

A GREAT ISSUE

is now, therefore, presented to the people of Ontario, which, when once fully understood, can meet with only one response. It is this: When Roman Catholics are permitted to have Separate Schools in which the religion of that Church is taught without interference or control by the State, is the Archbishop or any other Roman Catholic ecclesiastic to be permitted to dictate or supervise the nature of the religious teaching which is to be given in the Public Schools, even to the extent of **mutlating and garbling the Bible?**

Some who are Protestants, but probably more swayed by *political* than *religious* convictions, argue that as some Roman Catholic children in places where there are no Separate Schools have to attend the Public Schools, it is only proper that the Bible should be distorted so as not to offend the susceptibilities of their parents.

Those who thus argue forget or ignore the fact that **Mr. Ross**—doubtless under the direction of **Archbishop Lynch**—issued an order by a circular to the Public School Inspectors, under date "March, 1885," as to the Scripture readings, in which the following authoritative instruction is to be found:

"The right conceded to the pupil of absenting himself from the religious exercises of the school, as provided in paragraph 4 of the regulations, requires the most careful attention of every teacher.

"In order that the parents and guardians of Roman Catholic pupils may be saved unnecessary trouble in giving notice to teachers, under this regulation, it is to be assumed that the parent or guardian of a Roman Catholic pupil has notified his wish to the teacher, as by this rule required, unless such parent expressly notifies such teacher in writing that he desires the pupil of which he is such parent or guardian to attend and be present at the religious exercises prescribed. Before entering upon the closing exercises of the school, the teacher should therefore allow a short interval to elapse, during which such pupils might retire, and in this way remove all doubts as to the faithful observance of the regulations."

It is not admitted that even if the plea put forward was true in fact it would be a justification; but regard being had to the order just quoted, from which it appears that *before the Scriptures are read an opportunity is to be afforded for Roman Catholic pupils to withdraw* so that they shall not hear even from Mr. Ross's expurgated edition, that it is nothing short of an outrage that the Roman Catholic Church dignitaries should be consulted in the matter!

No! Now is the time for the electors of Ontario to insist, in the noble words of Dr. Chalmers, that "we mean to have the Bible the regular and daily school book; it shall be taught openly and fearlessly, not dealt with as a contraband article; not smuggled into a mere hole or corner of our establishment; not mended or mutilated by human hands, that the message of the Eternal may be shaped to the taste and prejudices of men; not made to skulk from observation lest the priests of an intolerant faith should be offended—No! God helping us, we will place His Word in the forefront of our system of education, and we will render it the unequivocal, the public, the conspicuous object that is becoming a Christian and Protestant nation."