

sons who think the day schools, like the farm fields, is the place for secular work, the religious exercises of the workers being performed in the one case as in the other in the home habitation, and not in the field of labour. But as Christian principles and morals are the foundation of all that is most noble in man, as well as most prosperous in a country, it is gratifying to see the public schools avowedly impregnated with these to so great an extent, thus tending to build up a comprehensive system of Christian education."

The case being so, how are we to realize this the highest function of our life work? I know of no way, and the world has not yet discovered, nor is it likely to discover, any other way but by Scripture reading and teaching of Bible precept. You will not misunderstand me, I do not ascribe any talismanic power *per se* to the reading of the Scriptures. I do recognize in the Bible a Divine gift to man for his safe guidance in this world of disappointments and triumphs. By religious and moral education I understand, not merely a set of Bible or religious lessons, or the regular and constant repetition in season and out of season of pious phrases, but the hourly training which is carried on in every lesson of the day. It should control every act. It is the constant, though often the inexpressed and scarcely conscious, reference of the conduct to the highest motives that the scholar may become self-reliant, and may be fitted to guide himself aright amidst the dangers and temptations which hourly beset his path of life. It is, in short, the preparation for the performance of the duties of this life in the light of the life hereafter. Nevertheless, though this is the case, I hold Bible reading, in our Public Schools, to be of prime importance, not for the teaching of doctrine, but for the teaching and emphasizing reverently of the great truths of our common Christi-

anity. In the achieving of this glorious purpose, I do not believe any serious obstacle would be encountered from any enlightened and truly patriotic citizen. What is required is just to do it.

In the city of London, England, this is carried out most successfully. I cite the example of the city of London, not because it is done better there than in other parts of Great Britain, but because the school population is nearly the same as in the Province of Ontario, and because what is done there seems to me quite practicable in Canada, at least in Ontario. Prizes are given annually to the scholars attending the London Board Schools, through the liberality of Mr. Peek, and also through that of the Religious Tract Society. For these prizes all the pupils, who are willing, are examined each year on portions of Scripture selected the previous year. For the year 1882 the number of school children whose names appeared on the school roll for the city of London, at the date of the last examination for Scripture prizes, was 203,001. Of this number 158,134 were examined in the selected portions of Scripture for that year. "When it is borne in mind," says the Chairman of the School Board, "that all the infants, except one standard, are excluded, it will be seen that practically all the children in attendance were examined." Why should we not have a similar record for our Province? I take it, ladies and gentlemen, that this question of Scripture knowledge, moral and religious education, is the vital question for Ontario, yea, for the whole Dominion, in this and all succeeding generations.

"Who loves and lifts his fellowman,
He is the saint;
He walks with God who works for man;
Who in restraint
Holds passions close, and folly scorns,
His nights are clean and sweet his morns;
God his pure brow with peace adorns,
And crowns the saint."