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## THE CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL.

An Educational Journal devoted to the Literature, Science, Art, and the advancement of teaching profession in Canada.

### —TERMS.—

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CANADA SCHOOL JOURNAL PUB. CO. (Limited)

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The Public School Board of Toronto have resolved to throw out of the schools the book of Scripture readings and restore the Bible in its entirety. This action has, naturally enough, provoked a good deal of discussion. Every friend of education and of religion must regret to see that the motives of the Board are impugned. Whether there be any ground for the imputation of political and partizan spite, the fact that such charges may be made with more or less of plausibility is, in itself, a condemnation of the system under which the Educational Bureau is made a political Department. The introduction of partizan feelings and methods into the management of the schools, and above all, into the discussion of such sacred questions as those pertaining to the use of the Scriptures, can not but be demoralizing and deplorable.

Apart, altogether, from any such secondary motives, the action of the Board cannot be regarded as extraordinary. The Minister of Education must have been singularly ill-advised when he undertook to have a book of extracts from the Sacred Scriptures prepared under his own direction, and prescribed its use by his own authority. The people do well to be jealous of the integrity of the book which is the palladium of their Christian civilization, and the repository of their most precious

hopes. The fact that the selections themselves were made under the supervision of a body of clergymen of different denominations does not really help in the matter, especially since this committee received their mandate from the Minister of Education, and were, in no proper sense, acting as representatives of the religious bodies to which they respectively belong. Even were it otherwise, the people of the churches would be slow in arrogating to themselves the power to appoint agents for such a purpose. Had the Department contented itself with asking the representative bodies of the various religious societies to appoint a joint committee to prepare a course, or courses of Scripture readings; and had the Department contented itself with giving a list of these selections to the teachers and recommending their use, the lessons being still read from the Bible itself, with chapter and verse indicated, some of the chief grounds of objection would have been avoided.

As the thing was done, Mr. Ross made the same mistake which is running through, and we might add, ruining his record as Minister of Education, in assuming that, either his high position, or his pre-eminent abilities, give him the insight necessary to enable him to choose the right man to prepare the most difficult text books. By way of emphasizing this high claim he very often chooses untried men. The whole business is preposterous and will sooner or later cover his career with ridicule, if it has not done so already. We venture to say that in no other country in which education and intelligence have made respectable progress, can be found a head of an Education Department undertaking the selection of makers of text-books, or a constituency of teachers and tax-payers tolerating the assumption of such a prerogative. In the matter of the Scripture readings, the difficulty and the presumption are increased by the sacredness of the subject. As to the fear expressed by some members of the Toronto Board, lest their action should lead to the withdrawal of the Government grant from the city schools, the supposition is as preposterous as it is uncomplimentary to the Minister. The people have still some voice in the disposition of the funds for which they are so heavily taxed.

"I deny," says "Sir Lyon Playfair, "that utilitarianism as an aim in education is ignoble." Few will dispute the proposition. But what is utilitarianism? It is the system which recognizes practical utility as the highest end to be sought. To this theory, too, most thoughtful persons will assent. But what is practical utility? Is not that system most truly and most practically utilitarian which aims at producing the highest character? To strive to make a man or a woman of the highest type in mind, manners, and above all, in morals, is surely to aim at a higher utility than that which has reference solely to what is called "getting on in the world."