

allowed by law for holidays is too long. We do not agree with these people. We have heard of such complaints having been made when the holidays were not much more than half as long as they are now; but these complaints were in most cases made by people who were in the habit of keeping their children away for weeks or even for months when the schools were in full blast. Perhaps the parents had some trifling job for the children to do at home, or perhaps the children themselves were driven by the pressure of class work, which they were too lazy to keep up with, to hint to their parents that "they did not feel very well" or that "the lessons were too hard for them" or that they "did not like the teacher," and they were kindly permitted to absent themselves. We have been informed by experienced teachers that it is just such parents as we have here attempted to describe who are the readiest to complain of the length of the holidays. It is said that during the long holidays the children forget what they learned, but if this matter were looked into it would be found to be true, even seemingly, only of the class of children spoken of above, and that really it is not what they learned that is amissing but what they never learned. By their irregularity they have lost the opportunity of having any one of the subjects taught during the school session presented to their minds in its proper connection and in its entirety. As for the fragmentary and disconnected bits of knowledge that happened to come before them on the odd days or weeks in which they attended school, they do not remember them, and if they did it would be to little purpose. The industrious children who have attended regularly, taken all the steps in the course in their proper succession, exercised their understanding as well as their memory, mentally assimilated, and made themselves masters of, the various subjects as far as they went—these will not readily forget what they have learned. These, not being in the habit of taking unlawful holidays, find the lawful holidays short enough, so does the laborious teacher who has faithfully devoted himself to his work, and could not possibly continue to do so with anything like the same vigour without a reasonable period of rest; so does the intelligent and judicious parent who desires to have all the powers of his child, bodily and mental, duly developed; and so, we trust, do our legislators, who in their wisdom have extended the holiday time to what it is at present, and will not without good reason return to the scant measure of former times.

There is just one other subject connected with our Public Schools to which we desire at present to direct, or rather to recall, attention,—that is the regular, daily use of the Bible in these schools. Into some it has never been introduced; in others its use has been discontinued under the impression that the school law forbade it, no place being given to it in the prescribed programme of subjects to be taught nor in the list of authorized books. This impression ought to be entirely removed by the repeated declaration of the Minister of Education, that the School Law of Ontario is favourable to the use of

the Bible in the schools and that the school trustees and teachers are responsible for its exclusion. Thus the matter is in the people's own hands. If they have trustees who will not permit the Bible to be used, or if they have a teacher in whose hands they cannot trust the Bible, the remedy in either case is obvious.

Those among the inhabitants of this Province who object to the use of the Bible in the schools are few in number, but they are active, and they sometimes find something to say that requires an answer. One very plausible objection professes to be grounded on the reverence with which the objectors regard the Bible as the Word of God, and on their fears that it will be maltreated, and degraded in the estimation of children who are permitted to use it in common with secular class-books. This, as we have already hinted, depends altogether upon the teacher. In proper hands the Bible itself is the best instrument for securing respect and reverence, not only for it, but for all other proper objects of respect and reverence. The teacher who uses the Bible properly, and inculcates its grand and noble and wholesome principles, avoiding sectarianism, and even if people will have it so, dispensing with the direct teaching of religion, has in his hands the most potent instrument in this world for securing good order and proper behaviour; he will have a decorous, an attentive, and an intelligent school; and under these conditions the progress of his pupils in their purely secular studies will be materially accelerated. We would scarcely bring forward this rather Erastian view of the matter as an argument for the introduction of the Bible. We are only using it as an answer to objectors—if they are more than answered we cannot help it. Some other objections are met in the subjoined extract from an article on "The Progress of Education in England" which recently appeared in the "Contemporary Review." The writer is Francis Peek, the Chairman of the London School Board. He does not despise Sabbath schools; neither do we. They have their own work to do and they do it well; but they would find their work much easier if the Bible were universally used in the day schools. It is too much to expect that children can be brought to have anything like a thorough knowledge of the Bible as a book merely by getting, once a week, a short lesson founded on a few isolated verses. Gross ignorance of the Bible may not be as yet so prevalent in Canada as it is in the localities mentioned in the extract, but a few years more of orthodoxy on the part of the Christian community will, we fear, do away with the difference to an extent that will abundantly satisfy the most bigoted secularist. Mr. Peek says:

"During the earlier controversies it was sometimes argued that the teaching of the Bible in the elementary day-schools was not only opposed to the principles of religious freedom, but actually unnecessary on account of the provision for it in Sunday schools, etc. This view, however, will not be endorsed by those who have actual knowledge of the gross ignorance which exists on the subject of religion among the masses of the population, even of those who are attending Sunday schools. Certain religious truths, indeed, they may know, but the Bible as a whole is comparatively a sealed book to them. Besides these, we have the vast numbers whom it was the very object of the compulsory clauses of the education act to force into the day schools, but who attend neither Sunday school nor any place of worship, and who, but for the scriptural knowledge gained in the day school,

would grow up in a heathenish ignorance of the very principles of religion and morality.

"A noteworthy instance of the inability of ordinary Sunday school teaching to give this knowledge has recently been shown in the case of a town in Wales, a country where the Sunday schools are considered most efficient. The introduction of the Bible into the Board Schools of this town was opposed on the ground of its being unnecessary and the Chairman of the School Board, very wisely, took the trouble to examine personally two hundred scholars, between nine and thirteen years of age, of whom eighty per centum attended Sunday schools. He put to each scholar the following questions: 'Whose book is the Bible?' 'Who was Adam?' 'Who was Jesus Christ?' Three-fourths knew whose book the Bible was, only sixty-eight out of the two hundred knew who Adam was, and only ninety-eight out of the two hundred knew who Jesus Christ was: such ignorance is, unhappily, not confined to any one part of the country. On examining two Sunday schools in the neighbourhood of London, one of which was in connection with the Church of England, the writer was unable to find a single child who could explain whom he intended to address as 'Our Father' when uttering the first sentence of the Lord's prayer.

"That such a state of ignorance of the very simplest truths of Christianity should exist in a Christian country like Britain, and especially among children attending Sunday schools, is certainly lamentable, and may appear almost incredible to many who have not thoroughly investigated the subject. Those who have learned from experience the immense difficulty of teaching in crowded Sunday schools, the general inattention of the scholars, the irregularity of their attendance, the very short time in which they may learn the Bible as a whole, and lastly, the slight impression which lessons from untrained teachers make upon them, will feel these almost universal and practically unavoidable difficulties are sufficient to account for a great deal of these unsatisfactory results in the acquirement of religious knowledge as distinct from personal Christian influence."

THE Sunday closing Act in Ireland has diminished the number of arrests for drunkenness two-thirds.

THE Roman Catholic authorities have sanctioned the publication of the New Testament in Spanish.

THE roll of the "Priests Associate of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament," a body of extreme ritualists, but still forming part and parcel of the clergy of the Church of England, shows a membership of 116 clergymen in the diocese of London alone. Oxford has 72 members, Salisbury 49, Lichfield 47, Exeter 46, and Canterbury 41.

THE Biblical justification for the hanging of criminals by the State is quoted as follows in the "Christian Intelligencer": "The Word of God commands: 'Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death. . . . So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood it defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.' (Numbers xxiv. 30, 33). This is 'a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.' Every departure from this law has been followed by an increase in the number of murders and of other crimes."

THE famous old Dr. John Brown, who was of old the minister at Haddington, Scotland, was in the habit of talking to his divinity students in a way which might wisely be followed by some of the professors of the present time. He would say to them, "Young gentlemen, ye need three things to make ye good ministers: ye need learning, and grace, and common sense. As for the learning, I'll try to set ye in the way of it; as for grace, ye must always pray for it; but if ye have na brought the common sense with ye, ye may go about your business."

A MINISTER in Cleveland said in his anniversary sermon to his flock:—"In respect of labour I might have done more for you, perhaps, and those outside certainly, if I had been content to burn the candle at both ends. But I never considered suicide a Christian grace, and, the Lord helping me, I never mean to kill myself before my time by work beyond my conscious strength." "This is far better," says a newspaper in comment, "both for himself and for his church, than if he had ruinously worked himself to the edge of the grave, and then asked the congregation to send him to Europe for a year to recover his health." Nevertheless it is these earnest men who work night and day, burning the candle at both ends, who build up the churches of Christ in our land. Epaphroditus was a preacher of this kind. And we are told to "hold such in reputation because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death not regarding his life."