “true-hearted Christians,” we are entitled to be regarded as a *Christian nation*, the great majority of us accepting the Christian Scriptures as a divinely given revelation of the mind and will of God for our welfare as individuals and as a national community.

In view of all the admissions referred to—that is, we being, though many of us far from being the Christians we ought to be, at least a *Christian nation*, the great majority of us accepting the Scriptures as a revelation given to guide us in the way of righteousness, and of individual happiness and national prosperity; and being all of us under obligation to see to it that the instruction of our children is committed to none but “true-hearted Christian teachers”—as

parents caring that Christian trustees are selected, because "such only can rightly apprehend the first and highest of all qualifications," and, as trustees, carrying out the views of those whom they represent—in view, we say, and in the face of all these admissions and their implications, most people, we believe, will think that only unusual subtlety of mind is equal to the task of reconciling all this with the insistence that our rulers, who equally represent us, and whose ministry is a service in our interests, in accordance with our convictions and wishes, must do no less than forbid the communication of Christian instruction by teachers qualified in accordance with their regulations. They may, we presume, see that the teacher is addicted to no immoral practice: but beyond that they may not go. That they may not see to it that he is nothing less than a genuine or "true-hearted Christian," no one will dispute. For that clearly were to go beyond their province, and to trespass on that of the Church. Defence, however, of the apparent inconsistency is not wanting. It is contended that, while Christian ministers, parents and school trustees are bound to use their utmost endeavours to prevent the *appointment* of a teacher who is not a "true-hearted Christian," the civil ruler may not, in his control of the education of the youth of the nation, concern himself in the religious sentiments of the teacher. That he is an agnostic or an atheist, it is contended, should be no bar to his receiving government sanction as a qualified teacher,

*eligible* for appointment to a Provincial School. It is insisted that it is a contravention of our accepted principles of national action, that the teacher's religious sentiments should be taken into consideration by the civil ruler. And seeing that the civil ruler may not refuse to make the skeptic or the infidel eligible for appointment to a National School, and that notwithstanding all the carefulness that ministers, parents and trustees may exercise to prevent his appointment, he may succeed in obtaining an appointment—in such a case, it is contended, it would be nothing short of oppression of the poor skeptic or atheist, who is supposed still to have a conscience, to require of him to impart Christian instruction and to offer up Christian prayer, and “*compel* conscience, interfere with the solemn relations between God and the individual soul, and put a premium upon formalism and hypocrisy.”

However great a hardship to the agnostic or the atheist may seem, in the judgment of some, to be implied in our contention for the introduction of Christian instruction into the Public School, there must surely be some great misapprehension underlying the flagrant inconsistency of denying the right of the supreme educational authority to refuse to license a man whom all other parties concerned are told they must, on no account, allow the appointment of as a teacher of our children. To say nothing of the obvious fact that it is the agnostic or the atheist himself that is guilty of the *πρώτον ψεῦδος*, in



representing himself to be a Christian when he knows he is not, it seems reasonable that if, as our opponents insist, the instruction of our children should be committed only to "true-hearted Christian teachers," we should *begin at the beginning*, by using appropriate means to keep all others out of the profession. Surely it is reasonable that, instead of licensing those whom parents and trustees are counselled to reject, and thus increasing the difficulty of a proper selection, the chief authority should withhold license from those whom, it is said, trustees should regard as disqualified, and should therefore decline to appoint, of course, as we have said, not presuming to pass judgment upon the Christianity of the candidate for license, but accepting as sincere his profession of a Christian faith. And it is obvious that, while according to our views, were they carried out, there would be no *compulsion* to teach contrary to a man's beliefs, but simply the *limitation* of his choice of a profession, the temptation to "formalism and hypocrisy," with which our contention is charged, would be equally strong, so long as parents and trustees act as the *Journal* in the strongest terms counsels them to do. The responsibility would only be shifted from the Government to the parents and trustees, whose refusal to appoint any but one whom they regarded as a "true-hearted Christian" would be no less a temptation to formalism and hypocrisy, than the requirement of the Christian ruler that the public teacher shall be a Christian and impart the lessons of Christianity to his scholars.

But, it is argued, the civil ruler goes beyond his province in requiring that the national teacher shall be a Christian and impart Christian instruction. Parents, it is said, have a right, and it is their duty, to see to it that none but a Christian teacher shall be in charge of the education of their children; and trustees, as the immediate representatives of parents, are bound to carry out their wishes. But the civil ruler may not interfere with the religious views of his subjects, in the way of disqualifying them for any official position, or for any position of which he has control. Although he represents the Christian people as much as the trustee does, and is as much bound to carry out their wishes as is the trustee, who, be it remembered, represents the parents *only by authority of the civil ruler*, yet an appeal is made to Scripture, in the belief that it authoritatively settles the question under discussion. That the civil ruler, or the Government, whether legislative or executive, may not do what parents or trustees not only may do, but are bound to do; or that he may not concern himself about the religious character of the teacher, while to parents and trustees that should be the "first and highest consideration," is said to be expressly forbidden by our Lord, both when He says, "My kingdom is not of this world," and when He says, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." And we are reminded that history proves what evils have invariably resulted from Cæsar's meddling with

the things of God, or, as it is explained, with the religion of his subjects.

We must be permitted to say frankly that it is entirely beyond us to see the bearing of those interesting and important sayings on the matter of our present contention. We presume that, when our Lord says, "My kingdom is not of this world," adding immediately, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight," etc., He means that His kingdom, which is, as the apostle says, "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," is not established or maintained and extended by force of arms, and that its aims are of such a character, that so far from interfering with the exercise of legitimate earthly authority, it recognizes it as "ordained of God," for important ends, which, as we know, cannot be so effectually promoted by any action of the civil authority, other than that which is based on the recognition of the principles of the Christian religion. And when our Lord says, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," He cannot, in view of the circumstances in which he replied in these words to His hypocritical tempters, be supposed to have meant anything but that they should submit to Cæsar and yield him a willing service in all his legitimate demands—*i.e.*, in all requirements not contrary to the commands of God, or obedience to which would be sin. To pay tribute to Cæsar were no sin on their part: for Cæsar had the power to enforce his demands; and if his

demands were unrighteous, the responsibility would be his and not theirs. But if Cæsar should demand their denial of Christ, or disobedience to His command in anything, His disciples must die rather than obey. We can therefore see nothing in our Lord's words, as an argument against Christian rulers taking upon themselves the responsibility of Christian instruction in the schools of a Christian nation and in accordance with the wishes of its people.

It is, we must be allowed to say, very inconsiderately assumed, and by implication charged against us, that we are proposing that the things of God should be rendered unto Cæsar. For are we not rather proposing that Cæsar himself, having learned his place of subjection to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, should render to Him the things that are His? For when Cæsar says, as in effect he does say, when he indicates his determination that all his young subjects shall have full opportunity of being instructed in the principles of Christianity by well-informed and sympathetic teachers, it cannot reasonably be said that the carrying out of that determination, in accordance with wishes of Christian parents, involves the great enormity of rendering to Cæsar the things that are God's. Is it not rather, we repeat, that Cæsar himself, being Christian, has learned dutifully and cordially to render to God the things that are God's? And why may he not do so? Is there any necessary opposition between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world? Are



the latter essentially departments of the devil's kingdom of darkness and sin? It cannot be, for are we not praying continually that "the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ"? And do we thus pray without believing that the promise will be fulfilled in actual experience? Do we not already see its partial fulfilment, however slow, we may think, the advance towards actual fulfilment has been? Surely we are, at least, warranted to believe that there is no *essential antagonism* between God and Cæsar. Do we not believe, and do we not actually see, that Cæsar himself may be, as he ought to be, a faithful subject of God, making God's Word the law of his rule as well as of his life? Is it to be no concern of his that his subjects should have their consciences informed and enlightened, and their lives regulated, by the inspired rule of righteousness, the Word of God? May he not be—ought he not to be—wise enough to know that, while Christ's kingdom in the world does not allow the exercise of his authority in its affairs, and does not need his official support or assistance, the knowledge of the Christian Scriptures and practical conformity to their teachings are essential to the welfare of his own kingdom? If these questions are their own answer, on what principle, we must persist in asking, is he forbidden to see to it that his young subjects, with the exception of the very few whose parents may be opposed to it, shall receive the instruction which, he believes, will more than anything else secure their growing up to

be good citizens, though he may not look to anything higher? Or, in other words, casting away the personification once for all, on what principle is a Christian nation, like Ontario, debarred as such, *i.e.*, in action through its chosen rulers, from the exercise of its inalienable right of self-preservation, in so far as the knowledge of Christian truth may contribute to it? Let it be granted as indisputable, and as a principle of essential importance, that the kingdom of God in the world—His visible Church—and the civil authority, the divinely appointed order for the protection and promotion of men's temporal interests, has each its own distinctive province, and that each must keep within its own sphere and prosecute its own objects. That principle cannot justly be said to be infringed, when a nation as such—acting, that is, by its chosen rulers—sees to the promotion of its own well-being in the training of its youth in the principles that exalt nations. The interests of Christ's kingdom may be *incidentally* or *indirectly* promoted, as no doubt they will be, by the daily or stated instruction of our youth in the lessons of His religion. But we cannot see that such instruction by the accredited teachers of the nation, or by the authority of the civil ruler, can reasonably be objected to as involving any encroachment on the province or privileges of the Christian Church, or any interference with its aims; as we have seen it involves nothing compulsory in connection with the religious convictions of any one.

If any objection is made, it cannot reasonably be made on the ground of the rendering of an improper aid to religion. It can only be made, as has been already shown, on the ground of the *inherent power* of the Christian religion to increase its credit and influence, by doing the good which nothing else can do, the implication being, as we shall see more fully in the sequel, that but for this inherent power for good—the highest good—no objection could be made against its being taught in our schools.

In closing this chapter dealing with the views of the *Educational Journal*, which are still the expression of the mind of some Christian ministers and people in relation to the introduction of Christian instruction into our Public Schools, we cannot yet close our argument against the error of those who hold that Christian instruction cannot be communicated in our Provincial Schools by legally qualified teachers, without contravention of acknowledged important principles of national action. If there are readers who believe, as we cannot but think many do, that enough has been said on the subject, and that we might now, without further delay, proceed to the consideration of the practical difficulties that stand, or are believed by some to stand, in the way of the introduction of Christian instruction into the schools of the Province, we trust they will have patience with us in our dealing, in a separate chapter, with the views on the subject under discussion, as they appear to be largely, if not generally, held by the

ministers of the Congregational churches of Ontario;\* and which, judging from his reports, are at least to a large extent endorsed by the late Minister of Education. If our opposition to these views is expressed with perfect freedom and in strong terms, it is only because we are under the constraint of a painful necessity—painful because of the high regard in which we hold the brethren from whom we differ, and a minister of almost unapproachable energy and administrative ability, to say nothing of our own party loyalty. The present state of things is to us

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\* No one can charge us with misrepresenting the position of the Congregational churches, who reads the following expressions of the views maintained by the Congregational (Pedobaptist), and by the Baptist (Antipedobaptist) Church. I. The resolution (passed, we believe, unanimously) by the Congregational *Union*: "That the Secretary of the *Union* respectfully acknowledge the receipt of a communication from the Provincial Episcopal Synod (1886) asking for co-operation of this body in securing legislative action with a view to religious instruction in the Public Schools; and that he be authorized to state in reply, that while we sympathize with the memorialists in their solicitude for the religious instruction of the young, we decline to co-operate as desired, for the following reasons: Ist. By the present laws the Bible is read in nearly all our Common Schools, and permission is given to ministers of the Gospel to use school buildings for the teaching of religious truth in hours outside of those allotted to secular instruction; and second, we deprecate *compulsory* religious instruction by the secular power, involving, as it practically does, principles against which we, as Congregationalists, have ever protested, viz., the Union of Church and State." II. The *Canadian Baptist*, referring to the subject of legislation prescribing such religious exercises as are at present in use in the Public Schools, after expressing regret that, while Baptists had taken no part with ministers of other churches who had pressed such legislation on the Government, they had *failed to protest*



galling in the extreme, especially when we think that to those who regard it from without, it must appear to be in a high degree discreditable to us as a Christian nation. It may be that there is a casuistry that will not quail before the glaring incongruity more than once referred to, that, namely, of denying to a Protestant people what is freely accorded, and constitutionally secured, to a comparatively small Roman Catholic minority. And it may be that the circumstances in which it originated forbid our appropriation of responsibility for the unprecedented anomaly.

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*against it*, gives what we may regard as the prevailing view of the Baptist churches in the following words: "We deny that it is any part of the duty of the State to teach religion. It is unquestionably its duty to secure the best possible moral training for its future citizens. But the two things, moral training and religious instruction or observance, are clearly distinct. We do not doubt, nay, we hold most strongly, that the Christian religion affords the only reliable basis of morality. If the grand facts and principles of religion are not known by the pupils, the teacher has no fulcrum on which he can rest an effective moral lever. *But surely both the teacher and the State have the right to assume that the parents, the Sabbath School and the Church have done their duty.*" Unhappily such an assumption is contrary to facts, so far as many parents are concerned, who disregard the provision made by the Church for themselves and their children. But of this we hope to treat in its proper place. Meantime, may we not ask what difference there is, in principle, between *giving* Christian instruction and *building upon* it, on the assumption that it has been given? And if it is the duty of the State, *through the teacher*, to labour in the erection of the superstructure, how can it but be its duty to *see* (not merely to *assume*) that the foundation is *sufficient*, *i.e.*, neither entirely wanting nor essentially defective? The obligation to erect the superstructure surely involves the obligation to lay the only foundation.

But there is one thing that can hardly be questioned, and that is, that the Government could not resist the force of public opinion against the indefensible anomaly, were it not that its weight is so seriously reduced by the opposition of some excellent Christian people, whose opposition is mainly founded on what we regard as an unreasonable dread that, to introduce into our schools instruction in our common Christianity would be to plant in Ontario the germ of State churchism, and to bring us back to ecclesiastical domination. We say *mainly*, because, as will be seen, their opposition is fortified by their sympathy with one or two minor practical objections which, we hope to show, are far from being of a formidable character.

## CHAPTER VI.

State of the question—Objections of Christian brethren endorsed by the educational authority—The one alternative.

IT will be seen from previous references to the views of ministers of the Congregational churches of Ontario, that we regard their opposition to the authoritative introduction of Christian instruction into the Provincial Schools as being a great hindrance to the success of our contention in favour of it. And if we consider the fact that the views of the educational authorities appear to be largely those of the Congregational brethren, we are probably not far wrong in regarding this united opposition as the greatest of all the hindrances with which we have to contend, and perhaps the least likely to yield to any endeavour to show that it is not justifiable on any reasonable ground. For it is an opposition which is avowedly grounded mainly on *principle*; and although, we believe, it can be shown that no accepted principle would be infringed in the success of our contention, it is, as we have said, well known that, when we have been accustomed to regard ourselves as impregably entrenched against argument, on the ground of a great principle unquestioned,

if not unquestionable, one sets himself to the hardest of all tasks, who would endeavour to persuade us that we are in error.

But however much we may regret the opposition of our respected brethren, endorsed as it appears to be by the educational authorities ; and however unhopeful any attempt to convince of error either the one or the other may be regarded, we who believe that they are in error, and that their error is a very serious one, as being replete with evil to the community, cannot but persist in our testimony against it, and in our endeavour to expose it. And we believe we have the full sympathy, not only of the ministers of what may be called the largest Protestant churches, but of the great body of the Protestant population of Ontario, whose convictions, if we are not greatly mistaken, are strongly in favour of stated Christian instruction in the day school by the accredited teachers of the Province.

The discussions of some years ago, which have been already referred to, though not altogether fruitless of good results, failed to issue in the success of the strenuous contention of the time for the introduction of religious instruction by the national teachers, mainly, the writer believes, because they happened to be contemporaneous with the approach of a general election, when unhappily, as in war, everything being supposed to be justifiable that may contribute to party success, the Minister of Education was made the butt of aspersions that had no ground except in



the estimation of the heated spirit of political partisanship. Those discussions, however, placed in a sufficiently clear light the position occupied by the advocates of Christian instruction in our schools by qualified and sympathetic Christian teachers—their ready admission of the difficulties alleged as standing in the way of the success of their contention; and the grounds on which they persist in the hope that the time will come when the acceptance of their views will be considered essential to the welfare of every Province in the Dominion. Those discussions showed, in particular, that we have no call to vindicate the essential importance of the Christian instruction of the youth of Ontario. With rare exceptions—with the exception, that is, of the few who are anti-Christian in sentiment—all are persuaded that early instruction in the facts and principles of Christianity is essential to the well-being of the individual and of the community. The only question, and that a question urgently demanding an early and conclusive settlement, has respect to the *responsibility of the Government* for the communication of religious instruction to the children of the Province. Assuming not only the obligation of the Christian Church and of its parents in the matter of religious instruction of the young, but also, what is freely admitted, that “Christianity being the basis of our school system, its principles should pervade it throughout,” the question is, whether Christian instruction in the day school shall be imparted by Protestant ministers, in

accordance with the regulations framed by the Education Department of the Government, which thus assumes no responsibility for the religious instruction of the young, beyond the granting of the use of the school-room for the purpose; or, shall Christian or Bible instruction be regarded as a constituent part of the regular school programme, and be imparted by the authorized and salaried teachers of the Province, the educational authority thus assuming the full responsibility\* of the religious instruction of the children of the Protestant majority, in what we may call the common Christianity of Protestants, as it is already responsible for that of the children of the Roman Catholic minority, as well in the distinctive teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, as in the doctrines common to Roman Catholics and Protestants—a privilege or right, let it not be forgotten, secured to Roman Catholics in the Constitution of the Dominion.

We cannot conceive of the possibility of any one objecting to the teaching of Christianity in the day

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\* It will surely not be charged against us that we plead for such a responsibility as is assumed by the State, when it gives pecuniary aid to the clergy of a particular denomination, or, as in France, to Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy alike. We simply plead that the particular character of the religious instruction being that of the determination of the parents, the civil ruler shall assume the responsibility of *insisting* that our children shall be *religiously* educated, and of providing, as a matter of expediency and propriety, by moderate taxation, for the decent maintenance of the teacher, instead of leaving him to the uncertainty of school fees.

school, as a matter and an important part of *history*, many departments of which, including those that should be specially interesting to us, cannot be studied intelligently and with profit by such as have not a competent knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, ignorance of which, discreditable as it is in the highest degree to a Protestant citizen of Ontario, is largely and, as some say, deplorably prevalent. The objection is made, as we understand it, not to the mere statement of the historical facts of the Christian Scriptures, but to the teaching of the distinctive doctrines of Protestant Christianity, with the view of early instilling into the minds of our children the principles that will be their safety against the evils that make for the destruction of their temporal, as well as of their spiritual interests. It is argued that because this is the work of parents and of the Church, it is a work in which the civil ruler may not interfere, and must not concern himself, and a work, therefore, which must not be committed to teachers whose salaries are secured by the action of the civil power, *i.e.*, by taxation, instead of being left to the uncertainty of school fees. The reasoning, however, is not allowable. What is the duty of one party is not therefore *not* the duty of another. And while we cannot too strongly emphasize the obligation of the Church and of parents, we contend that it is at once the right and the duty of the civil ruler *also* to have a regard to the moral, as well as to the material interests of his people, and as

their chosen representative to care that his young subjects do not grow up in ignorance of the religion, the knowledge of which is essential to the welfare of the nation under his rule. For let it be granted as unquestionable, that the sphere of the civil ruler has distinctive respect to temporal interests—the protection of the person, the property, and the good name of his subjects—the security of these interests depends very largely on the information and enlightenment of the consciences of his people, or, in other words, on their moral susceptibility ; which again, as is admitted on all hands, is most effectually promoted and secured by being based and built on the principles of Christianity, as they are understood and accepted by the people of Ontario, with comparatively few exceptions. While, therefore, it pertains to the Christian Church and its parents to instruct the young for the higher end of spiritual edification, it cannot reasonably be denied that it is the duty of the ruler of a Christian nation to promote and secure the inferior interests committed to him, by employing, with a view to that end, the most effective of all means—the knowledge, namely, of the common Christianity of the nation—not therein, be it remembered, having any thought of aiding religion, which, as he ought to know, needs not his aid (though some may not repudiate it), and can even dare and despise his opposition, but whose aid in the promotion of the ends of his own rule he cannot afford to dispense with.

In all the discussions of the past, on the subject of



“Systematic State Religious Instruction in the Public Schools”—this being the heading of a paper submitted to the Toronto Ministerial Association by a Congregational (Pedobaptist) brother, our knowledge of whom, during the last twenty-five years, has constrained our highest esteem—the ministers of the Congregational order have, so far as our knowledge goes, generally taken a strong ground against Christian instruction by the accredited and salaried teachers of the Province. They contend, as is done in the paper referred to, that such instruction is wrong in principle—contrary, that is, to the principle of religious *toleration*, held by us all, and to the *voluntary* principle, which, if not held by us all, is a dead issue in Ontario. It is asserted that to impart religious instruction by teachers whose salaries are secured by taxation, is to endow religion with public money, or to give it national or state aid, contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. If we allow any instruction except secular in the day school, we are, it is argued, or may be, compelling some to pay a tax in the interest of a religion in which they do not believe—an argument that would justify opposition to all taxation, some portion of which can never but be laid out for a purpose to which some taxpayers are conscientiously opposed.

It is further insisted, as in the paper referred to, that Christian instruction is the work of the Church and its parents. This, of course, we freely admit, while utterly repudiating the illegitimate implication

which, whether expressed or not, is improperly assumed, viz., that it is *not* the concern of the civil ruler. We cannot allow it to be assumed that, though the teacher is, during school hours, *in loco parentis*, the one thing in which he must not assist the parent is the religious instruction of the child, because, as is asserted, his doing so would be the same thing as the endowing of religion with public money, seeing his salary is secured by taxation. The identity of the two things, as we have said, we cannot see. And willing as we are, though not *voluntaries* in the abstract, to admit that the Church is not, in the Dominion, to look to the civil ruler for help in its work, but to depend exclusively on what "individuals may give of their own free will," we cannot but insist that, in urging our rulers with all earnestness to assume the full responsibility of Christian instruction in the schools of the Province, we are not asking them to aid the Church or help religion. We must insist that we are not pleading with the State to aid the Christian religion, and that it is not doing so in assuring a pittance to keep alive teachers whom it requires to devote a small portion of school time to the Christian interests of their pupils. Rather we are reminding the State that, while the Church, or the Christian religion, is more than independent of its aid, the State is not independent of the aid which the Christian religion can give and proposes to give it; yea more, that it cannot dispense with it. In other words, we plead with the State, or the civil ruler, not to aid the

religion of Christ, which has never thriven so much as when the State doomed it to destruction, and used all its power to extinguish it; but, as already said, to be "wise for itself" and the interests committed to it, by thankfully accepting and dutifully employing the divinely provided instrumentality for its prosperity and exaltation.

Without, then, disputing the soundness of the voluntary principle, and entirely agreeing with our respected brethren, at least so far that we believe with them that the appropriation of public money for the purpose of giving aid to religion, or of helping the Church of Christ or any portion of it, in its work of maintaining or of propagating Christianity, is not to be tolerated or even thought of in this Province, we cannot but persist in our contention that those are in error who believe that Christian instruction in the Provincial Schools of Protestant Ontario, by teachers certified and secured in their salaries by the action of the civil power, involves any contravention of the voluntary principle, or of any other generally accepted principle of national action. Lest we should be charged with pressing *usque ad nauseam* a distinction which we regard as being no less palpable than it is important, let this be our last reference to it.

Another objection, made in the paper referred to, against "Systematic State Religious Instruction in Public Schools," is one which, while it renders conspicuous the simple-minded generosity of the esteemed brother, cannot, we think, be regarded by the brethren

of any Church as well-grounded. It is to the effect that, should the Protestant majority of Ontario insist successfully in their contention for the introduction of instruction in its common Christianity, another majority elsewhere, or at another time, holding different or opposite religious views, having equal rights with our present local majority, will be "justified"—so it is pleaded—in the exercise of those rights. Of course, they *will* exercise them, even if not justified, which they cannot be, if they are in the wrong; and they will exercise them, too, whether we exercise ours or not. It were vain to expect that, by refraining from the exercise of our majority right, we shall induce other majorities to refrain from the exercise of theirs. Apart from this, is it not unreasonable to ask a majority to denude itself of its right and privilege, and to throw off its obligation to do what it believes to be essential to the welfare of the community, because another majority may, in the exercise of its right, as a majority, introduce erroneous teaching or do other wrong, thereby bringing evil on the community? Under our system of Government the majority *must* rule according to its convictions, while, as we have said, being careful not to rule oppressively, but with a generous regard to the convictions and feelings of the minority, both parties leaving it to the Providence of God to justify the action of the majority, or to show that it is wrong and of evil effect.

Again, contrary to what may be expected in a



body not behind others in liberality of sentiment, our brethren appear to be of the opinion that, if Christian instruction were committed to our teachers, they could not but take advantage of their position to commend to their pupils the distinctive views of their several denominations, with the result that, Protestants differing very much in doctrine among themselves, the land would "be filled with sectarian strife." In this objection to our contention, the Education Department, according to the views expressed in very decided terms by the Minister of Education, is in entire sympathy. The Minister, as his reports previously referred to indicate, recognizes fully what hardly any one questions, "That Christianity is the basis of our school system, and that therefore its principles should pervade it throughout," and adds that he is himself "personally deeply interested in the promotion of Christian instruction, and ready to promote it to the utmost limits of official authority." But he goes on to say that he is nevertheless "disposed to believe that the teachers themselves *cannot, with safety or propriety*, be charged with the responsibility of communicating distinctively Christian instruction to their pupils," and "greatly favours its communication by the ministers of religion or their representatives." There are, to his mind, "serious objections to religious instruction by the authorized and salaried teachers of the Province." That the Minister objects on the ground of the *voluntary* principle is, we think, hardly likely, though

objection on that ground, some may think, is implied in his reference to "the limits of official authority." But he objects, in particular, that "it would be *impossible* for a teacher to give Christian instruction without more or less frequently giving his remarks a denominational tinge."

Referring now specially to the views of the Minister, we must admit that there is, on the part of a small percentage of the Protestant or non-Catholic profession of the Province, such a wide divergence from the common Christianity of Protestants that the teachers' instructions could not but seriously conflict with views which Protestants generally regard as very erroneous. We cannot suppose, however, that it is to this that the Minister refers. In other words, we cannot suppose that he argues that the great majority of the Protestant profession are to be denied what they regard as a most important benefit to their children and, as they believe, to the community at large, on the simple ground that there is a small minority, as we shall see—not more than one in twenty—whose views are abnormally divergent from the common Christianity of Protestants, and whose children no one will think of compelling to receive the teachers' religious instructions. We suppose, therefore, that he can only mean that it is "impossible" for a teacher who belongs to one of the five great Protestant churches of Ontario, which together include *95 per cent.* of the Protestant profession of the Province, to give instruction in its common

Christianity, without "tinging" or flavouring his instructions with the distinctive teachings of his own denomination—that, for example, the Baptist teacher could not refrain sometimes from expressing his opinion that infant baptism is not in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament; that the Methodist teacher could not but occasionally refer unfavourably to Calvinistic predestination; that the Presbyterian teacher could not but sometimes so far forget himself and the proprieties of his position as to assure his pupils that the office of the *bishop* is the same as that of the *elder*; and that the High Church Anglican teacher could not, once in a while, resist the temptation to tell his pupils that, while a man may be a very good Christian outside of the Church, there are no churches, properly so called, except those of Rome and England, and the Greek Church, to which the *covenanted* mercies of God are confined. To this, however, we are constrained, to say the least, very strongly to demur. We shall say nothing of Scotland, whose people, since the Reformation, have been distinguished, beyond those of other Protestant countries, by their general agreement in a firm attachment to what they believe to be the Scripture principles embodied in the standards or symbols of their Church. But if in England no difficulty has been found in relation to religious instruction in the *Board* schools, established almost contemporaneously with the great advance in our own educational arrangements in 1871, much less should there be any

difficulty in the introduction into the Public Schools of Ontario, not only of the religious teaching of the English Board Schools, but of a religious teaching embracing the whole of the common Christianity of 95 per cent. of the Protestants of the Province.

Referring to the danger of filling the land with "sectarian strife," by the introduction into the Public Schools of religious instruction, we propose, further on, to deal somewhat fully with the matter of sectarianism, and with the difficulty supposed by some to be involved in the differences among Protestant Christians.\* Meantime let us remind our brethren of the significant fact which is patent to every one, and which we all gratefully acknowledge, that, with the exception of a small percentage, the Protestants of the Province are homogeneous in their Christian beliefs and sentiments to such an extent that the ministers of the different churches not only co-operate in Christian effort, but occupy each others' pulpits without exciting a suspicion of the denomination to which they belong, so far as difference of doctrine is concerned. What then can there be to hinder a teacher, however firmly attached he may be to the church of his conviction, from imparting instruction in the common Christianity of Ontario, without being guilty of the folly of even flavouring his instructions with his denominational peculiarities?

Once more it is objected by our brethren, and it may be that the late Minister sympathizes with them in

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\* See Chapter VIII.



the objection, as we know some others do ; that there are those in the ranks of the profession who " cannot be intrusted with the imparting of *religious* instruction." The implication, we presume, is that there are Provincial teachers who, if not opposed to Christianity, are ignorant of its teachings, or, in so far as they know them, are skeptical or out of sympathy in relation to them. An objection of this kind is not to be lightly thought of. Nor have we any disposition to make light of it, or to underestimate it, as will appear when, in view of its importance, we come to deal with it in a separate chapter. But meantime, we have no hesitation in saying that, to whatever extent the profession may, at the present time, be infected with skepticism or infidelity, the evil is one that not only can be remedied, but ought to be remedied, altogether apart from the introduction of Christian instruction by the licensed Public School teacher. Christian instruction or no Christian instruction, the National School, as is not only admitted but strongly insisted on by those with whom we are now at issue, is no place for the agnostic or the atheist, or for any teacher who, though he may not come up to the ideal of the *Journal*, is not at least an honest believer in Christianity. If, as cannot be doubted, some of our legally qualified teachers are not in sympathy with the common Christianity of the Province, or are, in plain terms, *infidels* in relation to Christianity, their position is an *illegal* one. By concealing their sentiments, they have, under a false

avowal of a Christian faith, crept into the profession or entered it surreptitiously. For it is only as avowing a Christian faith—Roman Catholic or Protestant—a faith which includes nothing less than a frank and honest acceptance of the divine origin of the Christian religion, that they are licensed to teach in the National Schools. We are not called to enter, in these pages, on a formal defence of the law on this point, believing, as we do, that it needs no defence on the part of any one. And besides it is held by those with whom we are now at issue, “that Christianity being the basis of our school system, its principles should pervade it throughout.” But accepting the law as it stands, we cannot overlook the existence of an evil which ought to be firmly dealt with until, if it cannot be entirely suppressed (as what evil can?) it should be reduced to a *minimum*, and, when so reduced, kept down by constant watchfulness on the part of all concerned, not by the action of parents and trustees only, but by that of the Education Department. As to the charge of intolerance and persecution, grounded on the exclusion from the profession of those who do not accept the Christian religion, or are hostile to it, refutation of it is superfluous. Our people, as we have said, surely have the right to determine what qualifications are essential in those to whom the education of their children is committed; and no one is justified in raising a cry of intolerance on the ground of what is simply the limitation of the choice of a profession, by the demand

of a qualification which, in the judgment of parents, is essential in the interests of their children. A man can make a livelihood a hundred other ways than by teaching. Nor is he hindered from doing so by teaching, if, believing that teaching is his vocation, or that he is a born educationist, as no doubt some are, he chooses to teach on his own responsibility, as thousands have done before, who have, on much less serious ground, been considered disqualified to teach in the National Schools.

It is more than likely that some will regard the argument of the preceding pages as unsatisfactory. It may be that there are those who can by no argument be persuaded that Christian instruction, such as we contend for, is not wrong in principle. But we shall not have laboured in vain, if we succeed in confirming some in the persuasion that no accepted principle of national action forbids our rulers to assume the responsibility of the Christian instruction of the youth of the Province; but that on the contrary, it is at once their duty and their wisdom to make suitable and adequate provision for such instruction by qualified teachers; and that their delaying to do so involves the continuance of a great anomaly, which is far from creditable to us as a Christian nation, and which is especially flagrant, in view of the fact that the Roman Catholics, who are not a large fraction of the population, are constitutionally and permanently secured in a privilege which may not improbably continue to be denied to us, so long as not a few of us

are only half-hearted in our contention, and some even opposed to it.

We have yet to consider, First, whether the obligation resting on our rulers and, as we have seen, acknowledged by them, in relation to the religious instruction of the children of the Protestant population of the Province is adequately discharged by the *permission* which, under certain regulations, relegates to clergymen the Christian instruction of the young in the Public Schools; or whether the arrangement referred to is not essentially unreasonable and unwise, as being generally impracticable and, as we shall see, seriously inadequate, because of its making no provision for the religious instruction of those who are most in need of it: and, Second, Whether the *practical* difficulties which, it is admitted, stand in the way of the communication of religious instruction by the accredited teachers of the Province are such as to be insuperable, or whether they are only such as may be more or less easily and sufficiently obviated by reasonable endeavour on the part of those who have an interest in the education of the young. If it can be shown, as we believe it can, that to expect Christian ministers to undertake the work of religious instruction in the day school permanently or otherwise than provisionally, is to expect what is unreasonable and impracticable, and that there are no insuperable obstacles in the way of its communication by the qualified and salaried teachers of the Province, one alternative only is before our rulers. Either they



must assume the direct responsibility of the religious instruction of the children of the Province by its authorized teachers, instead of casting it on the ministers of religion, by simply asking them to do more for their own children than they are already doing; or they must resolve that, *so far as they are concerned*, the education of the young of the Protestant profession shall be, as it is now, *exclusively secular*, and that in spite of the fact that they accept the responsibility of the instruction of the children of Roman Catholic parents in the distinctive teachings of their Church.

If Protestant ministers cannot accept, as a favour from our rulers, the permission to teach their children once a week in the Public School room, they will doubtless continue to do their duty, by instructing, with more convenience of time and place, all who are not unwilling to receive their instructions. And, with their helpers in the work of Christian instruction, they will continue to do not a little to check the moral degeneracy which only the knowledge of Christian truth can effectually restrain. But our rulers must accept the responsibility of the continued ignorance of many whose parents, prejudiced, as they are, against ministers and churches, are far from being unwilling to have their children receive Christian instruction from teachers who are now authoritatively forbidden to impart it.\*

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See Chap. VII., pp. 117, 119.

## CHAPTER VII.

Relegation of Christian instruction in the Public Schools to Protestant ministers an inadequate fulfilment of the obligation of the civil ruler, and otherwise objectionable.

WE propose in this chapter to deal frankly with the arrangement which gives to Christian ministers, under certain regulations, a *permission* to impart religious instruction in the Public Schools of the Province. This is a subject in regard to which ill-considered statements have, from time to time, appeared in print, being perhaps for the most part made at teachers' meetings and by the younger members of the profession. Speaking generally, we do not see how it can, after due consideration, be questioned that the arrangement is an unhappy one. Instead of conferring a privilege on a minister, or giving him an opportunity of doing good which he does not already or otherwise possess, it only suggests his doing what he not only can do, but is probably now actually doing, at a more seasonable time, and with greater convenience in other respects, both to himself and to others. The more we think of it from our own point of view, the more closely it appears to

us that we have, in the relegation of Christian instruction in the day school to the ministers of religion, a conspicuous illustration of the unwisdom and impropriety of the assumption, on the part of those who are outside of a profession, of a competency to determine the duties of its members.

The subject is one in regard to which a difference of opinion could hardly fail to manifest itself. But it is to be regretted that utterances should be emitted on either side, fitted to excite, if not to justify irritation on the other. For though, as the writer believes, ministers have been more sinned against than they have sinned, in the strife of words that has been occasioned by their practically ignoring the arrangement, instead of cordially and gratefully accepting it, as some insist they ought to do, it would be a matter of wonder if none of them had even spoken hastily. Regretting any unguarded expressions which he may himself be charged with having used at any time, it will be his endeavour now, while protesting against the arrangement, and reclaiming against the inconsiderate condemnation of his brethren, to say nothing inconsistent with the respect that is due to those who cannot see things in the light in which he views them.

We cannot but attach importance to the *permission* that has for years been given to the ministers of religion to impart Christian instruction in the Public School—a permission whose earlier stringent limitations have recently been in a large measure withdrawn, in the hope of making it less objectionable and

unacceptable. But if we do, it is chiefly, if not entirely, because we regard it as an official and authoritative testimony to the great importance of joining Christian instruction with the other lessons of the school, and as an acknowledgment, by the civil authorities, of their obligation to see to it that their youthful subjects are well informed in the principles of Christianity. And could they be persuaded to make Christian instruction a constituent part of the work of the school, ministers would probably be very willing to give their services *for a time*, in view of the fact that some time must elapse before teachers generally could be expected to be fully qualified for a work that has not hitherto been required of them. It is against the *permanent*—not a *provisional*—relegation of religious instruction in the Public Schools to the ministers of religion that we are constrained to protest. Apart from its essential unreasonableness, as being the occasion of inconvenience which is not to be measured by the amount of time required, such an arrangement is, as we shall see, very objectionable in other important respects. A little consideration should suffice to show that any permission that the law now gives to ministers is not of a kind fitted to promote the end that our contention has in view. It overlooks the evil that we are seeking the abatement of. When pleading for the introduction of Christian instruction into our Public Schools, we are told that we ministers are at liberty, not only to instruct our own children out of school hours as formerly, but to make an



arrangement with the trustees which will practically give us a portion of the regulation school time; and that even the ministers of the different denominations are now permitted to make such an arrangement among themselves, that each of them may in turn instruct the children of the others as well as their own, the great object we have in view is lost sight of, and nothing is suggested in the line of relieving our chief anxiety, or of meeting the need which, more than any other, makes us apprehensive of the future of the Province, because of the absence of Christian instruction from its schools. As has been indicated, we can be satisfied with nothing less than that our Public School education, instead of being exclusively and intensely *secular*, as it is at the present time, shall be avowedly leavened with Christianity. We are not unaware of the fact, and we rejoice in it, that notwithstanding the prohibition of distinctively Christian instruction, the sincere and earnest Christian teacher—and there are many such teachers—will not fail to exert a good influence by the Christian tone of his instructions. But if our educational authority persists in refusing to give the Word of God a prominent place in the school, or to allow instruction in the common Protestant Christianity of the Province to be made a part of the school programme, and an exercise of all the pupils, except of those whose parents expressly object to it, we can only look for the increase of the poverty in the knowledge of Bible facts and principles which is already prevailing to such a serious and alarming extent.

When, therefore, we are reminded that we may go, each of us, into the school-room once a week, and there and then give a Christian lesson to our young people, and when we do not manifest a cordial appreciation of the supposed privilege, it should save us from reproach, that it is not about our own children that we are mainly, if at all, concerned in our present argument. There is no propriety in our educational authority saying to us, as in effect it does, If you think the children of *your congregation* are not receiving sufficient instruction in Christian knowledge from their parents and their Sunday School teachers, you may have the Public School room in which to give them *another lesson once a week*. If our Christian rulers persuade themselves that this should content us, as proving that they are zealous for the Christian education of our youth, they are very much mistaken. *It does not content us*. Speaking freely, as we ought to do, but yet with all the respect that is due to our present rulers, not only officially but personally, we cannot but regard their relegating to the ministers of religion the Christian instruction of the Public School, as the *evasion of a responsibility*, and not the *discharge of an obligation*, which is cordially admitted in strong terms previously quoted. When we are told that the school-room is open to us for an hour's instruction of our own children every week, it is forgotten that our great concern does not respect our own children. *They*, of course, are our special charge and care. But,

as a matter of fact, *their* religious instruction is comparatively well seen to, both by ourselves and others, and with much greater convenience of time and place than in the Public School room or during Public School hours. We know, indeed, from the experience of our own early years in the parish school of our native town and in the Edinburgh Normal School, that the daily Christian instruction of the Public School would be a great benefit even to *them*, but only as an *addition* to the advantages which they already possess. *They* are not in need of it and dependent on it as many others are, and to send us to the Public School to give *additional* instruction to those who are least in need of instruction, and that, too, at the very time when those who are most in need of it, but are denied it, are perhaps amusing themselves in the playground, would, to say the least, very possibly only make matters worse. For any one can see that while our own young people might join cordially, or not unwillingly, in a *general* religious exercise, and be benefited by it, they would not improbably, if not very certainly, yield themselves to unpleasant feelings, in having a special exercise imposed upon them, at a time when their school-fellows were enjoying their freedom.

We have referred in a passing way to an arrangement in which Christian ministers could cordially acquiesce, and in accordance with which they could serve the interests of the community, which, we believe, they are as willing, at least, as any other

class to serve, and that without any thought of pecuniary compensation. Were restrictions withdrawn, or, perhaps let us rather say, were our rulers, recognizing their obligation to care for the education of their young subjects in Christian principles—Protestant as well as Roman Catholic—to determine on making Christian instruction, such as has been indicated, a constituent part of the daily or stated work of the school, Christian ministers would, we have no doubt, regard it as their duty and their privilege to engage in it *provisionally* and *temporarily*, to the full extent of the requirements of the public interest. For after the exclusion of Christian instruction from our schools for more than a generation, it could hardly but be expected that some time must elapse before teachers generally could effectively impart instruction on a subject, an acquaintance with which has never been required as a qualification for their office. The present arrangement, we have seen, is not fitted to promote the end which is our chief concern, in contending for Christian instruction in our Public Schools. It makes no provision for the religious instruction of those who are most in need of it. It contemplates only the *further* instruction of those whose opportunities of instruction are already, for the most part, more or less sufficient. While these would doubtless receive important benefit from a general exercise of religious instruction in the day school, they could, as we have said, hardly be expected to take well to an exercise exceptionally and, as they might think,



unnecessarily curtailing their freedom. And add to this, that we speak from knowledge when we say that there are parents who either cannot or will not give their children Christian instruction, and who will not place them under the influences of the Church, but who would willingly, or not unwillingly, have them receive such instruction in the day school, where it is now denied them, though they are above all others in need of it. A great inconsistency ! it may be said. But our nature is full of the most flagrant inconsistencies, and most of all in relation to matters of religion. Ministers would gladly instruct all who are willing to receive their instructions. But, unhappily, there are those who are prejudiced against ministers and churches. This probably goes far to explain the inconsistency referred to, and suggests another argument in favour of committing the religious instruction of the day school to the qualified Christian teacher.

Upon the whole, we cannot but think that to one who will take a careful and candid view of the matter in all its bearings, the arrangement now under consideration should appear, even on its merits alone, to be an unhappy endeavour to meet a felt and acknowledged obligation. Even if it did not impose on ministers of religion a duty which is to a great extent or in many cases impracticable, the arrangement, we must be permitted to say, is essentially unwise, however well intended it may have been. Some, no doubt, will be disposed to maintain the contrary opinion. It

may be well therefore briefly to show how much it would, in many cases, be entirely beyond the power of the most zealot of ministers to do what the arrangement contemplates.

While Christian ministers are, as a class, not unready for service in the public interest, we are well aware that there are those who think otherwise. There are some who are not able to understand how ministers can get their time disposed of, having so little to do, six whole days of the week, or how they can ever be at a loss to find time for anything. Considerate people, however, see that this is a very great mistake, easily accounted for, indeed, on the well-known and largely accepted principle that, as those who have no children know best how to train them, so those who are outside of a profession or occupation know best what its duties are and how to fulfil them. The writer's own case may be referred to as not an uncommon one. It has always, for near half a century, been a pleasure to him to be engaged in public service, and before his retirement from the active duties of the pastorate, he had, for over thirty years, not a little to do in connection with the local schools, his interest in them involving a considerable expenditure of time. But, however willing he might have been to add to his other duties that of giving stated religious instruction in the day schools attended by the children of his congregation, he could not have done so without serious encroachment on the time required for the proper discharge of his duties as a

pastor. And he would then have been expending time only in the *further* instruction of those who least needed it. There were *ten* schools within the bounds of his congregation, and there was not one of them that had not some one or more of his children on the roll of its pupils. Eight of these schools are rural; one is a High School, of whose trustees the writer was chairman for twenty years or more; the other is a graded school of *four* divisions. Surely the mere statement of such a case, which is not exceptional, is sufficient to show that the present arrangement is one that ministers could carry out only very partially, even did they approve of it ever so highly.

Before closing our argument in relation to a mistake into which our Christian and well-intentioned rulers have fallen, and to which they still adhere, but which, we trust, will ere long be only remembered as an instructive illustration of the unhappy tendency of even Christian rulers to assume omniscience and to act as if they were omnipotent, we are disposed to raise a question the positive and proper answer to which involves the retorting of a charge that is freely and frequently, but very inconsiderately, made against us. We hope in the sequel to consider this charge more fully. But meantime we ask, Is it wise to put Christian ministers in a position that is fitted to remind our young people of our differences, and early to impress their minds with the belief that these differences are in our estimation of a serious nature?

For when ministers are asked to go into the school-room and to teach their own children and them only, is it not implied that they may be expected, as they are given the full liberty, to teach the *distinctive* views of their *several denominations*? And what is this but the introduction of *sectarian* instruction into our schools? And can any one say that it is anything but unwise? Is it not unwise to begin so early to teach our children to say, "One, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos"? While we are charged with agitating for the introduction of controversial and sectarian teaching, the least consideration will show that our aim is the reverse of sectarian. Surely no one can justly describe as sectarianism the giving of lessons in the common Christianity of 95 per cent. of the Protestant profession of the Province. On the contrary, it would be a striking testimony against sectarianism: whereas the arrangement which we are denounced for regarding as unwise and impracticable is essentially sectarian.

It may be said that this sectarian aspect of the present arrangement would disappear were ministers of the different denominations to agree among themselves to teach in turn every one the other's children together with their own. In reference to this, we can only repeat that if, on the understanding that Christian instruction is to become a recognized portion of the school programme, ministers are asked to engage in it *provisionally* and *temporarily* until teachers shall have become generally qualified to be



entrusted with it, they will, we are sure, be found willing to comply with what they would regard as a reasonable request in the interest of the community. But if our educational authorities, believing, as their action shows they do, that their young subjects should be well instructed in Christian principles, should be at length persuaded to manifest the courage of their convictions, by requiring a competency to communicate Christian instruction as an essential qualification of the public teacher, instead of vainly tinkering at a compromise which can never be other than impracticable, and whose results, were it not generally impracticable, could be only partial and unsatisfactory, we would be very far from *counselling* the calling in of even the temporary aid of ministers. We cannot but think that to ask their aid, even for a time, however willing they might be to render it, would be, to say the least, an impropriety involving an unwarrantable reflection upon our Public School teachers who are already, the great majority of them, very far from being "poorly qualified," as some say or insinuate, to give Christian instruction to their pupils. Already the most of them, we believe, are now competent probably beyond the average Sabbath School teacher, so that we may be well assured that the competency will not be wanting in any when it is made a necessary qualification.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Practical difficulties—I. Differences among Protestants—High order of their unity, and their differences a trifle.

IN taking up, as we now propose to do, the fuller consideration of the practical difficulties that stand in the way of the introduction into our schools of instruction in the common Christianity of the Protestants of Ontario, we are, as will appear, not disposed to belittle them, unless the pointing out of the error of those who inconsiderately magnify them be regarded as a belittling of them. These difficulties are chiefly two, and have already been referred to. But in view of the fact that some speak of them as if they were insuperable, and as if a simple appeal to them ought to constrain us to drop our contention, a fuller examination of them is necessary. One of them, which will fall to be considered in our next chapter, appears, at first sight, we freely admit, to be of a very serious nature. But there are some who certainly attach undue weight to both of them, and who appear to be indisposed to deal with them in a hopeful spirit, though, as we believe, neither of them can reasonably be regarded as unsurmountable.

While we may well despair of accomplishing any great good, or of attaining any important end, unless we are prepared to grapple with difficulties, it is often found that difficulties which, at first sight, appear to be of no ordinary magnitude, shrink into very small dimensions when they are examined more closely. Such a difficulty, we believe, is that which now confronts us in connection with the *differences of Protestant Christians*, which we now proceed to deal with. We refer to the differences among them in their views of the teachings of Scripture, which, it is assumed by some, are such—that is, so many and so great—that they constitute an effectual bar to the introduction of Christian instruction into the schools attended by the children of the various denominations of the Protestant profession of the Province—a bar, it is said, unknown to Roman Catholic Christians, who are one in religious sentiment and conviction, under the *ex cathedra infallibility* of their acknowledged head, divinely appointed, argues one of the greatest dialecticians of the late century,\* to restrain the wild human intellect.

The difficulty arising from divergence of opinion in relation to the teachings of Scripture, even between Protestants and Roman Catholics, is not necessarily insuperable; † there being, as appears from a former reference, much Scripture teaching equally valued by them and equally regarded by them as fundamental. But should any think otherwise, we need not dispute

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\* Cardinal Newman : “ Apologia pro Sua vita.” † See p. 23.

the matter with them. The Roman Catholics have succeeded in their contention for the establishment of national or government schools in which their children are daily instructed in the distinctive teachings of their religion. It may be that we cannot say that the establishment of the Separate School system *entirely* removes the difficulty arising from diversity of view in relation to the teaching of Scripture. But we do say that it reduces it immensely and, as we shall see, goes far to remove it entirely. The utmost that they can reasonably desire, in the matter of the Christian education of their children, has been permanently secured to our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens by legislative enactment, Provincial and Imperial. And it can be shown, as we shall see, that the differences among Protestants—that is, the great body of them—are really nothing in view of their *higher* unity. For such they regard their all but unanimous cordial acceptance of the great truths of the peculiar gospel of our salvation. If so, as no one can reasonably question, is it not a grave injustice to the Protestant profession of the Province that, on the ground of their not being at one by what they would regard as a *renunciation of their manhood*, they should be denied the instruction of their children in their common Christianity by Christian teachers, the payment of whose salaries is laid upon them?

That in addition to the few who may be opposed to Christian instruction, wherever or by whomsoever imparted; there may be a small remnant of Roman



Catholics whose children, as a matter of convenience or of parental preference, resort to the Public School, cannot reasonably be pleaded in justification of the denial to Protestants of a privilege cordially granted to Roman Catholics, and secured to them in the constitution of the Dominion. For can anything be more unreasonable, not to say unjust, than that after cordially yielding to a minority a privilege which they regard as valuable, the majority should be required to forego equal privilege—the privilege of Scripture instruction, which, it is well understood, Protestants value not less highly than Roman Catholics do? We are far from attaching to the Roman Catholic minority the responsibility of the unprecedented anomaly against which we reclaim. We have no reason to think that the Roman Catholics of Ontario are unwilling to submit to the disadvantage common to all minorities—that, namely, of not having the rule of the majority. Having had accorded to them by the Protestant majority a reasonable respect for their convictions and feelings, we have no reason to think that they would have the majority to denude themselves of their right to rule. If the responsibility of the continued denial of Christian instruction in the Public Schools of the Province is to be appropriated, unwilling as we are to appropriate it, we cannot but ascribe it largely to those who allow themselves to be dominated by the groundless and false persuasion, or rather let us say, *imagination*, that while Roman Catholics are one in doctrine under their spiritual

sovereign, Protestants are, like the early Christian community in which every one was saying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Peter, and I of Christ," so divided among themselves that the children of one Protestant church cannot be given religious instruction that will not be in conflict with the teachings of others. And let us say that candour forbids our acquitting our rulers of participation in a persuasion which, one would think, cannot well be entertained by any person of good understanding and intelligence. Let us therefore see how much, or rather *how little*, the difficulty before us amounts to.

We look upon it as beyond all question that far too much has been and is being made of the differences among Protestants, as being a bar to the religious instruction of their children in the day school, which does not exist in connection with the Separate School. When duly considered, these differences are a very nothing, or, as it is sometimes expressed, a *bagatelle*, in comparison with the extent to which, as Christians, Protestants are at one. We speak, of course, of the great majority of Protestants. There are professing Protestants, whose religious views differ very widely from those held by the great body of Protestants. While of these we would not say an unkind word, we must be permitted to say that we cannot divest ourselves of the persuasion that it is barely possible for a man frankly and cordially to accept the Scriptures as the divinely inspired record of God's revelation of His mind for our good, without coming, on a careful

and unprejudiced study of them, to conclusions, in the main, at one with those held by the great majority of the Protestant profession of Ontario and elsewhere. There are, indeed, many things in Scripture "hard to be understood"; and these, we are told, "some wrest to their own destruction." But it is a libel on Scripture to ascribe to its alleged obscurity an impossibility, or even any great difficulty, in our being guided by it to a general agreement in relation to its distinctive teachings. In accordance with the express teaching of Christ himself,\* we must be allowed to think, and excused in affirming, that, not disallowing of exceptions, the cause is a *subjective* one, when a man, with the Bible in his hand, and with the promise of Divine guidance, fails to be guided into a right apprehension of His teaching, or fails to accept it. But knowing, as we do, that various powerful influences are, by Divine permission, for important ends, in operation to lead astray from the way of truth and righteousness, we cannot but rejoice that, in this favoured land, there are comparatively *very few* of the Protestant profession who do not hold the religious views that are generally accepted by those who bear that name. There are *five* leading Protestant churches in Ontario—Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and two Congregational—and these include, with the exception of not more than *five* per cent., the whole Protestant profession of the Province. The ministers of these different churches can (and actually

do, with a single exception, occasioned, it is understood, by legal obstruction) occupy each other's pulpits without any feeling of restraint or fear of giving offence, in declaring what they believe to be "all the counsel of God" in relation to man's salvation. If so, there cannot surely be any great difficulty in finding a place in our schools for all the fulness of Christian instruction that can reasonably be desired.

But though no one can but accept our reference to what is now a common practice among ministers of the different Protestant churches, as sufficiently justifying our assertion that the differences among Protestants are a mere nothing in comparison with the extent to which they are at one, perhaps the strongest and most striking and impressive illustration of the extent to which Protestant Christians are agreed in their views of Christian doctrine, and of the comparative insignificance of their differences, may be seen in the fact, already adverted to, that the churches referred to, comprising, be it remembered, ninety-five per cent. of the whole Protestant profession of the Province, would all of them cordially accept as the expression of their views of Scripture teaching, the Westminster Shorter Catechism in use among Presbyterians, if only a very few clauses were omitted from it. And many would be satisfied with only the modification of one or two expressions. That catechism is understood to be a very complete and comprehensive system of Scripture teaching, expressed in terms directly contradictory of the principal errors that



have arisen in the course of the Church's history, and that are regarded as more or less serious by the great majority of Protestants. And yet, notwithstanding the fulness of its teaching, it contains very little that is not held in common by the bodies referred to—scarcely anything, indeed, if we except its statement respecting infant baptism, and two or three expressions which characterize it as an Augustinian or Calvinistic composition. By simply dropping not more than five or six out of more than four hundred statements of Christian truth and duty, we might have a catechism that would be acceptable to the great body of Protestants, and that would, as a text-book, be an invaluable aid in the instruction of their children. Not that we would recommend such action in the formulation of the common Christianity of the Protestants of Ontario, for the purpose of instruction in Public Schools; although, it may be observed by the way, the catechisms actually in use in the Sabbath Schools of the Methodist Church and others are largely a transcript of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Probably, instead of an *expurgated* edition of the Shorter Catechism, which, being an English theological and religious classic, that has, with the English Bible from which it is drawn, been the making of what is best in Scottish character for many generations, should never, on any account, be published under its own title, except in its entirety, it would be more in accordance with the mind of the Protestant churches of the Province, including the

Presbyterian, to have their common Christianity formulated anew, for the purpose of instruction in the Public Schools; as the common Christianity of the Free Evangelical churches in England has been recently formulated in a new catechism which appears to be acceptable to them all.

It has long been our hope that, if our children could, by any suitable arrangement, be secured in the privilege of *daily* or *stated* (at the very least, *semi-weekly*) instruction in our common Christianity, with the addition, as they are becoming qualified for entrance into the High School, of instruction in the *Evidences of Christianity*, those of us who are not greatly advanced in years might live to see unmistakable indications of the happiest results. We cannot but believe that such instruction, especially if imparted by skilled and sympathetic teachers, could not fail to prove to many a security against the unbelief and the delusions of our time, and a means of saving them from the ruin which numbers of our young people heedlessly bring upon themselves. The writer was, for over thirty years, officially connected with the schools of his locality, first, as Local Superintendent of Common Schools, and, when that office was abolished, in 1871, as chairman of the High School Trustees, till the infirmities of age compelled his retirement from public duty. He has, for many years, maintained publicly his present contention, as he had opportunity. And now, notwithstanding the continued exclusion of Christian instruction from the

Public Schools, he cannot give way to discouragement, not seeing any insuperable difficulty in the way of the realization of his hope, though it may not come in his day. While he is fully persuaded that, with comparatively few exceptions, the Protestants of the Province desire the introduction of Christian instruction into our schools, he cannot but see that many of them are apathetic and indifferent to a degree that is quite inconsistent, both with the importance of the subject and with the interest that they profess to have in it. But all the more, on that account, are we called, regardless of the charge of *clerical agitation*, to be dealt with in due time, to endeavour to stir up an active and outspoken interest, such as may constrain even an unwilling Government to give effect to the wishes of an earnest and united people. Blame has been attached to the Government, and especially to the late Minister of Education; and the time was when some, who could not but be at variance with him in reference to the persistent relegation of Christian instruction to Protestant clergymen, felt themselves constrained, at the risk of adverse criticism, publicly to defend him against what they believed to be unjustifiable aspersions. They believed, as we believe now, that the Education Department may be fully credited with the desire to carry out the wishes of the Christian people in relation to the place of Christian instruction in the Public Schools. Were the apathy of the many dispelled, and the opposition of the few withdrawn, no Government could

resist the earnest pressure of a united Christian people, as, we believe, no Government, Liberal or Conservative, could entertain a thought of resisting it. It is in this persuasion that we now renew the contention that, with others, we maintained in the press some years ago. This we do by putting before the public, in permanent form, the views which, for many years, we have striven to maintain, in the face of not a little opposition. If we cannot now hope to see what we have long laboured for, we cannot renounce the hope that the Christian Government of Ontario will sooner or later give effect to the claim of its Christian people, to have Christian instruction statedly given to their children by teachers who are not merely nominal Christians, but in full sympathy with the religion which they profess.

But to close by returning to the practical difficulty proposed for consideration in this chapter. We trust it has been sufficiently shown that, so far from being insuperable, there is really nothing serious in it. Our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens have, as a body, been fully and firmly secured in their possession of a privilege, or as they themselves would rather say, a *right* which, we assume, Protestants generally value as Roman Catholics do. It cannot be questioned that the intelligent and consistent Protestant values the Word of God and its teachings not less than the intelligent and sincerely pious Roman Catholic does. It is true there are reasons why we cannot expect the same unanimity among Protestants in regard to



Christian doctrine that is claimed for themselves by Roman Catholics, who submit to be deprived of the right of *private judgment*, which is not only claimed by every intelligent Protestant as an indefeasible *right*, but felt by him to be a divinely imposed *responsibility*, of which he cannot divest himself, as, strange to say, some men of high intelligence comfort themselves in believing they can do.\* But while Protestants believe that any disadvantage arising from differences among themselves is far more than compensated for otherwise, their differences are, as we have seen, of comparatively little account. Our reference to the Westminster Shorter Catechism (designed, as the title page indicates, "for those of weaker capacity," *i.e.*, for *younger* scholars; a *Larger* catechism, which has long fallen into desuetude, being prepared for the more advanced) proves how largely they are agreed. Why, then, should they not, as they desire, have their children instructed in the day school in the principles of their common Christianity? Why should Roman Catholics be accorded, by the Government of a Protestant Province, the exclusive privilege and benefit of the Christian instruction of their children by teachers whose salaries are secured by legislative action? It is because there is a unanimity in doctrinal belief among Roman Catholics, secured by the submission of judgment and conscience to their acknowledged

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\* See Professor H. Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World."

head, the Roman Pontiff, and which cannot otherwise be secured? Such a thought we can repel only with the apostolic *Μὴ γένοιτο*, God forbid! Speaking frankly, as we are called to do, our rulers ought to know that, as Protestants, we claim a *far higher* harmony and *infinitely more valuable*, secured not by our renunciation of the attributes of our humanity, but by Divine guidance promised to the sincere and earnest seeker, who "has an unction from the Holy One, and knows all things" "that pertain to the life of godliness." Contrary to what some may aver, there are no *previous* questions to be settled, whether questions which occupy the learned, or questions about fundamentals. Happily our Christian people are not dependent upon a priesthood of learned critics, or upon any other priesthood. They have the Bible in their hands, and have no suspicion, as they need have none, that it has lost its inspiration of God by being translated into their vernacular. And therefore they can nourish themselves on the "sincere milk of the Word," and feed on "the bread of life" without having to wait till the critics are unanimous; and, while no one can draw a strict line between fundamental and non-fundamental in Christian doctrine, the general agreement among Protestants makes any attempt to do so altogether unnecessary. Let the common Christianity of the great body of Protestants, which can be formulated without any difficulty, as it was in the birthtime of our present British liberty—civil and religious—be taught in our schools

to those whose parents are not opposed to it. Let it be taught, because, as we believe, the welfare of our country demands it, and taught by our salaried teachers whom our school law assumes to be Christian men and women as, we have no reason to doubt, they generally are, at least in, what we have called, a *mitigated* sense; while many of them are, to our certain knowledge, Christians in the very highest sense of the term. Let the unhappy relegation to the ministers of religion of the most important department of the work of the Christian teacher cease to be insisted on. For nothing, we are persuaded, could be a more conspicuous and enduring evidence of the wisdom of our present rulers than the frank acknowledgment of the error of their predecessors in assuming that the allowance of the use of the school-room, one hour in the week, to a Protestant clergyman should be regarded as an adequate fulfilment of their obligation in relation to the religious instruction of their young subjects;—an arrangement not only, as we have seen, in itself unreasonable, and on the part of ministers generally impracticable, but, we may add, derogating from the respect due to our teachers, as being a standing authoritative declaration of their unfitness to give Christian instruction to their pupils, whether from ignorance or want of sympathy, or owing to a *want of common sense*, manifesting itself in their not being able to give Christian teaching without combining with it their several denominationalisms.

## CHAPTER IX.

Practical difficulties—II. Charges of skepticism, defective knowledge and want of sympathy—A great injustice to teachers as a body.—The Protestant Church is equal to the full perennial supply of Christian teachers.

REFERRING to what has been said in our last chapter, we trust we may proceed in our argument, on the assumption that, while there are differences among Protestants, and while a small percentage of professing Protestants hold views that are widely divergent from those of the majority, there *is a common Christianity*, embracing a wide range of Christian teaching easily formulated, which is the valued possession of the great body of the Protestants of Ontario. And, considering that Protestants so largely outnumber the Roman Catholic element of the population, we may even speak of it as the common Christianity of the Province. Instruction in this common Christianity, with the addition, as has been suggested, of simple lessons in the *evidences* of Christianity to more advanced pupils, ought, we cannot but insist, to be introduced into our schools, as a matter of even-handed justice to the Protestant population of the



Province ; but, apart from this, and above all, as being necessary to the welfare of the community.

Fully appreciating, as we do, the difficulties of the situation, we are sincerely thankful for every indication of the advance of public opinion in favour of an arrangement, whose introduction cannot be refused, or even delayed, without the aggravation of the evil issues of its absence, which are already flagrant. And if, in our contention, we are giving expression, as we believe we are, to the conviction and the desire of the great body of the Protestant profession of the Province, we cannot but feel that a serious injustice is being done to them, in the continued exclusion from their schools of the instruction which, they believe, their children's good, in common with the well-being of the community, requires. There is, as we have seen, no need to settle any question that is of interest to Scripture critics. And as little is there any need to wait for the determination of what is essential or fundamental in Christian teaching. Our people generally accept the Scriptures as the trustworthy record of a Divine revelation for man's guidance in the way of righteousness, and are well agreed in relation to the great disclosures which they make respecting God and our obligations to Him. What can be expected more than this, with the views which, as Protestants, we have of the right and obligation of private judgment ? What more can be desired or sought ? What more is needed ? We are not called to forego what we believe to be a great benefit, because a small

minority, whose convictions and feelings shall be treated with all due respect, is at some disadvantage, as a minority must almost always be.

But, if the more we consider the differences among Protestants as constituting a difficulty in the way of the introduction of Christian instruction into our schools the less formidable it appears, there is another difficulty of a much more serious nature, and in view of which the differences among Protestants cannot, however magnified by some eyes, be regarded as worthy of consideration. We refer now to what, we apprehend, is regarded by some, and not without apparent ground, as the greatest of all objections, if it is not their only objection, to Christian instruction by our Public School teachers—the difficulty of making sure that the lessons of Christianity will be taught by those who are *in sympathy with them*. But even admitting the impossibility of our securing, by any means, that the instruction of our children shall, in no case, be committed to a teacher who is not a genuine or (as the *Educational Journal* has phrased it) “true-hearted Christian,” we think it can be shown, as we hope to show, that the difficulty, great as it is, may be largely obviated, or reduced to a very small *minimum*, by the concurrent action of all parties concerned in the religious instruction of the youth of our country.

In the first place, we beg that it may be borne in mind that the school law of the Province assumes that our teachers are Christian men and women.

Again and again, indeed, we find it said by others than the *Journal*, that the teacher may be an infidel, an agnostic or an atheist. It may be a matter of *fact* that there are licensed teachers who hold agnostic or atheistic sentiments. But the teacher's contract with the Government, implied in his holding a certificate of qualification as a public instructor, is conditional on his professing himself to be a Christian, whether of the Roman Catholic or of the Protestant faith. If any teacher imagines that the expression "Protestant faith," includes *atheism* and *agnosticism*, or anything short of the acceptance of the Christian Scriptures as the record of Divine revelation, we apprehend that he needs only to make an honest profession of his infidelity to find that he is mistaken, and that the law takes the expression (Protestant faith) in its *historical* meaning of three hundred and fifty years, and will refuse to recognize a merely *negative* Protestantism, or what may properly be called a Protestant *no-faith*.

The law assuming that all our teachers are Christians, in the sense and to the extent above indicated, it is only a matter of consistency that all parties concerned should be careful to see that they are no other than they profess to be, in the very act of their acceptance of license to teach in the Provincial Schools. Whether or not they are genuine or "true-hearted" Christians is, of course, not within the competency of any of the parties concerned to determine, although it is a competency which ministers,

parents and trustees are, as we have seen, counselled by our opponents, as represented by the *Journal*, to assume to themselves. But, to say nothing of the extreme impropriety of these parties setting themselves up as judges of the reality of the teacher's Christian profession, one thing may be very safely affirmed, namely, that a teacher's decided attachment to a particular denomination may well be regarded as a recommendation of more value than a score of certificates. We need not, in these days, trouble ourselves with the fear that he will take advantage of his position to teach anything that is not a part of the common Christianity of the Protestant profession, when such teaching is committed to him. And we trust the time is not far distant when few, if any, teachers will be wanting in the recommendation implied in a man's intelligent and sincere attachment to the Church of his convictions. As to the entire and utter exclusion from the profession of those who are out of sympathy with the common Christianity of the Province, we have already referred to the mistaken notion of those who fancy that it involves a contravention of the principle of religious toleration. A man's religious convictions are not interfered with, if he is held to be disqualified for the position of a National School teacher on the ground that he is an agnostic or an atheist, or otherwise opposed to the common religion of his country. To say nothing of the fact that such a man's acceptance of the legal certificate, by which he professes himself to be a



Christian believer, is on his part an act of hypocrisy, the charge of intolerance is, as we have seen, based upon the unreasonable assumption that the interests of the individual who wishes to make a living by teaching, or who for any other reason wishes to enter the profession, are *supreme* in the matter. But surely no seriously-reflecting person can but believe that it is the interests of our children, and of the community through them, according to the judgment of the Christian parents, that are the supreme and determining element, in relation to the qualification of the teacher. If it is believed to be in the interest of our children and of the community that the lessons of Christianity should be taught in our schools, parents have the right to demand that these lessons shall be imparted to their children by teachers, both well-informed in them and in full sympathy with them. The interests of our young people and of the community, as these interests are regarded in the judgment of the great body of our people, are not to be sacrificed to the pecuniary interests of a few who are, whether from ignorance or want of sympathy, unable to give Christian instruction to their pupils. If they believe that teaching is their vocation, they can teach on their own responsibility, no man forbidding them. That they are refused recognition by the educational authority of the Province, they should regard as simply meaning that it regards the schools under its control as being no proper place for the teacher who, however qualified otherwise, is out of sympathy with the national religion.

But, however serious may be the difficulty that is now before us, we cannot regard it as being insuperable. Even, if we should with some regard it as being the greatest of all the practical difficulties which, at the present time, stand in the way of the introduction of Christian instruction into our schools, we cannot believe that the Protestants of Ontario are less capable of dealing with religious difficulties, or any other difficulties, than the Protestants of the home lands from whom we are sprung, and whose endowments, including force of character and power to grapple with difficulties, we inherit. We admit the seriousness of the difficulty now confronting us. But it cannot be insuperable to those who would, by proper means, take it out of the way of the accomplishment of a great and good purpose.

If, as some appear to believe and do not hesitate to aver, the evil referred to is not very rare and exceptional, but so prevalent as to warrant their regarding it as a bar to the permitting of our teachers to impart Christian lessons to their pupils, there must be *some cause* to which we owe the existence of an evil that is greatly to be deplored, as being in a high degree discreditable to the character of a profession which is second to none in its bearing upon the interests of the community. It cannot but be the effect of some cause. And surely no one will say that it is owing to the fact that the young men and women of Ontario, who enter the profession, are *exceptionally unprincipled* in the matter of religion, or that they are more

out of sympathy with religion or more averse to it than those of other countries, in which religious instruction is imparted in the day school. Nor will it be said that our teachers of the "Protestant faith" are less competent than those of the "Roman Catholic faith" to impart religious instruction. Our teachers, we have no hesitation in saying, are made the butt of a most unjust imputation, when they are aspersed, as a body, in connection with the existence of an alleged evil, for the existence of which we ourselves alone are responsible, in that, as a people, we have heedlessly permitted ourselves to be deprived of the religious instruction of our children in the Public School. A reference to our opening chapter will be enough to bear us out in the assertion that it is owing to our want of vigilance that we have been deprived of an important privilege, the recovery of which we are finding to be a matter of the extremest difficulty. But if hitherto protracted agitation has been unsuccessful, we cannot allow ourselves to believe that our lost privilege is irrecoverable. In particular, we cannot allow ourselves to think that the alleged evil, proposed for consideration in this chapter, is of such dimensions as some would have us to believe. The scholastic profession, we are fully persuaded from personal knowledge, is *not*, as some recklessly aver it is, "honey-combed" with skepticism; and the five leading branches of the great Protestant Church of the Province can furnish an adequate perennial supply of teachers who are *Christian* in no mitigated sense of the term.

Were, what seems to us, the almost *morbid* dread of Caesarism, State churchism, etc., etc., and of appalling results which, at least in theory, or according to logic, *ought* to be the ultimate issue of our allowing Christian lessons to be given by a teacher whose salary is secured by legislative action—were, we say, this dread dispelled, as it may well be, and were we, all of us, resolved to retrace the steps that have brought us into our unhappy position; or, putting it otherwise, were the large Protestant bodies of the Province united in their call to have an end put to the absence of Christian instruction from our schools, the end of our contention could not be far off, and no time would be needed to formulate for the Public Schools the common Christianity of the Province. But the other difficulty, which is to some the great, perhaps the only difficulty—the teacher's want of sympathy with the lessons of Christianity, to put it in the mildest form, or to say nothing of his *aversion* to Christianity, which we can suppose to be such that he cannot but sometimes betray it—is confessedly very serious, even apart from the question of religious instruction in the day school. As we have seen, Christian brethren who are most pronounced in their opposition to our views are equally pronounced in maintaining the position that all parties concerned in the *appointment* of teachers should be careful that only "true-hearted Christians" be appointed. But there are those who speak as if it were impossible to secure a supply of such teachers—teachers, that is,



qualified to give instruction in the principles of Christianity, as being at once well-informed in them and in sympathy with them. There are even those who will say that, from what *they know*—respecting, it may be, *one or two* teachers—they could not think with any comfort of their children receiving Bible instruction at the Public School, the implication being that our teachers are, at least many of them, so wanting in sympathy with Bible truth that they are likely to harm their pupils rather than benefit them in giving them Christian instruction. We have, even when pleading with brethren to interest themselves in favour of our contention, had our argument cut short by the *unanswerable smile* that rebuked our foolish simplicity in believing the honour and honesty of professing Christian men and women, who are, we are assured, not to be trusted with the *Christian* instruction of their pupils.

We have no hesitation in saying that very great injustice is done to our teachers as a body, when these general insinuations are made of their unfitness to be entrusted with the religious instruction of their scholars. While it is hardly possible that they should be, to any great extent, disqualified by ignorance of Christian doctrine, it cannot reasonably be doubted that their professed regard for the Bible as the Word of God, is, with rare exceptions, entirely sincere. If there are exceptions, we feel very sure that it is one of the rarest of all things for a teacher to be so forgetful or regardless of his solemn compact with the

educational authority of the Province, as to endeavour, either directly or by insinuation, to discredit the Bible and its teachings in the minds of his scholars. But even supposing it be admitted as an undoubted matter of fact that, while some of our teachers are insufficiently informed as Christian instructors, there are also others who cannot be trusted to refrain from endeavouring to insinuate anti-Christian sentiments into the minds of their pupils; teachers fully qualified in respect both of Christian knowledge and of sympathy with the teachings of Christianity, will in time, perhaps not a long time, be found in sufficient number, when such qualification is looked for and required by legitimate authority. Distinctively Christian teaching has now no place in our schools, and even the place of the Bible in them is scarcely more than nominal. Our people, therefore, when choosing a teacher, have ceased to concern themselves about his knowledge of Christian truth, and about his religious sentiments. When, for more than a generation, it has been no part of the teacher's work to present to his pupils distinctively Christian views of God and our relations to Him, of the person, the mission, and the work of Christ, and of His Spirit, and of the responsibility lying upon us, because of our possession of the knowledge of Christian truth, the wonder is that our teachers should be so generally more or less well qualified, as we believe they are, to impart Christian instruction. If, under the long-existing state of things, our teachers are generally so

Christian in their sentiments, and so well-informed in the facts and principles of Christianity, what may we not expect when Christian instruction shall have become a constituent portion of school work, and when the ability to impart it shall be regarded as an essential qualification of the teacher ?

While it is a reasonable expectation that, under an improved state of things, the difficulty under consideration would, after the lapse of no long time, be greatly reduced, we could, it may be, hardly expect its entire extinction. But if, when Christian instruction shall have been made a part of the teacher's work, it would be impossible to prevent the entrance into the profession of some who might not be in sympathy with Christianity, and not sincere in their profession of it, there need be no apprehension as to a lack of teachers in full sympathy with their work as Christian instructors. The Protestant churches of the Province, which are not, as flippant representations would lead people to believe, irreconcilably opposed to one another in relation to almost every Christian doctrine ; but are, as we have seen, entirely at one in their views of Scripture teaching, except in relation to two or three points that may well be made matter of forbearance, may be expected to furnish from year to year, an adequate supply of Christian men and women, prepared to devote themselves to the work of imparting to successive generations an education leavened with Christianity. We trust the time is coming when the dignity of the school teacher's

profession shall be recognized, and his work remunerated in accordance with its value and importance. He will then, as he should do, take rank with the members of what are called the learned professions; for it will then be seen, as it is not seen now, that the man or woman to whom the community entrusts the education of its youth should, intellectually and morally, be second to the member of no other profession.



## CHAPTER X.

Review and summary of previous argument.

WE have now concluded the main part of our argument in favour of the introduction of Christian instruction into the schools of the Province. We trust it has been sufficiently proved that objection on the ground of principle is based on misapprehension of the question at issue; and that no accepted principle of national action would be contravened, were our rulers to assume the responsibility of making Christian instruction an integral portion of the school programme, and to require of the national teacher an ability to impart it as an essential office qualification. We trust, also, that it has been sufficiently proved that the chief practical difficulties which, it is admitted, stand in the way of our making Christian instruction in our schools a part of the work of the teacher, instead of relegating it to Christian ministers, are, after allowing all due weight to them, not at all insuperable; and that what may be regarded as the most serious of all difficulties can be surely obviated in time by proper action, with that view, on the part

of those who have the control of our educational interests and arrangements.

Though there are other misapprehensions in connection with our contention that call for consideration, and which we propose to deal with, it may be well, before doing so, to review the ground we have already travelled over, thus submitting to our readers a summary of our argument up to this point.

It will be remembered that we set out with a reference to the circumstances which, near half a century ago, led to the exclusion of religious instruction from the Provincial Schools, and to the establishment of Separate Schools, in the interest of the Roman Catholics of the Province; who, taking their stand against an exclusively secular education, have had such success in their contention, that their children have access to schools in which Christian instruction, according to their views of it, occupies a prominent place. In view of the fact that our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens have won for themselves the secure possession of what they and we alike regard as being an arrangement in the interest of our children not to be dispensed with, we have not hesitated to insist that the Protestant profession of the Province ask no more than simple and equal justice, when they contend for the religious instruction of their children by competent teachers. Admitting that there are difficulties in the way of securing for the Protestant portion of the community the advantage of daily religious instruction, which do not occur in connection with the

education of Roman Catholic children, it has been our endeavour to show that those difficulties are very far from being insuperable. Assuming that the great body of the Protestant profession of Ontario are desirous of the introduction of religious instruction into their schools, because it is necessary, as they believe, in the best interests of their children and of the community, there is, so far as we can see, no good and sufficient reason why its introduction should be delayed. Much as has been made of them, the differences among Protestants may, as we have seen, be well regarded as of little or no account. There are, as we have also pointed out—because it is overlooked by some—good reasons why we cannot expect the same unanimity among Protestants, in regard to Scripture teaching, as among Roman Catholics. As Protestants, we believe that any disadvantage arising from differences among ourselves is far more than compensated for, by the invaluable results of the exercise of the God-conferred right of private judgment, to denude ourselves of which, at the call of prince, priest, or pope, under whatever claim or pretence, were, we believe, to *unman* ourselves. It may be that there is a small percentage whose views diverge more or less widely from those of the great majority of Protestants; and of these we say nothing uncharitable or unkind. That the percentage referred to is so small has been such a surprise to some that they have questioned our statement of it as incredible. But to us who accept the assurance given

by Christ, John vii. 17, and who believe that the careful and prayerful study of the Word of God, by the man who "is willing to do the will of God," will issue in the attainment of a right apprehension of saving truth, it should be no surprise to find, as we have said, that *ninety-five* per cent. of the Protestant profession of the Province agree in accepting, with two or three exceptions, the whole teaching of the smaller Westminster Catechism. And we believe that were the larger catechism, formerly referred to, not fallen of recent years into general desuetude, it would be found that, with the same two or three exceptions, its whole teaching would be cordially accepted by the great majority of Protestants.

In view of the fact that the Protestants of Ontario, who constitute four-fifths at least of the whole population, are agreed to such an extent in relation to the teaching of Scripture, we ought to hear no more of our differences as being a hindrance to the introduction of definite religious instruction into our schools. And if, in our pleadings, we have been giving expression, as we believe we have been doing, to the growing conviction and desire of our co-religionists of the Protestant faith, is it any wonder that we cannot help feeling that a grave injustice is done to us, in the continued exclusion of Christian instruction from the day school? To say to us, as our Education Department has long been practically saying, "We are not excluding Christian instruction from the Public Schools; for, if you wish, we give you access



to the school-room once a week, there and then to give the children of your own congregation an hour's lesson," is, as we have shown, to confer upon us an empty boon, and under the name of a *permission*, to call upon to do what is at once unreasonable and generally impracticable, as forty years' experience has amply demonstrated. We need not enlarge by repeating what has been already said, to show that the time is long gone by for our rulers to insist on Christian ministers taking the responsibility of religious instruction in the Public School room, instead of taking it upon themselves, by requiring its communication by their own properly-qualified teachers. The ministers of religion may well be trusted to do their duty towards the children of their several congregations. They do not need the stimulation of the Education Department, or the privilege of the use of the Public School room. But we must be allowed to say that our rulers, we are persuaded, including, of course, especially our Education Department, seem not to realize that, while the Christian religion needs no State aid and can prosper in spite of its most violent opposition, the State cannot dispense with the aid of religion. We cannot allow that religious instruction is the exclusive concern of the ministers of religion and of parents. There are parents who have no regard to the religious interests of their children, and whose unhappy prejudice shuts them out from all religious instruction, except such as may be given in the one place where it is authoritatively for-

bidden to be given by those from whom it would be received.\*

Again, we have seen that the school law of the Province assumes that all our teachers are Christians, and that in the case of teachers of the Protestant profession, it will not be satisfied with mere negations, or with anything short of a faith that accepts the Christian Scriptures as the record of Divine revelation; or, in other words, will not recognize as being of the Protestant faith, one who is merely not a Roman Catholic, and is an infidel in relation to Christianity. And notwithstanding assertions and insinuations to the contrary, we have, as has been said, good reason to believe that our teachers are, with rare exceptions, Christian in their sentiments, and generally anything but "poorly qualified," as some say, to give instruction in the facts and principles of the Christian religion. We need therefore have no hesitation in being fully assured that, when Christian instruction shall have been made a constituent part of the work of the school, our churches will be able to furnish an adequate supply of teachers fully qualified to give instruction in the common Christianity of Protestants, free from all taint of denominationalism.

We need hardly repeat that, all things considered, we cannot but regard the present educational situation as altogether anomalous and indefensible. That a profession of Christian faith should be required of all

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\* See page 116 and next chapter.

teachers ; that Christianity should be recognized as the basis of our educational system ; and that, at the same time, the teacher should not be allowed to give his pupils Christian instruction, or even to teach them to read the Scriptures, is surely the strangest of all anomalies in a Christian country, notwithstanding the plausibilities by which it is defended ; the anomaly being all the more flagrant in view of the fact that Roman Catholic Separate School teachers are under no such prohibition, our rulers taking the direct responsibility of Roman Catholic Christian instruction, instead of relegating it to the priesthood, as they relegate Protestant Christian instruction to Protestant Christian ministers. The anomaly, as we have seen, is not inexplicable. It has a history which explains it, and which we need not repeat. But our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens having protested successfully against being parties to an exclusively secular day school education, Protestants will have themselves to blame if the present anomalous state of things is allowed to continue. Or rather, the blame will attach to those who oppose, or hold themselves aloof from, the general demand of Protestants, which, as we have said, no Government could resist, were it not for the opposition of some and the apathy of others.

For though, as has been said, we are fully persuaded that the generally prevailing conviction is strongly in favour of the making of our education conspicuously Christian, it cannot be denied that there exists,

on the part of not a few, no inconsiderable degree of apathy, and on the part of others, a readiness to magnify obstacles in vindication of their pronounced opposition. As we have seen, there are Christian ministers, and no doubt, people also, who seem to be unable to divest themselves of certain suspicions or fears which, they believe, are warranted by the well-known meddlesomeness, present as well as past, of the "princes of this world" in the religion of their subjects; and who cannot think without a measure of serious alarm of the possible or probable evil consequences to our civil and religious liberties, should our rulers impose a tax upon us for the decent maintenance of the teachers of our children, except on the condition that they be *forbidden* to give distinctively Christian lessons to their pupils. And then they cannot believe that, from what they say they know, our teachers can, as a class, be trusted with the religious instruction of the young; some of them, it is alleged, having no sympathy with Christian truth, if not being even skeptical or infidel in relation to it, and those of them who have Christian convictions being so much under the power of their several denominationalisms, that their teaching cannot be Christian without being, at the same time, denominational or sectarian. We humbly think that those apprehensions have been sufficiently disposed of. We think it has been shown that the dread of "State churchism and Ecclesiastical domination" is entirely groundless, and that the fear of denominational



teaching is purely imaginary. And in reference to the alleged incompetency of our teachers on the ground of defective knowledge or on that of want of sympathy, we believe that, in respect both of knowledge and of sympathy, they are, to say the least, fairly well qualified to impart the lessons of Christianity to their pupils. We believe their average qualification is equal to that of our Sabbath School teachers, if not superior, as it certainly is in some respects. That, after forty years' exclusion of those lessons from the Public Schools of Ontario, our teachers should be so well qualified to impart them, as we believe they are, is at once a matter of thankfulness, and a sufficient ground for expecting that the Christianity of the Province will be found an adequate source from which a perennial supply of competent Christian instructors may be drawn, when the Book of Divine inspiration shall have been given its proper place in our schools. And one thing we must say with all possible emphasis,—we cannot, with the estimate we have been led to form of the character of our teachers, allow ourselves to believe that there is any ground for attaching such a suspicion to them as to justify the *permanent* relegation of religious instruction in the Public Schools to the members of another profession.

## CHAPTER XI.

Misapprehension of the action of Protestant ministers—Charges of clerical agitation in the interest of sectarianism repelled.

THOUGH we believe that what has been already said\* sufficiently shows that our rulers are at fault in thinking that the obligation which they recognize, as lying upon them, in relation to the Christian education of the youth of the Province, is adequately met by their giving *permission* to Protestant ministers to give a weekly religious lesson in the Public School room to the children of their congregations, *in addition* to instruction which they are already receiving, there exists so much misapprehension in the minds of many in relation to the views and actions of ministers that further consideration of them is far from being unnecessary. Blame is attached to them because they do not gratefully and eagerly accept the permission to teach in the day school as a precious boon conferred upon them by a generous government; and very ungenerous insinuations are made respecting their motives and aims in seeking

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\* See Chapter VII.

the introduction of religious instruction by the duly qualified teacher. This, we trust, will suffice meantime as an apology for devoting a separate chapter to the vindication of ourselves against aspersions inconsiderately made, and apt to be too readily accepted.

From time to time we have met with utterances emitted, for the most part, at teachers' meetings, but endorsed in communications to the press, which show that very false impressions are entertained by many, respecting ministers of religion, in connection with their general non-acceptance of the permission referred to, and their general insistence on the obligation lying on our rulers to take the responsibility of putting an end to the present anomalous state of things, by making arrangements for the communication of instruction in the common Christianity of the Province by its legally qualified teachers. There are those who, it would seem, are not able to conceive that we can be actuated by anything but the desire to be freed from an obligation which is exclusively our own, by having it authoritatively imposed on others, to whom it does not belong. Making all due allowance for the inability of those who are outside of our profession to define or realize its duties, we believe that we can satisfy a candid mind that ministers, in taking ground, as they generally do, in favour of religious instruction by the national teachers—not, let it be fully understood, *instead* of their own instructions, but as an important *addition*

to them—are doing nothing to warrant the ascription to them of anything except a sincere regard for the welfare of the community.

To state the issue briefly and definitely, the present school regulations forbid, if not directly and explicitly, at least by clear implication, the communication of Christian instruction by the teachers of our National Schools, the late Minister of Education expressing himself as being strongly of the opinion that they “cannot with *safety or propriety* be charged with the responsibility of communicating distinctively Christian instruction to their pupils.” But Christian ministers are permitted and given facilities to instruct in the teachings of their several churches, the children of their own congregations, whose attendance they may secure for the purpose, in the school-room once a week, out of school hours, according to the original permission. By a more recent permission, ministers of different denominations in the same locality may enter into an arrangement, according to which the children of each congregation may have the benefit of the instructions of the other ministers as well as of their own minister. And farther, also by a recent regulation, trustees may now shorten the regular school time, with a view to the communication of religious instruction by ministers, without unduly burdening the scholars. But notably all responsibility, on the part of the educational authorities, in relation to such instruction is carefully guarded against. They decline to exercise their



*authority* in the way of *requiring* and effectively securing the religious instruction of *all* the children of the Province, excepting, of course, those whose parents are opposed to it. The members of a profession whose work is not under their control *may, if they choose, add* to their work by giving another lesson to their own children. We ask from our rulers no more than the acceptance of responsibility which they are under by legislation in the case of Roman Catholics, but hitherto they cannot see their way to allow identical privilege to Roman Catholics and Protestants in the matter of religious instruction in the Primary Schools.

In opposition to this relegation of Christian instruction in the Public Schools, rightly regarded as Protestant, to the ministers of religion, our contention is that it should be committed to the qualified and salaried teachers of the Province. We reclaim against its being permanently relegated to the members of another profession, who need, for the most part, all the time at their disposal for the conscientious and efficient discharge of their own proper duties. As we have said, we do not object to the rendering of provisional and temporary aid by clergymen, until the authorities, having seen it to be their duty, in the interest of the community, to make Christian instruction a constituent part of the school programme, the teachers shall have generally become fully qualified, as some of them can hardly be expected to be, after the long-protracted exclusion of

Christian instruction from the Public Schools. Indeed, we do not know of any minister who would not be ready to render such assistance as we have referred to, in any department of school work. The writer is not alone or singular in having had frequent occasion to aid both teachers and pupils in their studies. He need not say that he regards it a privilege and feels it a pleasure. And he cannot believe that any of his brethren could feel or act otherwise in the same circumstances. One thing, however, he cannot but here repeat, namely, that however willing ministers may be to act provisionally in the matter of Christian instruction in the day school, there is hardly any need of their doing so, in view of the fact already adverted to, that our teachers generally are far from being even now ill-qualified to give Christian instruction even to the most advanced of their pupils.

Repudiating, as we cannot but do, the charge that, perhaps generally by insinuation, is brought against us, of our being actuated, in our contention, by a desire to lighten our own work, we might be excused in the use of strong language, when we have occasion to advert to the flippant and splenetic utterances of which we are not unfrequently the object. To give a specimen. On one occasion, towards the close of a meeting of the Provincial Teachers' Association, when, as we understand, the attendance was very much reduced, a motion was submitted, and after discussion, during which foolishly and painfully wild language

was used by some, carried by a majority, in the terms following: "That it is *unreasonable* to require *teachers* to give religious instruction; and that until ministers have given a fair trial to the present system, by generally availing themselves of the permission above referred to, any agitation on their part for a change should be discountenanced by all who desire to see our present non-sectarian system kept free from sectarian controversy."

Though a considerable time has elapsed since this motion was carried, it is no doubt expressive of the mind of many teachers up to the present time; and probably many will regard it as expressive of the general mind of the profession. This we do not believe. But whether it is so or not, we trust to be able to show that the resolution just quoted cannot, except perhaps in its grammatical construction, bear examination.

In so far as the resolution indicates an unwillingness on the part of some, it may be many, of our teachers to see Christian instruction added to the already crowded programme of day school instruction, it can hardly excite surprise. We can hardly be surprised if, after the long-continued exclusion of Christian instruction from our schools, many should be found averse to its introduction, if only as laying an additional burden on them. We would certainly regret it: and we are therefore glad to have been assured that the vote on the occasion referred to did not express the sentiments

of the majority of the teachers of the Province, and that the resolution would not have been carried, if the attendance had been full. We cannot, however, trust to such assurances. Nor can they hinder our expressing our extreme surprise and regret that an association of intelligent Christian gentlemen should, even when reduced to a small remnant, commit itself, not to the preference of one arrangement to another, in connection with Christian instruction in the day school, but to insinuations and implications in reference to clergymen, that are at once ungenerous and unjustifiable except to a mind splenetically perverted. And what shall we say of those to whom ungenerous reference to the members of another profession who take the deepest interest in them, has become a second nature ; so that they can hardly let an opportunity pass without indulging themselves in unworthy insinuations against the clergy, simply because they differ from them, and as they believe, not without sufficient reason ?

Referring to the charge of *unreasonableness* in the resolution above quoted, we have no hesitation in saying that there is not the slightest ground for such a charge so far as we, *i.e.*, ministers, are concerned. It is not we who are *unreasonable*, when we contend that the lessons of the common Christianity of the Province should, if acquaintance with them is believed to be essential to its welfare, be imparted by its accredited Christian teachers ; but those who, while admitting the essential importance of Christian in-



struction, would relegate it to Christian ministers, as if it were their exclusive business to have anything to do with instruction in the principles of religion. Only let it be granted, as has, we think, been sufficiently proved, that no principle forbids Christian instruction in the day school by teachers paid by moderate taxation of parents, why, we ask, in the name of reason, should it not be committed to the skilled instructors, through whose hands all our young people pass in succession during the most susceptible period of their life? Why, again, in the name of reason, should our teachers be called to submit, in the eyes of their pupils, to the permanent imputation and reproach of incompetency, intellectual or moral, to impart the most important of all instruction? And, once more in the name of reason, why should it be charged against our Christian teachers, by the highest educational authority of the land, that in the communication of the lessons of the common Christianity of the Province, they cannot "with safety" be trusted to refrain from insinuating into the minds of their pupils the distinctive views of their several denominations; to say nothing of the anti-Christian sentiments which some of them are said to entertain? In view of the fact that these questions are their own answer, we may ask farther, whether, when Christian instruction shall have been authoritatively introduced, and all our teachers shall have become fully qualified to impart it, we can think of any agency so fitted as theirs to secure that ignorance of the facts and

principles of Christianity shall be exceptional, instead of being generally characteristic of the people of Ontario—the inevitable result of the error (or what some would call the infatuation) of the entire exclusion of religious instruction from the schools of the great majority of our Christian Province.

There are, however, *two* special implications of the resolution quoted that call for more particular consideration :

I. The supporters of the resolution are not alone in the insinuation that the endeavour to secure for Christian instruction the place in the day school which, we believe, the national welfare demands, is confined very largely, if not exclusively, to the ministers of religion. Not unfrequently our contention is stigmatized as *clerical* agitation. While it is vain to expect that this style of dealing with a subject will ever be renounced by those who, knowing its power, have become habituated to it, one cannot but regret that a respectable body of gentlemen should, in the name of one of the most honourable of professions, allow itself to be responsible for the insinuation that the ministers of religion are worthy of censure, as being the chief, if not the only, peace-breakers under a present happy state of things. Admitting our prominence in the discussion of the subject, that is no reason why the agitation should be referred to sneeringly, or disparaged in any way. The judgment of the ministers of religion in relation to a matter that concerns the religious interests of the community, is

not to be despised. Neither is it to be set aside by giving it a bad name. And apart from the impropriety of treating our action with the language of contempt instead of with fair argument, it should be considered that there are very sufficient reasons why, interested in the matter as we are, we should take a leading part in it.

*First*, a requirement which we regard as unreasonable and impracticable has been imposed upon us. We say a *requirement*, because, while a generous government *permits* us the use of the school-room, in which to add one lesson a week to those which we are always giving not only on the Lord's Day, but on other days, we are being persistently censured for not accepting the permission—thus, it is alleged, despising a privilege and neglecting a duty. No doubt, this censure is, for the most part, due to want of consideration. But there are those who unhappily do not care, or are not able, to conceal a disposition to treat Christian professors and ministers with a scant measure of generosity. In those circumstances, we should surely have the liberty accorded to us of pointing out the unreasonableness of laying upon us an obligation, in connection with the Christian instruction of our children, that is entirely needless, as it is generally impracticable, while nothing is proposed to be done to abate the evil which is the occasion of our chief anxiety; nothing, that is, proposed to be done for the securing of the Christian instruction of children whose parents cannot, or will not, give them

Christian instruction, and who will not subject them to the influences of the arrangements of the Church, but would not object to their religious instruction in the day school.

But, *secondly*, the subject of the religious instruction of the community is one in relation to which both our knowledge and our interest are such that we may be reasonably expected to take a lead in urging the employment of every legitimate agency that has in view the reducing to a *minimum* of the present prevailing and increasing poverty in the knowledge of Bible facts and principles. The efficiency of our public ministrations depends very largely upon our hearers' knowledge of Christian truth; and the special design of them, namely, Christian edification in its highest sense, would be far more extensively accomplished were it not for the prevailing and growing ignorance of Scripture truth. We cannot but see that other agencies *in addition* to those that are now in operation, are necessary, if our people generally of all classes are to be distinguished by an adequate acquaintance with the religion which they profess—such an acquaintance as may qualify them to value the ministrations of the sanctuary, and to be profited by them. But it is not to be lost sight of that, while we know, from our own early experience, that our own young people would be greatly advanced in Christian knowledge by the daily lessons of the Christian teacher in the Public School—even far more, in many cases, than by the half-hour weekly lesson of



the Sabbath School—it is not *their* benefit that our contention has chiefly in view. *They* are, as every one knows, already comparatively well seen to, in the home and in the Sabbath School. We plead especially for those whose parents neglect their religious instruction, but are not unwilling that they should receive religious instruction in the day school. We have reason to know that there is nothing singular in the fact, which was at first a surprise to many, that in the London Board Schools, “practically *all* the children in attendance, *whatsoever be the relation of the parents to the churches*, receive the Bible instruction that is given.” In this way, thousands and tens of thousands of children receive instruction in the elements of Christian knowledge, who would otherwise grow up in heathen ignorance.

The labours of ministers and of those who are associated with them in the work of Christian instruction, no doubt, reach a larger proportion of the population of Ontario than that which similar labours do of the masses of the great Babylon of England. But there are, as we have said, many parents of Ontario, who do not themselves give religious instruction to their children, and who, whether from prejudice or indifference, do not place them under the influences of the Church, but will not object to their being under the Christian instructions of the day school. And perhaps such parents will be found generally to desire it. For it is, we believe, a rare thing that an irreligious parent wishes his children to grow up in ignorance of

religion. Our authorities (we say it with all respect and deference) would do well to listen to us, when we remind them that there are many of their youthful subjects, especially in the cities of the Province, whom we would gladly benefit if we could—if, that is, they would receive from us and our helpers what we are ready to give them; but who will certainly live and die deplorably ignorant of everything Christian, unless their religious instruction shall be secured by an agency which our Christian rulers have the full control of, and which, as we have seen, no principle of national action forbids the employment of. They know well that our work in the instruction of their people is promotive of the public well-being. And they ought to consider that we should be presumed to be competent beyond others to judge correctly in reference to our own methods of dealing with those who place themselves, or are placed by their parents, under our care and that of our helpers. If instead, they listen to the counsels of spleneticism, prescribing our methods, and representing us as agitators, actuated by a desire to lay upon others a burden which we ought to carry ourselves, the results can be nothing but disastrous. It ought to be known to all that we have no desire to do less than we do, and that, for the most part, our work, with all its cares, anxieties and disappointments, is a pleasure to us and to many even a delight. But we see clearly that another available agency *in addition* to ours is necessary, if Ontario is to claim the honourable distinction of being a com-

munity whose people are generally well-informed in the principles of the religion they profess—a religion which is conspicuously the safety and the exaltation of the nation that accepts its guidance. And seeing that no principle forbids the employment of the agency referred to, instead of having our motives and aims misunderstood and misrepresented, we ought to be regarded as doing a public service, when we seek to obviate the practical difficulties that are supposed by some to make it all but impossible that the Provincial teachers should become our fellow-workers in the work of Christian instruction.

If some, however, are disposed to retort inconsiderately and unkindly, when we seek to vindicate our position, there are, we trust, many more who will understand us and sympathize with us, when, using the language of the Great Teacher, we say that the sight of a great harvest, ready for the sickle, and largely perishing because not timeously gathered, is a source of much anxiety to us. True as it is that, though no one in this Christian land need “perish from lack of knowledge,” it is too certain that many do, because they will not receive the saving knowledge of Christ from those who would impart it to them. Nor will they allow their children to receive it, except from those who are not allowed to impart it. Shall we say, “Then let them perish in their obstinacy and their children with them”? Shall we not rather endeavour by every legitimate means to save them from being the victims of their own folly? Shall we not

rather, in the language of the parable, *compel* them (the word, of course, being used figuratively) to accept what they most of all need? Shall we not, that is, still pursue their children's welfare, and seek, by other agency than ours, to save them from the ignorance that is fatal to it? And what can possibly be the hindrance that is effectually barring the employment of that agency—an agency that has been notoriously efficient for good, as is proved abundantly by the experience of over three centuries in countries that have been wise to employ it? It is not surely that the exclusion of Christian instruction from our Protestant Schools has become, as we fervently hope it never can become, a *political issue*. And yet, if the Government, convinced, as it is, of the importance of the Christian education of its youth—a conviction that is, we are sure, equally held by the party in opposition—continues to shrink from the responsibility of introducing the only arrangement that is in full consistency with its conviction and obligation, or that can be expected to reduce to a minimum the prevailing ignorance of Scripture, which is sapping the morality of the community, how is this hesitation to be accounted for? We cannot think of any explanation, except what has been more than once already suggested, namely, that the Government, besides seeing opposition on the part of some—ministers and people—cannot be blind to the fact that Protestants, notwithstanding their general desire to see Christian instruction introduced into our schools, fail largely to



evince such determination in battling for their right as would *compel* the authorities to take proper action. For, as has been said, we may well be persuaded that no Government could resist the united and persistent demand of the leading Protestant churches of the Province; whereas we cannot justly pronounce severe condemnation on a government that is not an autocratic one, because, notwithstanding more or less strong convictions, it hesitates to carry them out in legislative or official action, apart from the support of general and decided public opinion.

II. But the resolution quoted above insinuates another charge against us--nothing less, namely, than the desire and endeavour to introduce *sectarian* teaching into our Provincial Schools. We are agitating, it is said, for a change that "should be discountenanced by all who desire to see our present *non-sectarian* system kept free from *sectarian* controversy." It will be noted that the resolution assumes that the "present system," according to which Christian instruction in the Public School is relegated, by a *permission* to the clergy of the different churches, is *non-sectarian*, and that, in contending, as we do, for the making of religious instruction an integral portion of the day school programme and of the work of the teacher, we are arguing for the introduction of *sectarian* teaching into our educational system. We would carefully refrain from all impropriety of language, and trust we shall not be regarded as transgressing in that respect, when we say that,

in our opinion, an assumption so gratuitous and unreasonable can hardly be conceived. Of this, at the risk of the charge of a little repetition, we hope to satisfy the candid reader. We have already had occasion to show that the "present system" is *essentially sectarian*.\* There is, indeed, a sense in which it may be said to be *non-sectarian*. It is non-sectarian in the sense that Christianity is *practically* nowhere in it, though it may be *nominally* Christian. Our rulers decline to take the responsibility of admitting definite Christian instruction into the school programme. Rather, they authoritatively exclude it; flattering themselves that they have fully discharged their obligation when they give permission to the ministers of religion to give a weekly lesson within the walls of the school-room. And thus the "present system" is non-sectarian simply by being *non-Christian*, ministers, meanwhile, and their helpers, instructing their children at a more convenient time and in a more suitable place. And, while our teachers are, for reasons already referred to, declared to be *incompetent* and *not to be trusted*, there are some, as is well known, who assume, as an unquestionable principle, that instruction cannot be Christian—we may even say, religious—without being sectarian, and that therefore we cannot be free from sectarian teaching, except by the exclusion of all teaching distinctively Christian or religious. That, however, is not the view of our rulers, if we may

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\* See Chap. VII., pp. 121, 122.

judge from the eloquent vindication, by the late Minister of Education, of the claim of Christianity to a conspicuously pervasive place in the education of our youth, though, we believe, he is mistaken in his distrust of our teachers. But in reference to the sectarianism with which our contention is charged, we retort the charge. For is not the very permission given to clergymen to teach, each of them his own children, *in itself* sectarian in aspect and tendency? It implies the permission to every clergyman to teach the *distinctive* views of his own denomination. And were it not that the "system," if it deserves the name, has been amply proved to be impracticable, our schools might present the miserable spectacle of clerical zeal expended largely in endeavours fitted to prejudice our young people against each other, and to alienate them from one another, in connection with most important of human interests. To the mind of any considerate person, the teacher is far less likely to yield to the sectarian spirit than the clergyman. For, apart from the fact that he may well be trusted as being at least no more of a sectarian than the minister, is there not all but perfect security against sectarian teaching, by the authoritative prohibition of it, in the case of the teacher, while there is absolutely no hindrance to ministers teaching their sectarianisms to their hearts' content? If any one would be at all likely to act like the bigots of old times, who were great on the "tithing of mint and anise and cummin" but were oblivious of "the weightier matters

of the law, judgment, mercy and faith," it would be not the teachers but the clergymen.

Referring farther to the assumption that we are seeking to introduce sectarian teaching, we think it has been sufficiently proved that instruction may be Christian without being sectarian. Far too much, we repeat, is made of the differences among Protestants; because in reality they are hardly worthy of notice, in view of their general agreement in all the essentials of Christian teaching. That the great majority of Protestant Christians are so largely at one as they actually are, is at once what might be expected from an unprejudiced study of the Word of God, and a matter of great thankfulness in so far as it is indicative of such study. We need not repeat what we have said, in a former chapter, in reference to the sufficiency of the Divine provision for our being led to a general agreement in relation to the substance of the teaching of the Christian Scriptures. In view of the many misleading influences which operate, by Divine permission, for important ends, we need not be greatly surprised when we see men, even of high intellect, committing themselves to egregious follies in religion—even preferring Buddhism or Mohammedanism to the teachings of Christ, or putting singular constructions on the teachings of Christ, if not "wresting the Scriptures." But if, having regard to the promise of Divine guidance, the marvellously general agreement among Protestants in relation to the teachings of Scripture should not surprise us,



none the less is it a matter of thankfulness. We know that our statement elsewhere, and here repeated, regarding the large proportion of the Protestant population—ninety-five per cent.—which it assigns to the five leading Protestant churches, has been called in question, but only, we believe, because it was a matter of surprise. For a reference to the Report of last census will show that it is correct to a unit. How, then, can it be charged against us, that we are seeking to make sectarian teaching a part of the work of the Public School, when we are simply asking that our teachers shall be required to give instruction in the common Christianity of ninety-five per cent. of those who have a peculiar property in the Public Schools of the Province—peculiar, we mean, in virtue of the setting up of a separate establishment for Roman Catholics? As Protestants, let us repeat, we believe that our unity in relation to the great essentials of Christianity is a unity of a higher order than that of our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, notwithstanding our divergence in smaller matters. But it were imposing too heavy a tax upon the advantage which we feel we possess in our higher unity, to tell us, as some in effect do, that we must wait till the *last religious crank of Protestant name is extinct*, before our unity can be accorded the privilege which is accorded to the Roman Catholics of the Province, as a right in all time to come. It is surely enough that the few who differ seriously from the great majority are *not compelled* to receive the lessons of the common Christianity of the land.

There is, then, no propriety, or rather there is a great impropriety, in meeting our contention, as some do, by asking, Shall the teaching be Calvinistic or Arminian? High Church or Low Church? Baptist or Pedobaptist? or by ridiculing the idea of making the Public School teacher a *theological tutor*. Such questions are, speaking mildly, the reverse of pertinent to our discussion; and we no more desire the teacher to be a theological tutor than the pious parent is, who faithfully instructs his children—with this difference, however, that while the parent has the right to indoctrinate his children in the distinctive tenets of his own Church, the teacher is to be absolutely forbidden to utter a word outside of the generally accepted, well understood, and easily formulated common Christianity of the Protestants of Ontario. Nor is there an intelligent and judicious teacher, belonging to any one of the churches which comprise nearly the whole Protestant profession of the Province, who would find it in the least difficult to give instruction in all essential Christian principles, doctrinal and practical, without introducing into his teaching the peculiar tenets of his own denomination. His intelligent attachment to his own Church, be it ever so strong, will be no reason for distrusting him. Rather, it will be the best of guarantees of his trustworthiness as a Christian instructor.

It may be we cannot yet say that sectarianism is an evil entirely of the past. But we may safely venture to say that, when all our teachers “of the

Protestant faith" are qualified and required to give instruction in our common Christianity, there will be little occasion to restrain excess of denominational or sectarian zeal on their part. Free of all apprehension on that head, under the system for whose introduction we contend, we could not but be apprehensive in relation to the action of the clergy, or of some of them, under the present essentially sectarian system, if, instead of being an utter failure, it had been more largely adopted. It would, from what we know, never surprise us in the least to be assured that there are clergymen who, under the "present system," ignoring the essential verities of the Christian faith, deem it their duty to limit their instructions largely to what is purely sectarian. But, when the "present system" is swept out of existence, and the Christian instruction of the day school placed in the hands of our teachers, each cordially and firmly attached to his own denomination, it will indeed be a surprise to us, when we hear of any of them being charged with taking advantage of his position to give a "denominational tinge" to his teaching. On the contrary, their faithful and honourable abstention from all teaching of a sectarian character will be a standing emphatic demonstration of the truth that a higher unity is attainable in the independent and reverent study of the Word of God than is attainable in any other way. If there are those who, like Cardinal Newman, and others of high intellect and of great dialectical subtlety, think otherwise and prefer to

entrench themselves in another unity, which they regard as a safe stronghold against the terrible vagaries of the wild human intellect, while we are far from envying them, we do not judge them, but leave them, as we commit ourselves, to the judgment of Him who alone cannot err in judgment.



## CHAPTER XII.

The essential importance of parental interest—Parental neglect an argument in favour of our contention—Permanent value of Christian knowledge—The Apostle Paul's valuation of its diffusion.

WE propose in this chapter to deal frankly with the error of those who, on the ground that the Christian instruction of the young is unquestionably binding on certain parties, argue that it should not be committed to the teachers of the Public Schools; and also to consider the serious failure in duty on the part of many parents, as constituting an additional and very strong argument in favour of the contention of these pages.

We are being continually reminded, as we need not be, that the communication of religious instruction is the duty of the Church, its ministers, its parents, and its Sabbath School teachers. We do not object however, to our being kindly and faithfully reminded of our duty. We are sure, at least, that ministers do not. It does us no harm. What we seriously object to is the implication that is intended to be conveyed in these reminders, which is nothing less than that,

*because* the Christian instruction of the young is the duty of the Church, its ministers, parents and Sabbath School teachers, it is *not* the duty of others *besides them*. To say nothing of the breach of the elementary laws of reason, involved in such an implication, the duty of these parties is not in question. The question is, whether *besides* these, there are not *others* who ought, in the best interests of the community, to be engaged in the work of Christian instruction. It is not a question of the *transference* of work from one party to another. Far less is it, as some represent it, a question of the *transference of a burden* from the shoulders of those who ought to bear it, to the shoulders of those who ought not to have it laid upon them. The question is, we repeat, Do not the interests of the community—the State, the Province, the Nation, for the name is a matter of indifference—require that *in addition* to the agencies referred to, *another* agency shall be employed, to the employment of which, as we humbly submit, it has been shown there can be no legitimate objection, or to the employment of which by the civil ruler there is no let on the ground of any Scripture principle?

It is a grief to us to see that there are those who seriously misapprehend our motives and our purpose and aim, in pleading for the *authoritative* introduction of religious instruction into the Protestant schools of Ontario—the Public Schools. Speaking in the name of the Protestant ministers of the Province, who, we believe, with the exception more than once referred to, are almost universally in

sympathy with us, our contention does not look, as some inconsiderately and ungenerously insinuate, to the *transference* of an obligation or, as they prefer to phrase it, a *burden* from themselves to another class of instructors. We do not need to be told that it is the duties of ministers, parents and Sabbath School teachers to instruct the young. For ministers we can safely say that there is no class of men, taken as a whole, who have more pleasure in the work of their calling than ministers have in the instruction of the young, as in the other duties of their vocation. And we think the same may be said of Sabbath School teachers, as is sufficiently manifest from the fact alone that their labours are gratuitous. We have indeed reason to be sore grieved that many parents fail to realize their responsibility, and are derelict in the duty of the religious instruction of their children. But *all the more* do we, for this very reason, earnestly contend for Christian instruction by the qualified Christian teachers of this Province, were it only as a means, urgently required, of mitigating the evil issues of parental neglect. We have no idea that Sabbath School teachers and dutiful parents will, when Christian instruction is imparted in our schools, do any less than they have been doing hitherto, and are now doing. And, as for ministers, we shall see before we close this chapter, that they will be under the necessity of doing much more, but not without the hope of ample reward for their increased labour.\*

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\* See also last chapter.

Ready as we may be to labour in our ministry to the utmost extent of our ability and opportunity, we cannot but believe that there is *another* class of instructors, whose agency in the communication of Christian knowledge, if it could be made available, would be of immense value, as an *addition* to the agencies that are now in operation. While it would be a great benefit to those who are now receiving a modicum of Christian instruction from the workers of the Church, it is nothing short of a *necessity* to many of the young people of the Province. We cannot but see that there are many whom, from whatever cause, the present agencies fail to reach; and the sorrowful fact cannot be denied that the employment of what is, in some important respects, the chief of these agencies, viz., the parental, is far from being the power for good that it ought to be, and that it would be, but for parental neglect of Christian duty. Even with the present agencies at their best—that is, generally as well as faithfully employed—the daily communication of Christian instruction by skilled Christian teachers would be an unspeakable benefit to our children of all classes, as witness the results of it, in making Scotland what it has been for more than three centuries, placed in the van of nations in the intelligence and energy of its people, and in their love of freedom, civil and religious, conscientiously loyal to the infatuated dynasty that persecuted them, and by their “resistance unto blood,” a prime factor in the securing of British liberty.



The writer may be allowed to refer to his own case, in illustration of the value of the religious lessons of the day school. Looking back more than sixty years, to the time when the Sabbath School was in its infancy in Scotland, and when there was yet no Sabbath School in connection with the congregation to which his family belonged, he believes that, notwithstanding home teaching, he would have been anything but an adept in Scripture knowledge but for the daily Scripture and catechism exercise with which every day began in the day school, Saturday forenoon being sometimes wholly spent in the revisal of the week's religious lessons. And though, as has been said, the master of the school at which he received his early classical education, was at that time required to be a member of the National Church, a whisper was never heard of sectarian teaching, though the children of three dissenting congregations attended the school, two of those congregations being of the *first* secession, and the other of the *second* or *Relief* secession, to which the family of the writer belonged. No doubt there was a full accordance on the part of all those congregations in relation to Scripture doctrine. But we have shown that, if the accordance of the great Protestant bodies of Ontario is not absolutely entire, these differences are of no account, in view of their unity in all the essentials of Christian teaching. But the writer has further to say, that when later he attended the Edinburgh Normal School, which was at the time practically

under the rule of a then distinguished *amateur* enthusiastic educationist—a Scottish barrister and county judge\*—who was a member of the Scottish Episcopal Church, with a decided leaning to Arminianism (which did not prevent the Kirk Sessions of Edinburgh, under whose control the school was placed, from accepting his valuable gratuitous services), there was the same freedom from all suspicion of sectarianism; and, though the Scripture lessons were felt by many to be unduly onerous, many others besides the writer, had they “remained until this present” time, would freely acknowledge that without those daily Christian lessons, which occupied a prominent place in the work of the school, their Scripture knowledge would have been comparatively very slender. And who can seriously think of the entire absence of Bible and definite Christian teaching from the schools of Ontario, without being so impressed with the inadequacy of the present agencies, as to fear that an increasing ignorance of Christian truth will characterize our otherwise highly educated classes, unless a prominent place shall without delay be given to it in the lessons of the day school?

Referring more especially to the parental agency, so far are we from thinking that the instructions of the day school can be an adequate substitute for those of the home, that, on the contrary, we are, in our pulpit ministrations, continually reminding parents that, however helpful any other agency may be, no

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\* In Scotland, *Advocate and Sheriff-Depute.*

agency, however helpful, can be expected to neutralize or compensate for the evils of parental neglect. That good results of the highest kind should be the fruit of the Christian instruction of children whose parents are indifferent to their religious or spiritual well-being, is not to be looked for; such expectation being barred by the parents' unbelieving disregard of Scripture promise, which assures the Christian believer of the success of his endeavor to bring up his child "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." But yet much may be done to compensate for the apathy and neglect of parents, in the way of storing the minds of the young with Christian knowledge. And no one, we think, can dispute the assertion that the addition of stated day school Christian instruction would tell more effectually than any of the other Christian agencies in reducing the present appalling unacquaintance with Scripture truth, and in making an adequate measure of sound Christian knowledge the general, and all but universal, possession of the people of Ontario. And in view of the possible and not infrequently actual results of the possession of such knowledge, who can overestimate its value? Not to speak of its value as an intellectual endowment, the Christian instructor who has been grieved to see all his endeavours neutralized by adverse home influences, has, from time to time, reason to rejoice in the changed life of one who has, perhaps for a long time, followed the evil example of the home.

While we labour to counteract the evil effects of

parental neglect, which its prevalency requires us to do incessantly, it is because we can never forget that the parental agency in the religious training of children is so indispensable that no other agency can compensate, in the interests of children, for parental indifference, to say nothing of evil example. Other agencies may store the minds of our young people with Christian knowledge, an inestimable possession which, through the plenteous mercy of God, may result eventually in the rescuing of their souls from death. But if our children generally are to devote themselves early to Christ and to lead Christian lives, we must above all things, direct our attention to parents, in the hope of rendering their Christian interest in their children less exceptional than it is at the present time. We are mourning over the slender results, moral and spiritual, of the much earnest endeavour that is being put forth, in the interest of our young people, by ministers and other Christian workers; but probably we do not at all sufficiently realize the fact that all our endeavours must be comparatively fruitless in this respect, when parental influence is adverse or unfavourable. We complain that so very few of our young people are giving indications of a disposition to lead a Christian life; but that, on the contrary, very many of them, and of our young men especially, make us fear that an evil future is before them, even in respect of the present life; inasmuch as they are manifestly averse to that godliness that has attached to it the promise of the life that now is, as



well as of the life that is to come. But are we sufficiently alive to the fact that, in the multitude of instances, the great hindrance to the present and immediate efficacy of the influences brought to bear upon our young people, is the spiritual torpor and indifference to divine things which characterize their parents? We may have all the machinery of Christian instruction in active and ceaseless operation; but all will be of little avail in awakening a genuine and effective interest in the minds of the children, while their parents are not acting in such a way as to compel the belief that they are actuated by a supreme regard to religious interests—deceiving themselves, it may be, but not their children. If parents give occasion to their children to suspect the genuineness of their religion, by their lukewarmness in relation to the great realities of the unseen and eternal world, while they are all life and earnestness in relation to the interests of sense and time, there may indeed be an occasional conversion, thus keeping up the succession of true piety in the church, without affecting to any appreciable degree the general reign of spiritual death. But not until parents generally manifest a type of piety and concern for their children's spiritual welfare that are now comparatively rare, can we reasonably expect a general movement toward Christ on the part of our young people.

In referring, as we have done with some warmth, to the essential importance of the parental agency, and to prevailing parental indifference and neglect,

we may possibly be reminded that we have forgotten that we are not preaching. If we have erred in this respect, we trust that some leniency may be extended to us, on the ground that, with the views we have, it is hardly possible that our spirit should not be stirred within us, when we not only have to deplore the partial or entire neglect of many parents, but must perforce submit to a system of public education characterized by the idolatry of the material and the secular, with no room in it for intelligent Scripture teaching; our rulers declining to acknowledge responsibility for the Christian instruction of the children of Protestants, beyond telling their ministers that, if they think their children are not receiving enough of religious instruction, they may go into the school-room and there give them another lesson once a week.

Our reference, however, to the parental agency has respect to the fact that our expectations, as well as our motives and aims, are so much misunderstood. Enough, we trust, has been said to satisfy the candid mind that there is no ground for ascribing anything to Christian ministers, except the desire and the hope of doing *more* work, and of working with more success as the community advances in Christian knowledge; and especially no reason to think that we are so foolish as to indulge in unreasonable expectations in reference to the results of daily or stated Scripture instruction in the Public School. But while, as has been said, we have slender hope of results of the

highest kind from the possession of religious knowledge, by whomsoever imparted, whether by ministers, or by Sabbath School teachers, or by day school teachers, while parents are neglectful of their children's religious interests, we cannot overestimate the value of the early possession of Christian knowledge, not only in respect of its influence as a moral power, but because, while memory lasts, it will give to the Christian comforter access to the soul and heart in the day of distress and in the dying hour, which he could not have in the case of one who is ignorant of the elements of Christian truth.

One word more at this point in reference to the strange notion of our desire that our work should be imposed on others. It is forgotten, when such a desire is ascribed to us, that we are *Protestant* ministers, and that the more intelligent our people are, the more careful we require to be in our preparation for the pulpit. And though we attach no little value to "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," and feel as secure of our "Apostolical succession" as the Roman Catholic priest or the highest of High Church Anglicans can do, yet we claim no power or influence with our people that does not follow freely through the instrumentality of *intelligence*—theirs as well and as much as ours. We have no desire to take advantage of their ignorance, or to serve them with platitudes. Charged as we are to give attention to reading and kindred exercises, to "meditate on these things, to give ourselves wholly to them, that our

profiting may appear to all," we believe we cannot acceptably serve our Master and His cause by "that which costs us nothing." The time indeed was when, having completed our college studies to enter on the work of the ministry, we assumed the general possession, on the part of the people, of a fair measure of Scripture knowledge. But after a while we found that there were not a few, not children in years, to edify whom it was necessary to descend to the commonplace. When it is considered that this necessity is largely owing to the little attention that is now paid to religious instruction, compared with what was given to it in other days, and especially to its absence from the day school, it cannot be thought that ordinary candour will ascribe to us any but a reasonable motive in agitating for the reduction, by all legitimate agencies, of the prevailing poverty in Christian knowledge.

But to bring to a close the discussion of the important subject of the present chapter. Surely when *in addition* to the present means of instruction, "Holiness to the Lord" is written on the doors of our National Schools, and the fathers and the mothers of the rising generation are generally interested in the religious welfare of their children, the hope that our land will become a "garden of the Lord" among nations is no vain one. There is indeed not a little to discourage us; and, as we have said, not our least discouragement is that there are Christian brethren who, under an unreasonable apprehension, as we



regard it, are opposed to the employment of what might be one of the most effective of all agencies in promoting Christian knowledge, the possession of which the great apostle so valued that he could not but rejoice in its diffusion, even "of envy and strife." Not that he rejoiced in envy and strife, which indeed he could not but, with all Christians, utterly abhor. But he rejoiced, as we do, in the diffusion of the knowledge, the possession of which makes its possessor a more likely subject of saving grace than the man who is ignorant of gospel truth.

In view of the apostle's strong language, which, we all believe, is the language of inspiration, can we imagine that, if the Cæsar of his day had, on becoming a Christian convert, enjoined the introduction of Christian instruction into all the schools of the empire, without making its reception binding on those who objected to it, Paul, instead of rejoicing, would have protested against it, on the ground of its being a contravention of the voluntary principle, or of any other principle of national action? It may be said that the voluntary principle, like other accepted principles, did not attain its full development till a comparatively recent time. But, let it be remembered, we are fully assured that we have it *in germ* in our Lord's teaching, in passages that have been quoted\* as said to be in opposition to our contention; though, as we have said, we cannot, perhaps in our blindness, see why a Christian Cæsar should not

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\* See Chap. V., pp. 84-86.

himself "render to God the things that are God's," or why he should not use his power and the money he receives from his people, to promote the Christian welfare of his subjects. We cannot think that Paul would have protested against such action, though he would surely have objected to coercion. And we think even that we cannot be quite sure that he would have objected to the Emperor's doing something, in his official capacity, for the support and comfort of the Christian ministers of his day, so that they might not have to labour night and day for their own support, at tent-making and other occupations. But those, it may be said, were the times of the morning twilight of some great principles, and some may think that, if Paul had been living now, he would have objected not only to the public endowment of religion, but to the allowance of Christian instruction in the schools whose teachers are secured in a decent maintenance by the action of the civil ruler. From this, however, we must dissent. We cannot but humbly think that, while the great apostle seems not to have highly relished the receiving of money from those to whom he was preaching the Word, although his doing so was in accordance with a Divine ordinance of both Testaments, we may be very sure that he would have rejoiced in seeing all Christians cordially united in the desire and determination to give Christian instruction a prominent place in our National Schools.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Specific objections to the use of the Bible in the Public School

- I. Alleged indelicacy of some of its utterances—II.  
Destruction of the Canaanites.

IN pleading for the introduction of Christian instruction into the Protestant schools of the Province, as the proper work of its qualified teachers, we look beyond the storing of our children's minds with the knowledge of the facts and principles of our common Christianity. An intelligent and sympathetic teacher may be expected to instil into the minds of his scholars a reverent and loving regard for the Bible, as the Word of God, revealing His "thoughts of good" towards us; and to aim at the education of their consciences in Scripture principles. And he may be expected to make his instructions to bear especially on evil practices and neglects of duty as circumstances may, in his judgment, require. In this connection, strange as it may appear to some, there are those who offer certain specific objections to the use of the Bible in the Public School—objections which, were they valid, would require its banishment from the Sabbath School and justify its universal

reprobation. Two of these objections especially call for particular consideration, on account of their plausibility, appealing, as they do, to the best and finest feelings of our nature—the one to the sentiment of *pudicity*, and the other to that of *compassion*, which includes in its kindly sweep and embrace even those whose criminality requires their suffering, it may be, even unto death, as a protection to the interests of the community.

I. While there are many other sins against which our young people need to be constantly and solemnly warned, such as profanity, dishonesty, untruthfulness, intemperance and unfilial conduct, there is perhaps no class of sins, the deadly nature of which they more need to have deeply impressed upon them than that of sins against purity, the Bible references to which some profess to consider so indelicate as to make the Bible, as a whole, an improper book for use in the school. Now, we cannot but hasten to say with all possible emphasis that, if anything in our present controversy calls for outspoken dealing and flat contradiction, it is this objection to the Word of God, which, as we have said, applies to the use of the Bible in the Sabbath School, including the Bible-class, as well as to its use in the day school. In dealing frankly with it, therefore, as we are called to do, we do not hesitate to say at the outset, that we take the ground that, not only are the references objected to no reason why the Bible should be denied a place in the school and concealed from our young



people, but the absence of these references would, in our judgment, be a serious defect in a book which professes to inform us of the mind of God in relation to our duty, and to the derelictions and delinquencies which proceed from and manifest the depravity of our fallen nature. In other words, these references are a proof, among many others, that the Bible is the utterance of God's mind to us, with the design of convincing us of our sin that we may be saved from it. And here, therefore, without going into the arguments *for* and *against* a Bible Lectionary, and without objecting to a Lectionary for younger children, we must protest against the superseding of the Bible by a Lectionary, whose chief distinction would be the omission of the vitally important references that are objected to as indelicate. We need hardly say that we fear that the plea of indelicacy is, on the part of many, altogether insincere. It cannot be questioned that there are those who dislike the Bible, because its teaching is of such a character as to make them tremble in the commission of sins which, they would persuade themselves, are venial beyond others, while the very mention of the Divine condemnation of them is an intolerable breach of propriety.

No one will hesitate to say that we cannot overestimate the value of the sentiment of pudicity in relation to the purity of the community. We may indeed say that it is the chief safeguard of social purity, in our fallen state,\* in which the power of

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\* *Custos virtutum omnium verecundia*, Cicero. Αἰδῶ θεῶν ἐνὶ θυμῷ (*pudorem habete in animo*). Ajax Telemon in *Homer*.

conscience is so slender a restraint against the indulgence of irregular desires. It is therefore important in the highest degree that we should, not only carefully avoid everything that might tend to weaken, but do all we can to foster, a sentiment apart from whose powerful influence, wide as is the prevalence of what is called the "social evil," the condition of the community would be infinitely worse than it unhappily is. But we shall be guilty of a tremendous folly if we imagine that the sentiment of pudicity can be a *substitute for conscience*; and we shall be justly reckoned as the worst enemies of those who come after us if, under the plea of respect for it, we decline to use our best endeavours to enlist the youthful conscience on the side of "purity in heart, speech and behaviour." Granting that the matter is one that requires delicate handling, a person is not fit to be entrusted with the education of the young, who cannot deal with it in such a way as shall tend at once to promote tenderness of conscience in relation to sins against purity, and to strengthen the sentiment which is the only safety of many, and which is a defence which perhaps not very many can afford altogether to depreciate or despise. We are surely not mistaken in believing that even Joseph was dominated as much as any man ever was, by the divinely strengthened modesty of his nature, when the mighty and irresistible power of the tenderest of consciences constrained him to exclaim: "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against

God?" There is, we feel sure, nothing so fitted at once to strengthen the sentiment of pudicity and to promote tenderness of conscience, and thereby to save our young people from an evil that brings swift destruction on thousands, as the enforcement of Scripture views in relation to it, by a judicious and pure-minded teacher, whether in the day school or in the Sabbath School.

To expect to train our youth in purity of thought and life, by setting aside the teaching of the Word of God, and seeking to impress upon the tender mind the evil results of disregarding physiological laws and the social proprieties, is one of the vainest of all imaginations. For, setting aside the fact that this were, on the score of delicacy, far more difficult than to enforce the lessons of Scripture, no thoughtful person can but see that physiological and sociological considerations are utterly inadequate, apart from the teaching of Scripture, to the production and maintenance of a right frame of mind, in relation to intercourse between the sexes. And this is not all. It is undeniable that much of the literature that is current under the name of physiology, exercises a pernicious influence on the minds of many, fitted as it is, whether designed or not, to divest that department of human conduct of all moral character, and to foster the belief that the great danger to be guarded against in connection with it is, not the sin of the transgression of the moral law of God, but the error of forgetting that evil results will, according to

physiological laws, be the natural penalty of unrestrained indulgence of natural appetencies. Though we might subject ourselves to scorn in properly characterizing the teaching to which the literary power of some men of name gives currency and popularity in our day, all the more does such teaching need, as an indispensable counteractive, the plain home-speaking of Scripture, where the needful and only effective counteractive is to be found. Men will range the encyclopædia of human knowledge in vain for a moral power, fitted to appal the transgressor of the law of purity, such as is contained in a single utterance of Scripture; and that because it is instinct with the breath of the living God and pervaded with the power of Him who is the Lord of conscience, and "is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." To say nothing of the direct and dire denunciations of the Divine displeasure against impurity, not only of life, but of heart, where, in the whole compass of human literature, shall we find a sentence weighted with such a power to affect the conscience, as that which closes the simple and faithful record of a great king's violation of the Divine law of purity, and his criminal attempt to conceal it, "The thing that David had done *displeased the Lord*"? But for Scripture, and having regard only to standard works of profane history, we can with difficulty avoid the impression that princes and other great men, their associates, are reasonably to be regarded as exempt from the obligation of the Divine law of purity. But



“God is no respecter of persons,” and while all honour is due to the virtuous prince who is proof against all temptation, the transgressor will find that there is a righteous judge who is swayed by no partialities, and in whose judgment impurity is no venial offence but a deadly and damning sin.\* And let men beware of referring in a foolish and flippant way to the sin of David, instead of trembling in the prospect of the righteous punishment of their transgression of the law of God, or of rejoicing with trembling gratitude for the grace that has kept them from falling.

II. The other specific objection to the use of the Bible in our schools, which calls for particular notice, is based upon the Divine command to the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites, and to occupy their land, which God promised them as a perpetual possession, on the condition that they did not themselves practise the idolatries and the wicked abominations associated therewith that necessitated the Divine command. If we deal with this objection more largely than some will probably think to be at all needful, it is because some time ago we had occasion to deal seriously with it three or four weeks in

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\* We are pleased to note that the solemn teaching of the Sermon on the Mount has its place in the present Lectionary. But we regret the absence of the narrative of Joseph's great victory, and that of David's fall and its terrible consequences—the fruit of God's displeasure. And room might have been given for some of the *direct* denunciations of the Divine wrath by prophets and apostles, against transgressors, Jewish and heathen.

a local newspaper, in reply to attacks made by a teacher against the use of the Bible in our schools, on that special ground.

The objection, while it is plausible, as seeming to appeal to the best feelings of our nature, is really based upon a very erroneous impression respecting the guilt of heathen men in the sight of God—an impression contrary to the teaching of Scripture and entirely inconsistent with right views of sin; and an impression which, we may also say, by the way, largely accounts for the apathy of many nominal Christians in relation to the great work of the Christian Church—the evangelization of the heathen world. We trust, therefore, it may serve a good purpose to endeavour to dispel this evil impression, by an appeal not only to Scripture, but to the axiomatic utterances of the human conscience, in relation to sin.

God's thoughts of the guilt of men as sinners, like His thoughts of other things, are very different from those which, owing to human depravity, men themselves are apt to entertain. Men are apt to be greatly mistaken in their thoughts both of their own sin and of the sin of others, and do in fact often err egregiously in their estimate both of others' character and of their own. There are those who are "clean in their own eyes," but are "abomination in the sight of God"; and there are those whom some may regard as hardly to be charged with the guilt of sin—to be pitied and not blamed—but who are deeply guilty

and very wicked in the sight of God. Many think that no great degree of wickedness can attach to heathen men, who are not favoured, as we are, with the light of Divine revelation. And in their superior, if not ineffable wisdom, some will plead that it is better that they should be let alone in their *innocence*, instead of having our guilt imposed upon them by imparting gospel light to them. Strange delusion! And yet it may be truly said of them that their sin is nothing compared with the sin of those to whom "God hath spoken by his Son," and who yet continue impenitent. But like the men of heathen Sodom, they may be "wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly," and their sin "crying and very grievous," as was the wickedness that, five or six hundred years before, called for the extinction of universally corrupt humanity, one family only excepted.

Let God's own judgment respecting the men of Sodom be noted: for "we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth," against those who sin like the men of Sodom. Nor is it difficult to see the ground of God's righteous judgment. It is true there are questions in relation to sin, which it is beyond our power to answer so as to free the mind from all perplexity. This, however, is not the place to deal with these questions, beyond saying that they do not affect the actual guilt of the transgressor of the law of God, whether heathen or Christian. For, independent of all questions respecting the existence of

sin and God's permission of it—its origin and diffusion, the long-continuance of it, and the wide extent of its prevalence, and of the fact that, reasoning of these and of kindred subjects,

Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate ;  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,  
We find no end, in wandering mazes lost :

independent, we say of all this, heathen, not less than Christian men, in all their sin, *are and do or leave undone* what they *know*, or *ought to know*, they should *not* be and do or leave undone. The men of Sodom *ought not* to have been the wicked men they were. They were wicked not by any *physical necessity*, but solely because they *preferred* and chose to be wicked ; and they did wicked things, because they had pleasure in the doing of them. If it be said they were wicked because their fathers were wicked, and all their surroundings tended to make them wicked, so that they could not but be wicked, we must repel the attempt to excuse them. To allow it were to allow the contradiction that they were *not* wicked in being wicked. We must therefore hold and affirm—what needs no argument to sustain it—that they *ought not* to have been wicked because their fathers were wicked, or because they were tempted by their environment to be wicked. The very fact that presumably they were not all *equally* wicked, as men never are anywhere, is of itself sufficient proof that they were wicked, not because



they could not but be wicked, but because they *chose* to be wicked. It would seem indeed that, though not all equally wicked, all the inhabitants of the city were more or less on the side of wickedness, with the one exception of Lot, who "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds." Certainly there were not *ten* righteous or not wicked, though Abraham began his intercession on behalf of the wicked city with supposing there might be *fifty*. And if fifty, why not five hundred or five thousand? Nay, why not *all* of them? Only because they chose, and that freely, to be wicked.

We need not quote the terrible indictment of the apostle Paul (Rom. i. 21—ii. 11) against the most highly civilized peoples of the ancient heathen world. We know from the history of Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, that his arraignment, which will hardly bear other than silent reading, is strictly true. It is simply necessary to remind those whose objection we are now called to meet, that the apostle, without any hesitation, affirms that those whom he arraigns are *without excuse* for their sin and wickedness. How could they be otherwise than inexcusable when, knowing what was right, they preferred doing the wrong—the very wrong which, the apostle says, they condemned in others? And then, as all know, there were grand and illustrious exceptions—men who abhorred the prevailing wickedness, and who were eminent examples of what others ought to be and to do, but freely chose not to be and to do.

There have been discussions, sometimes very warm, respecting the final destiny of those illustrious men. But that is a matter which we are not called to concern ourselves with. It is enough for us to know that, in relation to them, as to all others, the "Judge of all the earth will do right," and that "he delighteth in mercy," the mercy-seat being His "dwelling place."

We have not been as yet called to be at variance with any one who questioned the justice of God in the destruction of Sodom and its neighbour cities, when, their inhabitants being past reclamation, they were, we may well say, in mercy to others, as well as in righteous judgment, blotted out of existence by fire from heaven. When, three or four centuries later, "the iniquity of the Canaanites was full," their extermination by the sword was committed by Divine injunction to the children of that same Abraham who had pleaded so earnestly against the destruction of "the cities of the plain"; the injunction being accompanied with the solemn warning, again and again repeated, that, if they defiled the land, as the doomed nations had done, with their abominations, it would surely "also spue *them* out, as it spued out the nations that were before them," as its possessors. This injunction is now objected to, as making the Bible an improper book for the instruction of our children attending the schools of the Province. The implication involved in the objection is that such an injunction is not within the Divine

competency, and therefore it cannot be from God. In other words, the objection is an infidel one. But the allegation need excite no surprise. It is only an illustration of the disposition of unbelieving men, in all ages, to find fault with *every* Divine arrangement in relation to *sin*, whether it regards the *punishment* or the *pardon* of it. They will insist that "the ways of God are not equal" or just, both in His punishing and in His pardoning sin. (See Ezek. xviii. and xxxiii.) But it is surely not less within the Divine competency to rid the world of a moral nuisance by the *sword* than by *fire* from heaven. Can the civil ruler, by Divine authority, use the sword to remove an enemy of society; and cannot God Himself employ the same instrument in the extermination of a community which has made itself a nuisance and a curse? Nor can we think of anything so fitted to impress the Israelites with a sense of the awful wickedness of those nations, and to keep them from following their evil example, as their being themselves made, by Divine commission, the instrument of their extermination, with the solemn assurance of their own ruin, in practising the wickedness which they were commissioned to punish by the extermination of a people irreclaimably wicked.

Having already stated the circumstances which led us to think that a somewhat full consideration of the above objection to the use of the Bible will not be regarded as out of place or unnecessary, we shall only add that there are doubtless, besides our local

antagonist, some others, as we know there are, though very few, unless we are greatly mistaken, who have the same views, and whose confident and flippant utterances indicate their persuasion that they could rule more wisely, justly and beneficently than the Christian believer's God—the God of the Bible. If some regard our discussion as out of place or uncalled for, we are not without hope that it may tend to confirm the conviction that the teacher who does not see that the Bible record of the Divine procedure, whether in the Old Testament or in the New, is fitted, as it is designed, to be the most effective deterrent from *errors* and *sins* which are the ruin equally of the individual and of the community, is to be regarded as not qualified to be entrusted with the instruction of the children of a Christian community.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### Instruction in the evidences of Christianity.

THE writer has, from his early years, been so deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of the instruction of the young in the *evidences* of Christianity, that he has never ceased, as he had opportunity, to urge its importance on his brethren in the ministry, and on other Christian instructors. And one of the first, if not properly the first, of his attempts in Christian authorship was made many years ago, under the title of "A Plea for Popular Instruction in the Evidences of Christianity." He cannot doubt that the impression referred to was largely owing to the fact that, when he was one of the older pupils under a teacher who was a model specimen of the Scottish parish school-master, a class was formed for the study of the Evidences, the text-book being Bishop Beilby Porteous' adaptation of Paley's work on the subject, prepared for use in the higher schools of England and elsewhere. That booklet has long been out of use, and though others have since been prepared from time to time in Britain and America for the same purpose, we have not met with

one that is not wanting in the simplicity that is desirable, and in adaptation to the purpose of properly *preoccupying* the minds of our young people, in view of their having soon to confront the objections to Christianity that are involved in the issues raised by infidelity. These issues, while immensely important, are much less numerous and far more simple than is perhaps generally supposed. And as will, we believe, be apparent in the sequel, they involve mainly, if not entirely, assumptions which foreclose the adduction of the proof of the facts of Christianity, and which practically imply the unmaking of history.

In view of the importance of the issues referred to, no one who realizes it can say that our young people should be left to hear, for the first time, from the lips of the infidel the objections involved in them. Surely, instead of first hearing of them from those who would dispossess them of the simple faith of their early years, it were infinitely better that they should hear them from the lips of the intelligent Christian teacher, who will, at the same time, show them how they are to be met. Left, as for the most part they are now, to get their first knowledge of them from those who would lead them astray, they are, some of them, more than likely to think that they have been imposed upon with fables, and to resolve that, being no longer children, they will assert independence of mind by casting away the faith of their childhood. Surely then it is, to say the least, in a high degree

important that the Christian instructor should *anticipate* the efforts of the destroyer, by *underpropping* their early faith, "adding to it knowledge," and so making it an *intelligent* faith. Surely we do our young people a wrong in leaving them defenceless against the assaults of the skeptic. Prevention is infinitely better than cure. There are remarkable instances of recovery from skepticism. But even though there were no more than a very few who are ensnared beyond recovery in the meshes of skepticism, is it not our duty to see to it that, in addition to the training of the conscience and the sympathies of our young people, in connection with Christian truth, appeals should be made to their understanding, when, owing to its rapid development, they are beginning to crave the knowledge of the grounds of their child beliefs? For then is the time when, in relation to the issues referred to, their minds may be so intelligently *pre-possessed* on the side of Christianity that they will not be injuriously affected by the assaults to which many succumb, some falling never to rise again.

It is true, indeed, that the Bible is its own witness, and that by far the most powerful—the irrefragable and irresistible—evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity is what is called the *internal* evidence. But the force of it, in the experience of the individual, depends essentially on his *moral* condition, while the force of the *external* evidence may be apprehended by a man apart from his moral condition, if he is of sound understanding. Reason may compel a man to admit

conclusions which are his condemnation, and which therefore he would gladly reject if he could. It is in reference to the internal evidence that our Lord speaks, when He says that if a man "is willing to do the will of God," he shall know that His teaching is of God, or shall recognize it as the voice of God. And without any disparagement of the external evidence, we cannot but regard it as a conspicuous illustration of the wisdom and goodness of God, that a full conviction of the Divine origin of the teaching of Christ is attainable otherwise than by the careful study of the external evidences. For, in the first place, this way of the attainment of a full conviction is a way that is *open to all*; and, in the second place, the condition of its attainment cannot justly be said to be anything but *reasonable*. For, if there is any one thing which is more than all others binding on a man, it is a willingness to do the will of God. Nothing of all this can be said in relation to the external evidence. However sufficient it may be to produce in an unprejudiced mind a rational conviction that Jesus Christ was a teacher sent from God, its force can be apprehended only by one who has a competent knowledge of history, and is more or less familiar with the principles that determine historical questions.

This is not the place to go into details on the large subject of the Christian evidences. It may be enough to say that the Christian teacher should be qualified to give his pupils such instruction as shall make them understand the subject in both departments referred



to. We cannot think of any branch of Christian instruction that has been hitherto so much neglected, or that is so much called for in these days, when not only every peculiar truth of the Gospel is assailed, and every distinctively Christian duty discredited by plausible reasonings, but the most unwarrantable assumptions are made by the adversaries of Christianity, and by those who, professing a regard for it, would rob it of the supernatural element which makes it stand alone as the religion which is "the power of God unto salvation." That there has been a very serious neglect in this department of Christian instruction cannot, we think, be denied. It may be that instruction in the evidences requires a closer application of mind, on the part both of teacher and of pupil, than the ordinary Christian instruction. That, however, instead of being an objection to it, is a strong argument in its favour, inasmuch as, apart from its intrinsic importance, it could not fail to be a valuable exercise of mind, suitable to the more advanced pupils in the Sabbath and the Public Schools, and to High School pupils. If only comparatively few could be expected to make a thorough study of the subject, it is not only possible but, we think, not at all difficult, to convey to our young people generally of twelve or more years of age such an apprehension of it as would be of great and permanent value to them. It cannot surely be difficult for an intelligent and sympathetic teacher to convey to the minds of pupils of twelve or thirteen years a distinct apprehension, first, of the

way in which the facts of Gospel history are proved in common with other historical facts, and *that* by an amount of evidence far exceeding that which can be adduced in proof of other universally accepted facts of ancient history; and, secondly, of the way in which objections of various kinds, whether inherited from former times, or peculiar to modern times, can be met to the satisfaction of a mind that is not prejudiced by invincible disaffection towards the author of Christianity.

Referring to the issues raised by the current infidelity, to mention only the more important, and to say nothing of objections in detail that have been sufficiently met hundreds of times, and that would have little or no power to unsettle or perplex the mind of one who has, in some good measure, apprehended the force of the Christian evidences, we cannot see why an intelligent teacher who has, by previous training, made himself at home in that department of Christian instruction, should find it at all difficult, or should not find it one of the most genial of all the lessons with which he is charged, to make his pupils see clearly the right and the wrong in connection with those issues. For example, he should not find it difficult to show that, if we can at first glance recognize the authorship of a writing of human composition, it is no more than reasonable that there should be on the part of some, though not of all, a capacity to recognize the voice of God, when He speaks to us, as we believe He does in the Scriptures. We say *some*

and not *all* ; because, as it is some only—those, namely, who are familiar with the style of an author—who can at once recognize it, while others cannot ; so it is *some* only who can recognize the voice of God when He speaks to us by His Son—those, namely, who as Christ says, are “willing to do the will of God.” If a man is, what all men ought to be, “willing to do the will of God,” then, notwithstanding present slender knowledge of it and shortcomings in practice, his willingness, shown in his endeavour to *practise* according to his present light and to *obtain the increase* of light, constitutes the moral condition which is the one essential to his recognition of the voice of God in the teaching of Jesus Christ. And could anything be a more powerful incentive to carefulness in moral practice, on the part of ingenuous youth, on the eve of the development of youthful passions, than the divinely given assurance that such carefulness will be their security against the temptations which they are soon to encounter, and which, if not met by a fixed desire and determination to do the will of God, may lead to the “shipwreck of faith,” and of all the virtues which it sustains—the inevitable issue of not “holding a good conscience,” or, in other words, of not being willing to do the will of God.

Again, referring to the external or historical evidence, and assuming that, in dealing with the supernatural or miraculous attestation of the Divine origin of Christianity, attention should be largely concentrated on our Lord's resurrection, as of itself suffi-

ciently proving the Divine authority of His teaching, it should not be difficult for an intelligent Christian teacher to make it plain to his more advanced pupils, that while our Lord's resurrection is of the essence of the Gospel—so much so that apart from it there is no Gospel and no salvation—it is a fact not only whose acceptance carries with it the acceptance of all that is distinctive in Christianity, but on which the light of historical evidence shines more fully than it does on any other fact, whether ordinary or miraculous, of the Gospel history, or on any fact of the history of ancient times.

Nor can it be difficult to make it plain to the more advanced pupils of ordinary intelligence, whether in the High School or in the Sabbath School, that the famous argument of David Hume, which, strange to say, continues to be implicitly relied upon by almost every assailant of Christianity, is based upon the false assumption—silently, if we dare not say consciously, sophistical—that *all kinds* of testimony are of *equal value*; or, in other words, it attaches to the very highest testimony the suspicion that belongs only to the lowest. No respect is had to the fact that our confidence in the testimony of a man, even should we know nothing else respecting him, is inversely in proportion as we see that his own interests are promoted or imperilled by the testimony which he gives. That is to say, in reference to the testimony of the apostles and the other early martyrs, though their testimony, being not only disinterested,



but given at the peril of every interest of a temporal nature, is the highest kind of testimony possible, it must, according to Hume and those who accept his argument, have laid upon it all the suspicion that attaches to the testimony of witnesses of the most discreditable character. And besides this, Hume is guilty of what is called (no doubt, not consciously) *begging the question*, when he says that a miracle is contrary to *universal* experience, inasmuch as the very question at issue is whether the experience is *universal*, or whether there is not an *exception* to its universality in the experience of the early Christian witnesses, and, we may add, of others—a question that cannot be settled by a sophistical assumption which is a begging of the question, but only by showing that testimony is dead against the alleged facts, which, we hesitate not to say, is simply impossible, except by sapping the foundations of the best accredited facts of history, ancient and modern.\*

Again, it cannot surely be difficult for the trained and skilled teacher to make it plain to the understanding of the boy or the girl of twelve or fourteen years of age, who is not exceptionally destitute of capacity as a learner, that the primitive Christian martyrs are not to be classed with those who, in all ages, have evinced their sincerity by suffering even unto death for their religious *opinions* or beliefs, whether right or wrong; but that they suffered as *witnesses of a fact* respecting which, according to

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\* See Note A on Hume's Argument, in Appendix.

their own showing, they could not have been mistaken.\*

Nor, again, can it be difficult to show to the ordinary understanding of our elder scholars, the unreasonableness of the universally current assumption of modern infidelity, that any reported fact of a miraculous nature, such as the resurrection of our Lord, is to be discredited and set aside, *without any consideration* either of the evidence that can be adduced in proof of it, or of the possible end which it may conceivably be designed to subserve. Surely it requires no pains to convince the mind of ingenuous and unprejudiced youth, that such an assumption involves nothing less than that of man's competency to sit in judgment upon God, and to determine the procedure proper for Him in all possible circumstances; whereas, repudiating an assumption full of horror to a reverent mind, the Christian apologist's assumption is simply that of our competency to judge of our own human nature, by the knowledge we have of it from actual experience and observation—a knowledge which, including, as it does, a knowledge of the laws which regulate human action, fully warrants the affirmation

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\* This distinction, important as it is, and, one would think, sufficiently obvious, is persistently and, we may say, sometimes very eloquently disregarded. It is easy to bury it under a heap of eloquent verbiage, as is done in a book, published some years ago, under the title of "Supernatural Religion," whose author was surely not conscious of the distinction; because to charge him with *willingly ignoring* it were to make against him the most serious of all charges.

that the falsehood of certain kinds of testimony, or of testimony given in certain circumstances, is infinitely more incredible than the event in whose favour it is given is extraordinary and improbable.

Only once more. It cannot surely be difficult to make it plain to the ordinary understanding, at the period of its most rapid development, that it is unreasonable to expect, as the current infidelity insists, that God's revelations of himself should be accompanied with and attested by such an amount of evidence as shall carry conviction to the minds of all men *indiscriminately*, however their minds may be affected towards Him ; or, in other words, such an amount of evidence that it shall be *impossible for any man not to believe*, even as it is impossible not to believe that the sun is shining in the cloudless sky at high noon. Whatever may be the literary name of some who so insist, assuming, as they do, that their confident assertions have all the weight of the mathematical or ethical axiom, and are as little in need of proof, we cannot hesitate to charge with boundless and inexcusable self-sufficiency the man who is so foolish as to say, as one does, "There *ought not* to be the *least shadow of a doubt* whether a given book is from God or not" ; or, as another says, "If the handwriting of Jehovah in the Scriptures is *doubtful*"—that is, to *any* one—"it cannot be Divine." Let it be that men and women who are in high reputation as literary geniuses, such as Frederick Harrison and George Eliot, professing sympathy with Christianity,

make themselves responsible for utterances which are the *acme* of presumption and absurdity, we cannot but accept as final the word of Him who has declared that our acceptance or refusal of Him as the Teacher whose word is the voice of the living God, hinges on our willingness or unwillingness to do the will of God. It may be asked how we can presume to call in question the willingness to do the will of God of those who are models of virtue, though they cannot see the sufficiency of the evidence of the claims of Jesus Christ. Our answer is that it is not by gross immorality alone that men's unwillingness to do the will of God manifests itself. Men, if they only knew themselves, would be self-convicted of their unwillingness to do the will of God, and would see that this unwillingness, and not insufficient evidence, is the root cause of their infidelity in relation to Jesus of Nazareth. If we would find the fullest development of our native unwillingness to do the will of God, we shall find it, plain as the sun at noon, in our instinctive desire and determination to be, each of us, his own god. The presumption of prescribing to God His duty, implied in the quotations we have given, is of itself evidence sufficient of conscious supremacy, inconsistent with submission to the will of God.

It is not necessary to go further into a subject so painful. Only let us close it by saying that, to a man who is not altogether ignorant of his own depravity and nothingness, no presumption can exceed that of the man who, by committing himself to such



assertions as those which have been quoted, does no less than commit himself to the baseless and wild assumption, which he mistakes for an axiom, that the attainment of full satisfaction of mind in relation to divinely revealed truth cannot, in any way or in any degree, depend on man's *moral condition*; whereas, on the contrary, any mind not hopelessly blinded by invincible ignorance or prejudice cannot, we think, but clearly see that most important purposes may be designed, and actually are, as we see, subserved by God's giving us *just so much light* as He does give, *and no more*. To say, as the objector does in effect say, that God, if He speaks to men, *ought* to speak to them in such a way that their *moral condition*, or the way in which their minds are affected towards Him, shall *count for nothing* in their forming of a judgment respecting a professing revelation from Him, is to us the greatest of all possible human follies.

Having stated the leading general issues between the Christian apologist and the present-day skeptics, we surely cannot be charged with asking too much when, in the interest of the rising generation, we ask at least that the Christian principal of a High or Public School of this Christian Province, should be able to present those issues to the understanding of his pupils so clearly that their minds shall be intelligently prepossessed, as, of course, their parents properly wish them to be, on the side of Christianity, and that thus they may be proof against the assaults to which they might otherwise succumb, and be also

helpful to others. For ourselves, we cannot conceive that there could have been such a prevalence of skepticism as characterizes the present time, had there not been a long-continued neglect of the instruction which we are now urging the general introduction of, in the interest of those of our young people who are sufficiently advanced to take it in. An incalculable amount of good could not fail to be the result of such instruction. Were the minds of our young people generally, before leaving the school, made more or less familiar with the Evidences of Christianity, in their principles and outlines, and in moderate illustration in detail, they would, we cannot doubt, be so impressed with the force of them that objections which are the stock of infidelity, and are daily reiterated, notwithstanding frequent refutation, would have little power to perplex and unsettle them. Those objections, of whatever kind—moral, historical or scientific—will appear to them of little or no weight, compared with the strength of the evidence. And they will see that many of them are groundless, or founded on misapprehension, while others can be so explained as to fortify the Christian position. Even the great objection in which the unbelieving mind has revelled in later times—the objection drawn from speculations in cosmogony—can be so handled as to strengthen the proof of the inspiration of the Mosaic record.\*

But to conclude. While we cannot but see that

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\* See Appendix, Note B,

the evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity is not *indiscriminately* demonstrative, like a proposition in geometry, as some of our very wise men insist that it *ought* to be, before it can be considered sufficient, we hold that the wisdom of those wise men is *foolishness*, and that the *wisdom* of God is conspicuously manifest in His determination *not* to give either to them, or to any others, such evidence as shall *compel* all men to believe, whatever may be the state of their hearts towards Him, or whether they are willing or unwilling to do His will. If, as it is said, with an unfathomable depth of significance, the God who so graciously reveals himself to us in His wondrous Son, "is a God *who hideth himself*," no one should be so foolish as to complain of His doing so, inasmuch as He cannot be supposed to do so without a great and good design. He assures us in every page of Scripture that He is to be *found* of them that *seek* Him, and is to be known to the joy of all who seek to know Him. Can any one who would justify his claim to reason ask for more? Can a man justify himself at the bar of reason who will insist that, in the matter of finding and knowing God, He *ought* to make no difference between the man who is anxious to know Him and find Him, and the man who is utterly careless and will be at no pains to find Him? And may we not repeat that, according to all experience, to the man who makes God his supreme quest, the proof of the Divinity of Christ's teaching will appear to possess such a strength

that it cannot be set aside without discrediting all history, and compelling the withdrawal of all confidence in every universally trusted record of ancient times, none of which has come down to us with a hundredth part of the evidence we have for the purity, genuineness and authenticity of some of the New Testament records, if not of all of them? And again we repeat, let it not be said that our young people in the High School or in the Bible-class are not capable of a conviction, rational as strong, that shall be proof against the objections of skeptics. Without referring again to his experience as a pupil, when over sixty years ago his school-master formed a class for the study of the Evidences, the writer may state that he has had no small degree of satisfaction in handling the subject in his Bible-class, some of its members showing a remarkable aptitude of apprehension, even in connection with the study of such a book as that of Isaac Taylor on "The Transmission of Ancient Books."\*

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\* The reference is to a later edition in which the two works, "The Process of Historical Proof," and "The Transmission of Ancient Books," are combined.



## NOTES AND ADDENDUM.

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*Note A, page 219.*

HUME'S "Argument on Miracles" is to the effect that, while it is contrary to universal and uniform experience that a miracle should occur, it is quite in accordance with experience that testimony (on which alone we must depend for proof of any alleged miraculous fact) should be false; and that, therefore, no testimony can have such force as to prove the occurrence of a miracle. Hume admits that "there may possibly be miracles or violations of the usual course of nature of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony," and supposes an instance, while he thinks no such instance can be found in the records of history. But he contends that his argument applies with full force against a miracle in connection with any system of religion. In any such case, he says, a reported miracle is not only to be rejected, but to be rejected "without examination" of any testimony by which it may be supported.

However plausible this argument may appear, it would be difficult to find in any writer of name so large an amount of fallacy compressed into so small a space.

It is to be noted in general: 1. That, if the argument is sound, it must apply *universally*, and not be limited to miracles in connection with religion. If any discrimination is to be made, it must be not *against*, but *in favour of*, a miracle that *may be* designed to authenticate a divine revelation;

because such a design constitutes a *reason* for the miracle. 2. The argument is not against the *possibility* of a miracle, but against its *credibility*; it does not say (as who can say?) that a miracle is *impossible*, but that even if a miracle did occur, its occurrence is *beyond the possibility of being proved*. The unreasonableness of this position is exhibited in his own clear and vigorous style, by Hugh Miller, the eminent Scottish geologist of the century now closed, in a chapter on the *Bearing of the Experience Argument*, in "Footprints of the Creator."

But, apart from the above general considerations, it is to be noted, in particular, that the argument involves *two fallacies*, technically called: 1. *Petitio principii*, or *Begging of the question*; 2. *Sophisma a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, or reasoning as if what is true only in *particular circumstances* were true *universally*. The *former* fallacy is evident, without using a syllogistic form, if it be considered that the *universality* of experience which is affirmed is in reality the question at issue; that question being, whether there is not in the experience of certain persons, *i.e.*, the early Christian witnesses, an *exception* to the *general* experience. To say, as Hume does, that the experience is *uniform* and *universal* is the same thing as to say there is *no exception* to it; or, in other words, it *assumes* what has to be *proved*.

The *second* fallacy, which is the one first referred to in the text, is apparent, if it be considered that, while it accords with experience that human testimony may be false, *every kind* of testimony is not *equally liable* to suspicion. Whatever suspicion may attach to testimony given in certain circumstances, there are other circumstances in which testimony may be given that place it above all suspicion. We may suspect the testimony that a man gives, when his giving it is seen to lie in the line of his own interests, but we attach weight to his testimony given in a matter in which his own interests are not concerned. And we are warranted, from what we know of human nature, to hold that the falsehood of testimony given by men, with no

prospect but that of evil in relation to the most valued of temporal interests, is simply incredible. We may safely say of it, as we cannot say of a miracle in the ordinary sense of the term, that it is contrary to uniform and universal experience. In the testimony of the early Christian witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, we have testimony of the *highest kind possible*; and to throw upon it the suspicion that attaches to the most untrustworthy class of witnesses, as Hume does, is an instance of sophistry of the highest order.

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*Note B, page 224.*

That the assertion of the text is not lightly made will be, we think, sufficiently manifest from the following extracts, the one from a believer in the divine origin of the Mosaic record, and the other from one who rejects divine revelation. Professor James D. Dana, in the article on Cosmogony, in his "Manual of Geology," in which he shows the correspondence between the order of events in the Mosaic cosmogony and that inferred from the combined study of geology and astronomy, sees in this correspondence a proof of the divine origin of the Mosaic record. "*This document,*" he says, "*if true, is of divine origin.* For no human mind was witness of the events; and no such mind in the early age of the world, unless gifted with superhuman intelligence, could have contrived such a scheme—would have placed the creation of the sun, the source of light to the earth, so long after the creation of light, even on the *fourth* day, and, what is equally singular, *between* the creation of plants and that of animals, when so important to both; and none could have reached to the depths of philosophy exhibited in the whole plan. Again, *if divine, the account must bear the marks of human imperfection, since it was communicated through man.* Ideas suggested to a human

mind by the Deity would take shape according to its range of knowledge, modes of thought, and use of language, unless it were, at the same time, "supernaturally gifted with the profound knowledge and wisdom adequate to their conception; and even then they could not be intelligibly expressed, for want of words to represent them." After showing the correspondence between the Mosaic order and that deduced from science, Professor Dana concludes: "The record in the Bible is therefore profoundly philosophical in the scheme of creation which it presents. It is both true and divine. It is a declaration of authorship, both of creation and of the Bible, on the first page of the sacred volume."—"Manual of Geology," pp. 845 *et seq.*

The other extract is from Professor Haeckel's "History of Creation." "The Mosaic history of creation," he says, "has enjoyed, down to the present day, general recognition in the whole Jewish and Christian world of civilization. Its extraordinary success is explained, not only by its close connection with Jewish and Christian doctrines, but also by the simple and natural chain of ideas which runs through it, and which contrasts favourably with the confused mythology of creation current among most of the other ancient nations. First, the Lord God creates the earth as an inorganic body; then He separates light from darkness, then water from dry land. Now the earth has become inhabitable for organisms, and plants are first created; animals later, and among the latter the inhabitants of the water and the air first, afterwards the inhabitants of the dry land. Finally, God creates man, the last of all organisms, in His own image, and as the ruler of the earth.

"Two great and fundamental ideas, common also to the non-miraculous theory of developement, meet us in this hypothesis of creation, with surprising clearness and simplicity—the idea of *differentiation*, and the idea of progressive development or *perfecting*. Although Moses looks upon the results of the great laws of organic development as the *direct* action of a constructing Creator, yet in his theory there lies hidden the ruling idea of



a progressive development and a differentiation of the originally simple matter. We can therefore bestow our just and sincere admiration on the Jewish lawgiver's grand insight into nature, and his simple and natural hypothesis of creation," but the Professor adds, "without discovering in it a so-called divine revelation."—"History of Creation," pp. 37, 38.

Haeckel's not "discovering a divine revelation" where Dana and others see it, is owing, of course, to the fact that his mind is previously made up that there can be no such thing as divine revelation, and that his "scientific materialism," to use his own words, "positively rejects every belief in the miraculous, and every conception, in whatsoever form it appears, of supernatural processes." His first objection against the reception of the Mosaic record as a divine revelation, viz., that it *asserts* (so he says) that the earth is "the fixed central point of the whole universe," one would have thought too stale for repetition in our time. The second objection, that *man* is represented as the premeditated aim of the creation of the earth, might be expected from one who *scorns final causes, and excludes all purpose* from the order of things.

## ADDENDUM ON THE MEMORIZING OF SCRIPTURE BY THE YOUNG.\*

ITS IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGES WITH SUGGESTIONS AS TO ITS  
EXTENT AND THE DUTY OF PARENTS.

THE subject has been chosen under the persuasion that its importance is, at the present time, far from being duly realized. Indeed, we cannot but think that it is greatly underestimated. The subject is, "The Memorizing of Scripture," or the storing of the mind with Scripture truth in the very words of Scripture, or in words which, though not the actual words of Inspiration, are the nearest equivalent to them that is available to those who are not adepts in the original languages in which the Scriptures were written.

No one who believes that the Scriptures are the writings of men who "wrote for our learning, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," can consistently question the importance of our having saving truth lodged in our minds and treasured in our hearts, in the very terms in which God has communicated it. We should, of course, be careful in relation both to ourselves and to those whom we instruct, that the words are understood, for otherwise, our Lord tells us (Matt. xiii. 19), being in the memory only, they penetrate not beyond the surface of the mind, and, so far from being fruitful in any good, cannot even germinate in the soul. While we cannot expect that our scholars should be able to fathom the depth and appreciate the richness of teachings, whose depth and richness only time and experience can evolve or reveal, great care should be taken that the memorizing of Scripture should, in no case, be only a learning by rote. So far as he is capable, even the youngest child

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should commit Scripture to memory as an exercise of intelligence ; it being understood, at the same time, that the memorizing of Scripture by the young is chiefly the laying up of material for future use. For the great benefit of the memorizing of Scripture, on the part of our children, does not accrue to them in immediate connection with the exercise, as the benefit of preaching does to the hearer, but is subsequent, often remotely subsequent, to it. But when the benefit does accrue, as it does so often, and sometimes when all hope of it has died away, it is unspeakably great, as it is permanent.

Our young people themselves cannot be expected to appreciate the good they are treasuring up for themselves, in committing portions of Scripture to memory. The value of the acquisition that is made by a young person whose mind has become largely stored with Scripture, can perhaps be fully appreciated only by those who have occasion to deal with persons of mature years, and especially with aged people, in relation to their spiritual interests. Every one who is called to deal with those whom accident or sickness has awakened to concern about the future, knows the difference between ministering, in such cases, to those whose minds are stored with Scripture truth, and ministering to those who have grown up in ignorance of it. In the one case, it is a comparatively easy thing to minister with good success—to bring light and peace to the sufferer, the light and peace of intelligent trust and enlightened penitence ; whereas, in the other case, it is often next to impossible to impart, to the mind of the suffering or dying man, a right conception of his moral relation to God, and of the way of salvation. It seems as if the constitutional legalism of the mind has become so inveterate, that the soul is inaccessible to any religious idea beyond regret for the past, and purpose to do better, should life be prolonged.

In view of what may be before our young people, in the providence of God, we cannot, when labouring to store their minds with Scripture, calculate what good we are doing, in

making provision for their salvation, edification and comfort, in the time of their extremity, when they are in deep distress, or when they are dying. And although, as we have said, they cannot be themselves expected to appreciate the benefit, it is possible to impress them, to some extent, with a sense of the importance of the exercise; and, knowing ourselves its importance, we do well to persevere patiently in using all the influence we have with them, and all the power we have over them, to keep them from becoming remiss in the practice of memorizing God's Word. For it is important to remember that it is necessary, in the interest of our children, both that they should learn much beyond what they see or are capable of seeing the value of, and that they should commit to memory much beyond what they can understand. They will be grateful to us afterwards that we insisted both on their learning many things which, left to themselves, they would not have learned, and on their committing to memory, much that they can grow in the understanding of only as their minds mature. Were we to be guided by their appreciation in the one case, or by their capacity of understanding in the other, we would lose the very best opportunity of storing their minds with the knowledge that is of the most importance to them, in connection with both their temporal and their spiritual interests. The Sabbath School age is the time when the mind is most susceptible of the information and impression that are to be its permanent possession, and the time to preoccupy the mind with good, which, being its first possession, is most sure to be its last. The Scripture knowledge early imparted will be the mind's permanent possession. It will be the last to be forgotten, when the memory of other things has passed away, and even when the mind has become, it may be, an utter wreck, the words of God will be remembered. And in the numerous cases in which early Christian instruction is, at the time, instrumental in no saving good, the mind's possession of Scripture knowledge is an enduring ground of the hope of a time when it will be the means of a saving change.



Numerous instances show that we should never despair in relation to the conversion of those, in whose minds the good seed of the Kingdom has been early sown ; while, on the contrary, as already indicated, there is comparatively little ground of hope, in relation to those who have grown up or become old, ignorant of the elements of saving truth.

As to the extent to which the memorizing of Scripture is desirable or attainable, no rule universally applicable can be laid down. Some have much better memories than others. Some minds receive more readily and are less retentive. Some take in more slowly but are more retentive. Others there are who have a memory that is at once quick and retentive. We have all heard, if we have not known, of persons whose power of memory was phenomenal. There have been those who could repeat almost the whole of the Bible. No approach to anything like this is either needful or desirable. There are large portions of the Bible, in relation to which it is enough that we can readily find what we want by turning to the place where it is to be found. It is not of importance that we should be able to state the facts of Scripture history in the precise language in which they are recorded, or that we should commit to memory the historical books of Scripture. It is enough that we can state the facts correctly without addition or omission. There are, indeed, verses occurring everywhere, even in what may be regarded as the least interesting portions of Scripture—for example, in the genealogies—that are worthy of being memorized, as being full of comfort or wise counsel. That one should be able to use his Bible without being under the necessity of referring to a concordance, is an attainment that every minister may be expected to have made comparatively early. And let me here add, in reference to the use of Scripture by ministers, that they should be so familiar with Scripture, that, when professedly appealing to it, or using its language, they should quote it correctly. And especially may ministers be expected to avoid certain erroneous forms of Scripture quotation that one some-

times hears ; as, for example, "He who runs may read," instead of, "He may run that readeth it," a substitution which, though two distinguished College Principals are responsible for it, is a mere jingle of words without any meaning ; and, referring to a recent International Sunday School Lesson, the prayer that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the channel of the great deep," an alteration which it is not easy to account for.

While it is to be expected of some that they should have an acquaintance with Scripture beyond others, and much beyond the ordinary attainments of Christians in Scripture knowledge, the proportion of Scripture which it is desirable, as being of importance, that Christians generally should have in their minds, ready for immediate use or service, in all the emergencies of the Christian warfare, as well as for guidance in the daily duties of the Christian walk, is comparatively small—so small that, if the selections be made judiciously, and the practice of memorizing be begun in early life and kept up for a few years, the result will be such a familiarity with the Scripture grounds of every important Christian doctrine as constitutes a man "mighty in the Scriptures." We can give only a general outline of what may be regarded as a proper selection, indicating the leading principle that should guide in determining our selection of the portion of Scripture which, it is desirable and important, should, as the result of the practice of memorizing, be a part of the mental furniture of every Christian.

I think all will be agreed that, though, for the most part, it may be enough that we are so acquainted with Scripture as not to err ourselves in presenting its teachings to others, by using words that do not convey its true meaning, and to see when others err in using words that do not express the real teaching of Scripture, it is of no little importance that we should be able to give the very words of Scripture in its statements respecting such subjects as the Being and the Perfections of God, the Person and the Work of Christ as our Redeemer, the agency

of the Spirit in our regeneration, and the way of our acceptance with God and of our access to Him, and our walking with Him and following Him—all things, in short, for the knowledge of which we are entirely indebted to His revelation of them. Every one, we think, will at once see the ground and propriety of the distinction here implied, and will readily concur in the assertion that, in all matters of pure revelation, it is of importance that we should be familiar with the very words which the wisdom of God has employed in revealing them. Whereas, on the other hand, where Scripture deals with matters pertaining to the affairs of this life, our own understanding may be regarded as competent to their faithful expression in other than the very words of Scripture. I need hardly say that in specifying the subjects, in relation to which it is important that we should be familiar with the very words of Scripture, I include all that God calls us to under the Gospel of His grace, all the promises and invitations He addresses to us, His counsel and words of warning, including the solemn threatenings of His Word.

It will be seen that the amount of Scripture we would urge the memorizing of not only goes far beyond what most are satisfied with, but is such as, with practice, would suffice to make a genuine Christian believer “skilful in the word of righteousness.” Most, perhaps, seem to be satisfied to be able to repeat the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer, the latter, by the way, being generally repeated incorrectly, *i. e.*, in a form found nowhere in Scripture. The years of childhood and early youth, say from seven to sixteen, would, at the rate of six verses a week, far more than suffice for the committing to memory of all the recorded direct utterances of God, the personal teachings of Christ, including all His parables and discourses; the promises and predictions of the Old Testament that have direct reference to the coming and the ministry of Christ, and to His work as our Redeemer and its fruits—“His sufferings and the glory following”; many of

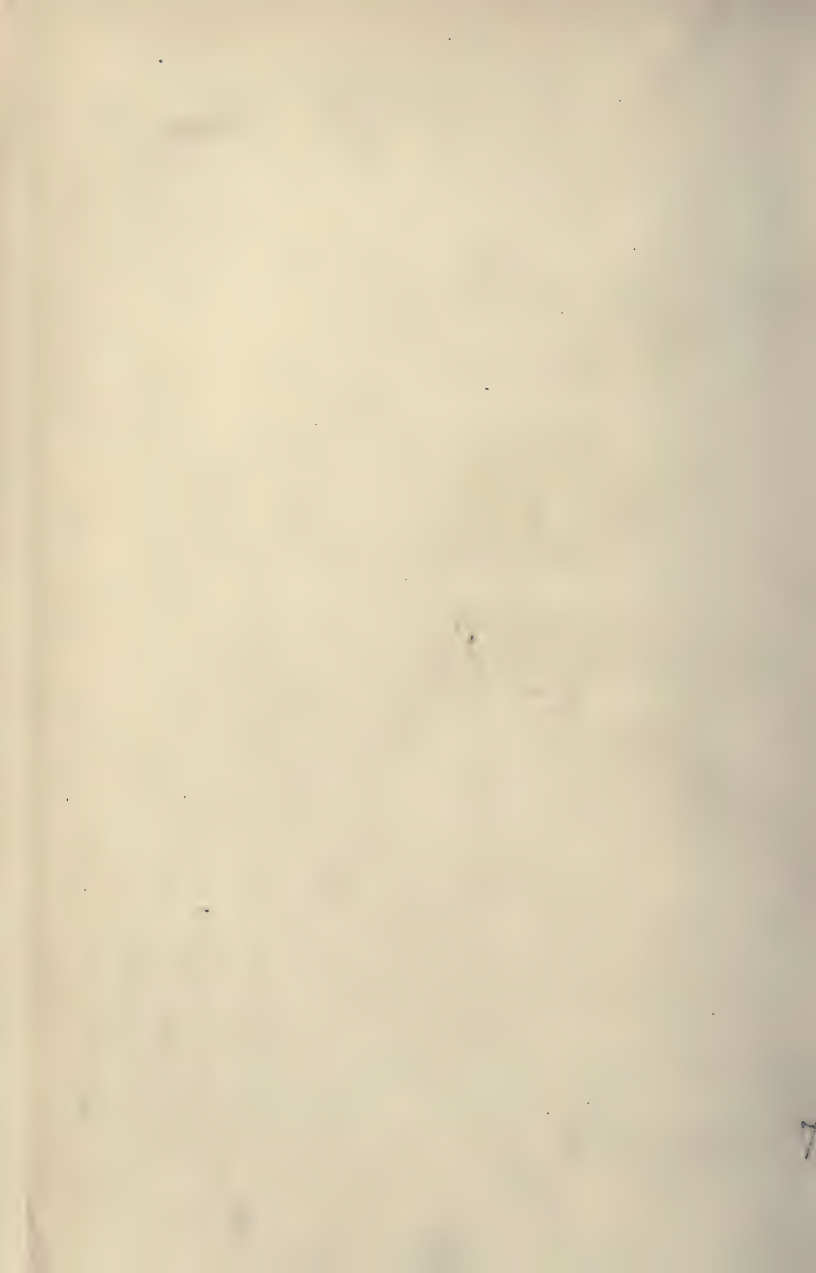
the Psalms ; a large proportion of the Proverbs ; and portions of the prophetic books, and of the Epistles. One thing, however, is very evident—that, until professing Christian parents are, much more generally than they are now, alive to their responsibility in relation to the religious training of their children we cannot expect that more than a very small proportion of our children shall make any but the poorest measure of attainment in familiarity with Scripture and in ability to quote it aptly and correctly. The amount of Scripture knowledge that results from one lesson in the week, cannot, except in rare cases, be anything but very inadequate to the needs of the Christian life in these days. Owing mainly, no doubt, to parental neglect in the matter of Christian instruction, probably few of our young people grow up to years of maturity without being open to the reproach : “When for the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” Most of them are so “unskilful in the word of righteousness,” as to be little able to hold their ground when exposed to the assaults of the errorist. But could the homes of Christian parents be made, to any great extent, places of Christian training, we might expect a goodly proportion of the rising generation to grow up familiar with Scripture—not babes in knowledge, or “children carried about by every wind of teaching,” but “men in understanding,” “holding fast the faithful word,” and “able to convince the gainsayers.” Were Christian fathers generally, realizing their duty and privilege as heads of Christian homes, to gather in their children nightly at a seasonable hour, and to spend a short time, before retiring to rest, in hearing them read a portion of Scripture, and in assisting them in the intelligent memorizing of a verse or two, our land would become a very garden of the Lord—a land not only full of the knowledge of the Lord, but rejoicing in the abundance of its fruits of righteousness and peace. Surely no observant and thoughtful person can but say that there is an urgent call

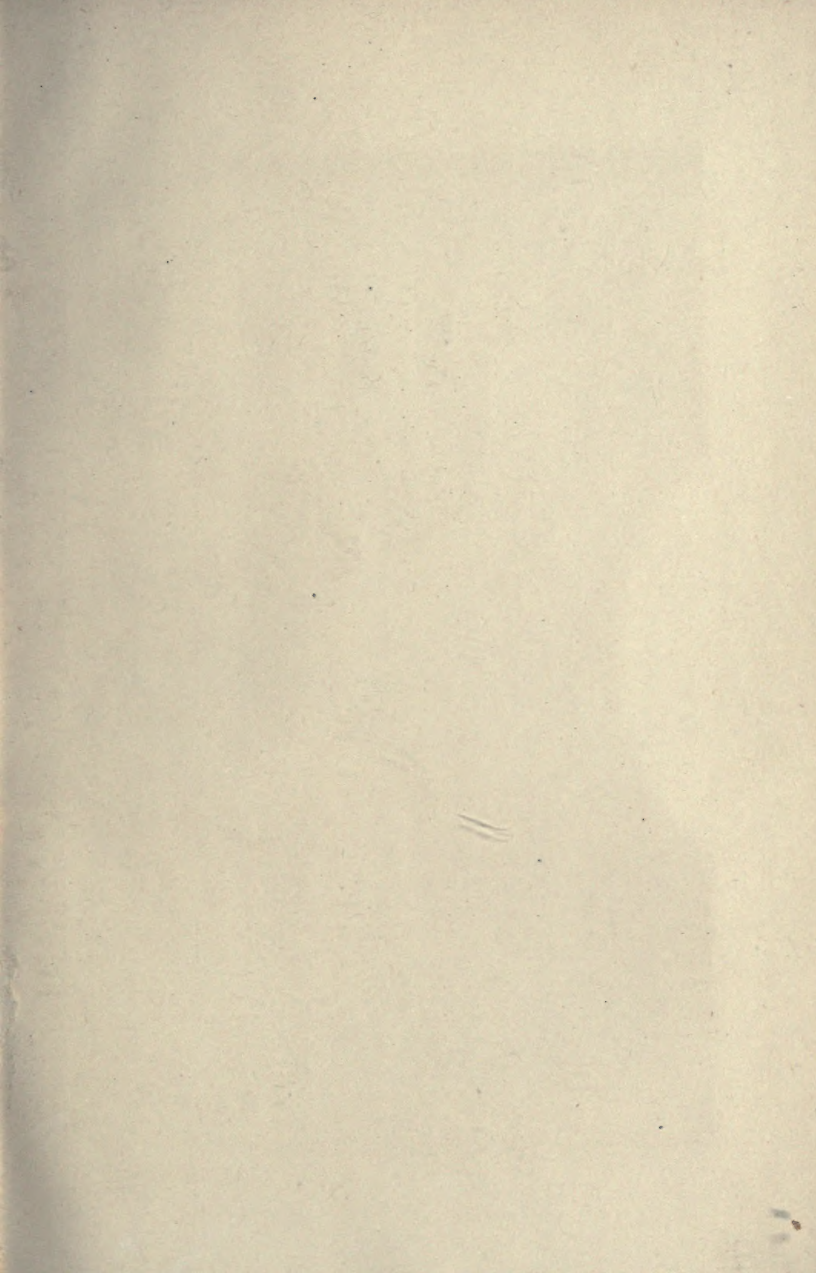


to heads of families to set themselves against the almost nightly absence from home till a late hour, of fathers, and one or more of the young people, which is so common, that their homes are, to many fathers and children, hardly anything more than their boarding and lodging houses. The absence may not be occasioned by the love of amusement of a harmful or frivolous character, as it is in too many cases. But no matter. While we cannot withhold our sympathy from efforts made to give to the young such occupations, during the hours of evening, as will lessen the temptation to spend them in sinful or demoralizing practices, no evening occupation, however unexceptionable in character, or however rational and improving, should be allowed to take the place of the regular gathering together of the members of a family, to close the day with the household acknowledgment of God, including the Christian instruction of its young members.

NOTE.—The proportion of Scripture memorized at the rate of six verses a week, from the age of seven to sixteen: The number of verses in the whole Bible being 31,173, of which 23,214 are in the Old Testament and 7,959 in the New, if six verses are memorized every week, from the age of seven to that of sixteen, the proportion of the number memorized, 2,708 verses, to the whole number in the Bible will be as 1 to 11.84 or about 8½ per cent. If we suppose that of the six verses memorized weekly, three are from the Old Testament and three from the New, the proportion of the Old Testament memorized will be as 1 to 17.14 or a little under 6 per cent., and of the New, as 1 to 5.87 or 17 per cent.

Will not the parents of the Church lay it upon themselves to co-operate with the Sunday School teachers, to secure that their children shall, in connection with the International Lesson, make the attainment above indicated? Moderate as such an attainment is, who can estimate the value of it, or the good that would accrue both to parents and to children in the making of it in the way suggested? Do not Christian parents forget that they are laying up matter of sorrowful reflection for the dying hour, when they neglect the Christian duty of caring for the religious instruction of their children?









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Author Middlemiss, James

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