

or reads in the public press, and this, though he be of a family which is Protestant or Catholic, Jewish, Mohammedan or Buddhist . . .

As a well of pure English, undefiled, as a fountain of pure, idiomatic English, it has not its equal in the world. . . . From the common English Bible, too, we derive our household words, our phrases and illustrations, the familiar speech of the people. Our associations are with its narratives, its parables, its histories and its biographies. If a man knew the Bible in its original Greek and Hebrew by heart, and did not know the common English version, he would be ignorant of the speech of the people. In sermons, in public speeches from the pulpit, the bar and the platform, would come allusions, references, quotations—that exquisite electrifying by conductors by which the heart of the whole people is touched by a word, a phrase, in itself nothing, but everything in the power of conducting—and all this would be to him an unknown world. . . . As a preparation for life, an acquaintance with the common English Bible is indispensable.”

And we, in Ontario, can have the Bible in schools, too, with Separate Schools and a “conscience clause” as safety-valves, if we evangelical Christians will just lay aside our little denominational jealousies and work unitedly to this great end. Have we the will to demand it? This reform transcends in importance any other that is before the public to day. It lies at the root of all others.

Now I must bring my own remarks to a close. This is not the first time that an attempt has been made to draw public attention to this theme in a somewhat similar way. Years ago Mr. Archibald MacMurchy, who as long as I can remember, has

staunchly stood by the cause for which my feeble voice to-day has been pleading, published in the CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY the result of an examination held in his school on some simple Bible references in Tennyson's poems (In Memoriam, I think), with very unsatisfactory results. In the fall of 1895 an examination was held in an Ontario High School asking for the explanation of a number of Biblical references in various selections from prose and poetry. The result was reported by the Rev. P. K. Dayfoot, of Port Hope, in the *Globe*. The answers were a set of curiosities, the only one among the pupils whose answer even approached to accuracy was a young man whose childhood had been spent at the famous Blue Coat School in London, England, where the Bible is used as a textbook. Mr. Dayfoot, in an obliging note to me, tells the following: In a certain college, 40 students of a freshman class, six of whom were sons of ministers, were examined as to their Bible knowledge. None had read the Bible through; 5 had read the New Testament; 1 had read as far as Proverbs, 12 had read the books of Moses, none had read the prophets, and not one could name the books of the Bible.

No class of persons is so competent to pass an opinion on the scriptural information of Ontario youth as the teachers of literature in our High Schools and Collegiate Institutes. At the suggestion of one of these I wrote to a number asking them for their opinion as to the condition in scripture knowledge among High School pupils, and among Ontario young people generally, and as to the efficacy of the present means of Biblical instruction, and for any improvements they could suggest. In reply I received a most interesting series of letters. It