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## THE BIBLE IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

"I use the Scriptures not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons... but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure, and to increase my awe and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and adored."—Boyle.

We think that it would have been well had the authors of our free school law been imbued with the noble sentiments of the above quotation, to such a degree, at least, that they could have laid aside their peculiar creeds, and agreed upon some religious course of instruction for our public schools.

Whilst in a general way a teacher may give, yea is required to give instruction upon good conduct, honesty, truthfulness, virtue, etc., and may punish, even by expulsion, anyone who persistently uses improper language, either in or out of school, or on its premises, yet, as a class-book, the Bible is prohibited. And if a teacher should feel it to be his duty to read a few verses, and offer a few words of prayer at the opening of the school, he can only do so as long as no one objects, but he must cease when any individual sees fit to do so.

We have seen this done by principals of large schools, who have interfered with their sub. teachers, and intimated that such exercises be discontinued. There are, however, a few instances where the pupils are gathered in an audience room, a hymn is sung or a chapter read, sometimes both, and a prayer offered by the principal, then each division marches to its own department, but these are rare exceptions. True, some provision is made by which those who object to be present at such opening exercises can remain until they are over, a miserable subterfuge, or the Lord's Prayer may be used, as if indeed, any teacher would be guilty of thrusting his pet articles of belief upon the minds of his pupils through the medium of prayer.

We do not object to the use of this most beautiful and complete of all prayers, although those sects that do not consider it worthy to form a part of their worship might consistently do so, yet we think it but right that a brief prayer, consisting of praise and thanksgiving unto God for His kindness towards the school during the hours of separation; of supplication for His assistance during the day, that its labours may be beneficial to the moral as well as the intellectual training of our youth ought to be allowed. With this daily lesson they will grow up with a knowledge of their dependence upon God, and of His relationship to them as a father.

We have said that teachers are required by the Act to watch carefully the habits of their pupils, but we contend that no teacher can succeed in training his pupils, in a moral point of view, unless he has some standard authority, and there is no authority equal to the Word of God, and this word occupies only a secondary position in our schools, and can we wonder that our youth are growing up in ignorance of and indifference to its most sublime truths?

We are aware that the object in view was to avoid giving offence, first to those who do not use the Protestant Bible; second, to the Protestant body itself, because of its various sects and isms. Now we admire the persistency of our Catholic neighbours, in maintaining that a religious training is paramount to all secular knowledge, although we do not agree with them in their religious views, yet we would much prefer such a religious training to none at all. For them a provision is made by which their children are carefully taught, whilst Protestant youth receive no systematic course of religious training, simply because one parent may be a Baptist, another a Methodist, a third a Unitarian, etc., and on account of such foolish adherence to some pet article of belief, as if there were no other subjects, at least as important, in the Bible, our children are sadly deficient of its most wonderful events, and also we are strengthening the very church that would most object to its use.

The Bible is full of great events, lives and characters of wonderful men, and a teacher whose mind is well stored with these, and whose heart is filled with love to his fellow men, will find neither time nor inclination to air creeds in the presence of his pupils. We need more of its history in our schools. Children are daily required to cram their heads with the great events of English History, to be

a single event either of the Old or New Testament is ever mentioned, hence they are grossly ignorant of the most important scenes and events of the world's history. They are also required to become familiar with English literature, Shakespeare, Milton, Macaulay, Bacon, etc., must be thoroughly studied, at the same time they are deprived of the works of greater writers than these ever were, yea, of the very source from which these derived their best and richest thoughts. There is no poetry, no history, no language to be compared with that of the Bible. Where can we find such simplicity and pathos as we find in the narrative of Moses? Where such sublimity as we find in the writings of Job, of David, of Isaiah and St. John? Well has it been said,—"In lyric flow and fire, in crushing force and majesty the poetry of the ancient Scriptures is the most superb that ever burnt within the breast of man." Where do we find rules of conduct equal to the wisdom of the Proverbs of Solomon? Here are lessons for every age and condition—lessons of knowledge and discretion that every young man ought to learn and treasure up as his daily monitor in the midst of worldly cares and vexations. In argument, in composition, this Book is unequalled. There is no literature to be compared to it and it is a grievous wrong to deprive our youth of its most interesting and invaluable records.

From the Reports of European Schools, especially of Germany and Great Britain, we learn that the first subject on the course of study, is "Religious instruction," to which from three to six hours per week are devoted. In Prussia the Bible receives more attention than any other book. At a very early age the pupils begin a systematic study of its contents, the great events, the lives and characters of its wonderful men, in all its ages, its morals and duties, and the history of the Christian Church, are daily studied in connection with the history of their own countries. Annexed is an outline which will give some idea of the study of the Bible in that country, whose school system is generally conceded to be the best in the world.

(a) Bible Stories. Psalms and Hymns.  
(b) History from Old and New Testaments, a portion of the history of the Christian Church.  
(c) Reading and explanation of the Bible, its arrangements, etc.  
(d) Moral instructions. Duties to God and man.  
(e) Reading the Bible, with comments, etc.

This forms a course for several years, a portion being assigned to each grade, so that when a pupil completes the course of study he has received a good knowledge of the Bible.

Some are ready to say, we have Sabbath schools for this purpose, parents at home, ministers in the church, and teachers in the Sunday-schools should supply this want. They have not done it, they cannot do it, for various reasons. There are but few parents who are members of any church, of these few not many are found who have either the time or inclination to take upon themselves this duty. The ministers cannot well attend to the Sabbath-school work, as that day has other duties for them; nor can they conveniently convene the children for scriptural instruction, so they cannot well "train up the child," &c. It is no wonder that parents are sometimes well nigh discouraged, when we, as we sometimes do, hear children say that "it cannot be true as my parents tell me that the Bible is the best book on earth, for if it were why is it not allowed in the day school? I never see it there. I never hear my teacher read it, much less read it, although I have seen it, novels, and my teacher reading them." Hence the result is that the child loses all respect for this blessed book, and the teaching of the Sabbath-school is almost nullified. But if it were allowed to be read daily, and the importance of its divine character was impressed upon their minds both by precept and example in the public school, religion would then be regarded as a disposition of the soul which unites man in all his actions with God, and a higher moral tone would pervade our land.

We do not wish to find any fault with our school law, not by any means. It has indeed done, and is doing a noble work. But it has lost much by not allowing, yea, by not insisting that a portion of the Bible should be read daily, and that all teachers should give religious instruction. Some there are who look upon schools as they do shops. They think that a teacher should not open his school by prayer, any more than a merchant would collect his clerks, or the overseer his men for worship before they began their duties. The engines are not parallel. We are of the opinion that even the merchant would lose nothing by asking God's blessing upon his labours. But the teacher's position is different. He is expected to train his pupils to become good citizens; to teach them their duty to God and man, and what better means can be employed than to open and close his school with a devotional exercise?

schools. Let them ponder well their future welfare and see that they are surrounded by such influences as will enable them to form such habits that will make them honest upright citizens, and will make them meet for heaven. Alas, how sad it is that there exists so much evil influence even in our schools. Both boys and girls are liable to form habits of lying, swearing, etc., and are unchecked save by the rod or ferule. They are not taught how sinful it is in the sight and hearing of their heavenly Father, and how it grieves Him, hence they begin to think that it is only an arbitrary rule of the teacher they are violating, and instead of becoming better they become worse. We would urge upon all parents to enquire into the habits of teachers, and ascertain what progress their children are making in forming a good, moral, upright character. Remember that "the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord."

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### AFGHANISTAN AND THE AFGHANS.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRY WITH WHICH ENGLAND IS GOING TO WAR.

The following sketch of this Asiatic country which now seems disposed to defy the might of England, is taken from the Philadelphia Telegraph, and will be specially interesting at this time:—

Afghanistan is a country in Central Asia, which has suddenly been brought before the whole civilized world by the struggle between Russia and England for supremacy over it and its people, as a barrier to the possessions of both countries. The Himalayas are a section of the broken chain of highlands which stretches across the continent of the Old World from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean, and end naturally only at the Baman Pass, for the Hindoo Koosh are but an extension of the Himalayas, and end naturally in the great dip at Baman, although the range, under names, continues westward along the northern frontier of Persia on to the plateau of Armenia. Afghanistan thus lies both north and south of the Himalayas, both beyond and within the Hindoo Koosh, and the part of it which concerns Great Britain and Russia just at the present is that which includes the valleys of Cabul and Candahar, to the south of the Hindoo Koosh and within the basin of the Indus. Afghanistan proper is simply a part of the Indus basin, that part of it formed by the southern water-shed of the Hindoo Koosh, and to perfect the northwestern frontier of British India it has long been felt in England that the waters of the Hindoo Koosh, from the Panacee Steppe to the Baman Pass, which leads into western Turkestan, should be in British hands, or in the hands of trusted allies. The conquest of the country, however, would be a matter of no little difficulty. In a military point of view, Afghanistan is stronger even than Algeria. It is the "Maharatta country of Northern India—a country abounding in all the resources of war, in which armies can be prepared in perfect secrecy and descend to sweep the rich and defenceless plains below without a moment's warning. The proverb is current throughout Central Asia, "He who conquers Cabul rules in Hindostan." Afghanistan, in fact, absolutely commands India, and it is felt that the British must eventually turn it to their own advantages as a redoubt across the ditch of the Indus and outwork of the Himalayan rampart of India. In possession of a civilized baste power, it would hang in the Himalayan sky over the great camp of Delhi like the sword of Damocles. The British, under these circumstances, could no longer hold India except on sufferance.

The population of the whole country known as Afghanistan is nearly 8,000,000. The Afghans of the Cabul and Candahar valleys, who alone are concerned in the present difficulty, are divided into two great tribes—the Ghilzies of Cabul and the Duranis of Candahar. The Ghilzies had in former times the ascendancy, and it was their chief, Mahmood, who overthrew the Sofi dynasty of Persia in 1717 and conquered Persia, but after their expulsion by Nadir Shah the Duranis got the upper hand. This tribe is divided into the inner clans, the chief of which are the Sadozais, the old royal clan of Ahmed Shah Durani, and the Barokzais, represented by Dost Mubammed and Sher Ali; and it is the rivalries between these royal clans and families which have reduced Afghanistan to political anarchy and population. The Afghans are physically, remarkably fine, raven-haired, robust, well-formed and active. They have extremely handsome faces, and the beauty of their women is often of a dazzling brilliance. The Afghan tribes are physically, a man coming along the road, the more readily modestly cast down their eyes and pass on, but the younger women turn their backs to him, and stand still until he has gone by. This can be seen in the

hospitable, and when once forced to settle down to industrial pursuits develop an astonishing aptitude for trade. They have made little progress towards a general settling down, however, because of the rivalries and jealousies of the chiefs of the different tribes. In maps the frontiers of Afghanistan are made to coincide with those of India, but all the border tribes both claim and maintain their independence of any central authority, and are under no rule whatever except that of their own chiefs, and even these are seldom obeyed one instant longer than is convenient. Indeed, the only authority which has of late years been revered by the tribes on the northwest frontier of India was that of the late Akhoond of Swat, who accidentally gained his ascendancy over them through his reputation as a saint.

It has been the settled policy of the British officials of the Punjab, which is the district immediately adjacent to Afghanistan, to encourage the claims of the frontier tribes to independence of the Ameer of Cabul. They have always affected to treat these tribes as a useful "buffer" between the Indian Government and the tribes themselves have only been too glad to play off the one power against the other. As a consequence, the northwest frontier of India has been in a chronic state of trouble ever since the annexation of the Punjab, in 1849. In the interval between that date and the present, the Indian Government has been obliged to undertake no less than twenty-eight expeditions against them, or at the rate of one expedition a year. The Khyber Pass, which is or ought to be the great highway between British India and Central Asia, has never once been open to peaceful expeditions more than a few weeks at a time. The Ameer could not keep it open without asserting and maintaining his supremacy over the wild tribes in its vicinity, and the British have shrunk from undertaking the task for fear of giving offence to Cabul. As a consequence of the very considerable trade between the Punjab and Afghanistan has been obliged to seek out the difficult routes to the north of the Khyber and between the real Khyber Pass and the Cabul River. The ability of the Ameer to suddenly man the pass and thus head off General Sir Neville Chamberlain's mission was the direct result of the half-hearted policy which has been pursued by the British Government in India. Now they are repenting at their leisure; and, meanwhile General Abramoff, the Russian envoy, is doing all he can towards cementing an alliance between the Ameer and Russia. The British authorities, on their part, fully realize the critical character of the situation, and appear to be moving in response to the universal demand of the Indian press for an apology from the Ameer or the occupation of Afghanistan. But the military operations which are inevitable must be postponed until spring, for the attempt to force the Khyber Pass in winter would be sheer folly. Nearly forty years ago the British were reckless enough to venture upon military operations in the Afghan country in midwinter, and the terrible lesson then learned has probably not yet been forgotten.

## WORDS OF WISDOM.

Fear always springs from ignorance.  
Imitation is the sincerest of flattery.  
Rare as is love, true friendship is rarer.  
He only is exempt from failure who makes no effort.  
Content can only be purchased by a virtuous life.  
We are often more agreeable through our faults than through our good qualities.  
Our greatest glory consists not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.  
Flowers are the sweetest things that God ever made and did not put a soul into.  
Friendship improves happiness and abates misery, by the doubling of our joy and the dividing of our grief.  
Men of genius are often dull and inert in society; as the blazing meteor, when it descends to earth, is only a stone.  
No man is rich whose expenditures exceed his means; and no one is poor whose incomes exceed his outgoings.  
We never go so near the heart of our sorrowing humanity as when we are in communion with the Man of Sorrows.  
A man's own good breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners.—Chesterfield.  
True politeness is perfect ease and freedom. It simply consists in treating others as you love to be treated yourself.  
True friendship is a plant of slow growth and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity before it is entitled to the appellation.

The glory of the good is in their consciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladness of the just is of God, and in God; and their joy is of the truth.

The Gospel of John opens with Christ in the bosom of the Father, and closes with a sinner in the bosom of Christ.—W. Lincoln.

If two men are united, the wants of neither are any greater, in some respects than they would be were they alone, and their strength is superior to the strength of two separate men.

Good words do more than hard speeches; as the sunbeams without any noise will make the traveller cast off the cloak, which all the blustering winds could not do, but only bind it closer to him.

Ambition is to the mind what the cap is to the falcon; it blinds us first, and then compels us to tower by reason of our blindness. But alas! when we are at the summit of a vain ambition, we are also at the depth of misery.

If so are faultless, we should not be so much annoyed by the defects of those with whom we associate. If we were to acknowledge honestly that we have not virtue enough to bear patiently with our neighbor's weaknesses, we should show our own imperfection, and this alarms our vanity.

Every failure is a road to success; every detection of what is false directs us towards what is true; every trial exhausts some tempting form of error. Not only so, but scarcely any attempt is entirely a failure; scarcely any theory, the result of steady thought, is altogether false; no form of error is without some latent charm derived from truth.

How the universal heart of man blesses flowers! They are wreathed round the cradle, the marriage altar and the tomb. The Persian in the far east delights in their perfumes, and writes his love in nosegay; while the Indian child of the West clasps his hands with glee as he gathers the abundant blossoms—the illuminated scriptures of the prairies. The cupid of the ancient Hindoos tipped his arrows with flowers, and orange flowers are a bridal crown with us, a nation of yesterday.

When ye are come to the other side of the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters, and to your wearisome journey, and shall see in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, ye shall then be forced to say, "If God had done otherwise with me than He hath done, I had never come to the enjoyment of this crown of glory."—Rutherford.

Dying, yet giving life; nailed to a cross, yet holding the key of death and heaven; covered with every badge of contumely and scorn, yet crowning others with immortal diadems; robbed of all things yet giving all His native right. No event of moral grandeur like this can ever be imagined. Truly Christ was the Wonderful, joining in His own person the strangest contrasts the most inexplicable mysteries.

Christ hath died, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Christ hath died. Tell it to that despairing sinner—that man who is just about to seek escape from the uproar of an angry conscience by the terrible alternative of self-murder. Go to him. Be quick! Tell him he need not die, for Christ has died—hath died to bear his sins away.

## IN HARVEST TIME.

I sat one morning in a little lane,  
Under a canopy of beauteous leaves,  
I watched the reapers on the heavy main  
Pile high, with cheerful toil, the golden sheaves.  
The eager little children stood around,  
With tiny harvest gleanings of the corn.  
Under their arms, showing, with poppies bound,  
Their mimic labor all the merry morn.  
I watched the slow-drawn, hoartous load depart,  
The children following down the shady lane;  
And, left alone, I asked my empty heart,  
"Where are thy gathered sheaves of ripened grain?"  
Why comes no sound of harvest joy to thee?  
But my dumb heart no answer had for me.

"Heart," said I further, "there was good seed sown  
Deep in thy furrows ere last winter's snow,  
And in the spring-time tender airs were blown  
Across thee, and God gave thee summer's dew.  
Where is thine harvest of good things and true,  
The fruit of this thy ground which God hath tilled?"  
The crown of work appointed thee to do,  
The sheaves wherewith thy garner should be filled,  
Where is thy harvest joy, thy reaping song,  
Thy blameless triumph o'er honest toil?  
Thy deep contentment satisfied and strong,  
Thy worthy reaping after worthy toil?  
He who dost describe would thy harvest see,  
Yet still my heart no answer made to me.

But ere the autumn seed-time came again,  
God quote the furrows of my silent heart,  
The ploughshares of strong sorrow and pain  
Dived deeply, striking to the inmost part,  
Wherein full soon the good seed gently fell,  
The which my heart received repentant, grave,  
And brought to fruit in season duly—well—  
And God the increase of that harvest gave.  
What though in warfare my sheaves were bound,  
With faded flowers of happiness and love.