

authentic details regarding the life of Homer, and that there has been much controversy as to the date at which the poems which pass under his name were composed, and as to whether they were the work of one author or of many;" and he asks, "Why should similar information be kept back in the case of the Bible?" There is no reason in the world why it should be kept back—no reason why an intelligent child should not be told that there is uncertainty as to the authorship of some of the books of the Bible, and different opinions as to the dates at which some of them were composed. No doubt some good men are possessed by "the spirit of fear," and would like to have silence preserved concerning the results of criticism; but this timidity, though springing from a good motive, is not the right spirit on the part of those who are "of the truth." We need have no fear as to all the facts that have been ascertained about the Bible being made known. It does not follow, of course, that we are to trouble the minds of children about the unverified theories and speculations of clever men, or about unconfirmed suspicions or assertions of inaccuracy on the part of Biblical writers as to matters of science or history. Moreover, the main business of the teacher will not be to discuss questions of criticism, but to emphasize the moral and religious lessons which the Bible contains.

But, says Mr. Le Sueur, "people who read the Bible continually, under a strong prepossession as to its Divine character, have little idea . . . how repugnant much of it is to the instinctive morality of children." Doubtless; but how has the morality which Mr. L. calls "instinctive" been developed in children? By the Bible, and especially by the Christ of the Bible, and by the influence and example of fathers and mothers who

have learned of the Christ. Surely it is fair to ask intelligent men, whether Christians or not, to take the Bible for what it is—a library rather than a book—a collection of the records of a nation, setting forth the story of God's guidance and of God's forbearance, in letting the light of His truth shine into men's hearts as they were able to bear it, and so leading them from one stage of moral development to another. It is nothing new to Christians that not all parts of the Bible are of equal moral and spiritual value; it is from the Christ of the Bible they learn that many things were suffered at the earlier stages of moral training on account of the hardness of men's hearts. Nor is it hard to make all this plain to an intelligent child.

To the third question, viz.: "Under what conditions or restrictions should the Bible be used in the Public Schools?" various replies are given. It is well to recognize that there is room for diversity of opinion. The question falls into several parts, such as: By whom shall instruction in Bible truth be given? What portions of the Bible shall be taught—the historical, or the devotional, or the ethical? or shall there be no restriction? At what hour shall religious instruction be given?

In my judgment, religious instruction in the Public Schools should, as a rule, be given *by the teachers*. I say "as a rule," because there are exceptional cases that may need to be provided for otherwise. I am aware that ministers of the gospel in Ontario have the privilege of giving instruction, under certain conditions, to the children belonging to their respective churches, and that they have been blamed for not using this privilege as they might have done. I believe the plan to be, in the great majority of cases, an impracticable one. If it were practicable, I should regard it as a misfortune to have the children reminded