

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES.

MR. EDITOR.—I have headed the few remarks which I take the liberty of addressing to the Protestants of Canada, through your journal, by the words, "A Sign of the Times," for I consider the fact on which I want to speak as one of the saddest and most humiliating scenes which have attracted my attention since it has been my privilege to preach the Gospel. The 17th of June last, Quebec, as some of you will remember, was the theatre of an act of cowardice, barbarism, ferociousness and perfidy which probably has never been witnessed save among savage nations. On that day a man, who, when a priest of Rome covered his native country with the imperishable monuments of his zeal, patriotism, philanthropy and piety—a man who, since the day he embraced Protestantism, has been indefatigable in well-doing, and who is now at the head of the largest colony of converts from Rome which can be seen on the whole continent of America—a man known and respected all over the world—Father Chiniquy—preached one of the most Christian sermons ever heard in this city, from the text: "Master, what must I do to have eternal life?" Not a word had been said which might be taken as an abuse by any one, the only thought of the whole discourse was the divine answer of Christ, "Love God and your neighbour." And what was the result? I will not attempt to describe it, for that would be impossible. Let me simply say that while preaching he was not only assailed, abused, and insulted by words, but attacked with stones, which broke the windows, and several times compelled him to interrupt his address. Nor was this all. When his sermon was finished, he peacefully went out of the church to take a seat in a carriage which was to draw him to the railway depot, in order to go back to Montreal by the night train, when a band of some 1,500 well-dressed French Roman Catholics, among whom could be seen two priests, rent the air with the most horrible and beastly imprecations ever heard, made a rush at Mr. Chiniquy, and hurled at him a real hail of stones, with the evident intent of killing him. Without giving any signs of surprise or fear, he quickly put a cloth overcoat around his head and shoulders, and calmly took his seat. In a minute the glasses of the carriage were broken in pieces, and Mr. Chiniquy was left unprotected against the hundreds of stones hurled at him from every side. As I had invited him to preach in my church, I felt it my duty to share his danger and even his death, if I could not protect him against his savage and cruel murderers. In spite of the stones, which were striking me also, I tried to get into the carriage, but was unable to do so, the would-be murderers of Mr. Chiniquy having seized me by the legs and made me roll at their feet in the dirt and dust of the street. Mr. Chiniquy was exposed to that hail of stones for several minutes, from the French Protestant Church to the St. John's gate, and from the St. John's gate to the Old Palace gate, when he ordered his driver to turn back and go to the St. Louis Hotel, where he arrived with his shoulders and head badly hurt. The consequence was that Mr. Chiniquy was immediately seized with brain inflammation, and has been between life and death for more than three weeks. Now, what was the crime of Mr. Chiniquy that he should have been so publicly condemned to death by the Romish priests and people of Quebec? Had he killed, or stolen, or done some act of violence? No! His only crime was that of Luther, and Calvin and Knox. His only crime was that of our ancestors, when they gave up the errors and superstitions of Popery to walk in the truth and light of the Gospel. His only crime is to have preached that everlasting and blessed Gospel to countrymen whom he loves. Has the world ever seen anything so ignominious, so cruel? No! you are ready to say. Yes! I answer, and it is the silence, the indifference, the want of sympathy of the Protestants of Canada towards Mr. Chiniquy. Since that public murderous attack against him, I notice that Presbytery after Presbytery has met all over the country, from Quebec to the remotest part of the Dominion, and not one has raised its voice or entered its protest against that so audacious, cruel, and public act of intolerance against a Presbyterian minister. Is this silence the result of indifference or fear? I am too young and insignificant to give my judgment on

such a grave question. But let me tell you that every day I hear the Roman Catholics say that it is both indifference and fear. "If Chiniquy is not a bad man," said one to me a few days ago, "why is it that Protestants seem to show him so little sympathy?" There is not a member of my congregation but has heard a similar remark, since the 17th of June last. And this is the reason that determined me to raise my voice to-day. Ah! if such an outrage had been committed by the Protestants of Quebec or Montreal against Archbishop Taschereau, or even against the least of the Roman Catholic priests of Canada, what indignation meetings we would have seen all over the country, among the Roman Catholics? What numberless addresses of sympathy would have been sent from large towns and cities, as well as from the humblest parishes, to heal the wounded feelings of their priests! How quickly they would have refunded to him the money disbursed in connection with the riot and long weeks of sickness! And why so? Because there is life, and unity and fraternity among the Roman Catholics of Canada. Whoever touches one of them touches them all. This is the secret of their strength and of their triumph over the Protestants all over the Dominion. Surely they have their differences, their family quarrels among themselves. But see how they present a united front, how they help one another, how they are one in the presence of their adversary—Protestantism! Who does not feel that the heroic courage of Mr. Chiniquy has done more than the combined efforts of all the Protestant ministers of Canada to take away the mask of the Church of Rome, and to force her to show herself what she has ever been, what she is to-day, and what she will ever be, the greatest enemy of both the rights and liberties of men, and the Gospel of our most blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Who does not feel that Mr. Chiniquy has completely and forever silenced and confounded Bishop Lynch with his admirable letter, and that he has opened the eyes of the Protestants of Canada as they were never opened before to the real character of that "great prostitute who is drunk with the blood of the saints?" Who does not see that Mr. Chiniquy at the risk of his life, has gained the greatest moral victory ever won on this continent against Rome? And now that he has accomplished all this, and is there, alone, calumniated and cursed by his former friends, condemned to death by his own people, an outcast in his own country for the Gospel's sake, not one has a word of sympathy to address him, or a cent to indemnify him for the expenses necessarily incurred in such a difficult mission as his last, in our midst. Christian friends who will read these lines, let no longer the Roman Catholics believe and say that you are absolutely indifferent to the cruel treatment inflicted on one of your ministers! Show by your words and your deeds that you believe the words of Paul who says, "Remember them that are in bonds, and them that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Let the Roman Catholics know that those stones were thrown at every one of you, that those insults and abuses touched you as being one body with your so cruelly persecuted brother. Tell them that the blood shed on that day is your blood, and it is the last which Rome will draw unrevenged and unpunished in Canada. Make them remember that you are living in a British Province, under a flag whose emblem is liberty of conscience the world over, without excepting Quebec. And let Mr. Chiniquy be told that if he has enemies sworn to murder him, because he preaches the Gospel, he has in every one of you a brother—a co-soldier, who will stand by him always and everywhere. If this be not done, then suffer the least and the last of your brethren to tell you that this failure will be considered by posterity as a sign of the times, very unchristian and unmanly indeed.

JOSEPH ALLARD.

Quebec, August 21st, 1884.

THE BIBLE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY THE REV. NATHANIEL PATERSON, HANOVER.

There is no doubt of the propriety of teaching the Word of God in our public schools. The chief difference of opinion seems to be concerning the manner of doing it. And, in these days, when the great scheme of the unification of the Empire, under one grand national and political system is so loudly talked of, it well becomes us to lay deep and strong the foundations of our Christian education. Canada is a great Dominion and the most important portion of

the British Empire, on whose fair lands "the sun never sets." If, then, we should be called upon, as, at no distant time we may, to take our share in the government of the great empire referred to, it is well becoming to take, not a part, but the whole Bible into our educational system. We say this first, because, though our laws do not enforce the sacred volume as a text book, they have given no sanction to a division of it. Why, then, begin now, at this advanced age of inquiry, to mutilate the great book into selections, which must necessarily be those of a party? Rather let us all go forward as a Christian community to ask the State so to amend the School Act as to make provisions for the religious education of our youth, on the broad basis of that eternal truth conveyed to the mind of man in the word of God—the greatest educator of the human race in existence. To extract certain portions only is to invite opposition. If, for instance, we present a volume of selections, including the Decalogue, Chronicles, Proverbs, the Gospels, etc., and the Revelation of St. John—the Romanist will say, "Leave out the last mentioned book, as I don't wish to be brought under the withering condemnation of its closing chapters." Some parts of the Epistles also, and the Book of Daniel may be brought under the same ordeal of criticism, while the agnostic will not thank us for asking his child *through a special quotation of the Psalms*, to read aloud for his own benefit and that of the rest of the pupils, the significant truth of Ps. liii. 1: "The fool hath said in his heart, 'there is no God.'" Mr. Wallace says very truly, "Surely we should not allow the children of the great majority to suffer, to suit the ideas of a few agnostics." He might have added also, other opponents, more numerous and more important. But, with all due deference, I contend that such men must be met *by the whole volume, and not a part of it*. Sacred truth will prevail. The whole Bible is its only true exponent and symbol. And those who oppose its introduction into the public schools will have a far harder battle to fight by having to deal with the only book that Christianity has ever acknowledged as a revelation sent from God, than they possibly can have with any compilation of extracts, which the most conciliating ingenuity can suggest. As I have said in a former letter, by all means let us have a special creed for this great enterprise, like Dr. Guthrie's for the ragged schools, or that of the Evangelical Alliance, but let us also put the whole book into the hands of the teacher. Now, it has been objected by some that "the Bible is not suitable to be read in the presence of children of both sexes, who attend our national schools." This is a very unreasonable view of the case. Is it not read every Sabbath in the presence of the whole congregation of the people of God, and may we not reasonably expect that the same prudence and good sense will characterize the teachers of Canada as those of Scotland, or other lands, where it has been employed with such marked and blessed results? Besides, God's book was intended to reprove sin, as well as to destroy Satan and his power in the world. And if so, we may rest assured He will help us in applying that great spiritual force which He has ordained for this purpose, and that in the most delicate manner. The truth is, our people must remember their most sacred responsibilities in reference to the education of our youth, and the less sectarian this movement is made the better. I maintain the Word of God ought to be *taught*, not simply read. There should be a junior and senior class instituted in every school, and a careful unfolding of its sacred truths to all the pupils. The pure and natural sciences are no doubt excellent, but there is no use attempting to turn our school system into a "British Association." What we want is a good and liberal system of education, based upon divine knowledge, from which will no doubt flow every form of moral and intellectual excellence. Let the Word of God thus prevail, and we will have fewer complaints of irreverence and waywardness in the youth of the land, and "the earth will yield her increase, and God, even our God, will bless us."

THE Hespeler correspondent of the *Galt Reformer* says: We are pleased to learn that the people are in favour of having the Bible read in the school, and are going to insist on it, and at the school trustee election are going to run a candidate pledged to use his influence for it. We hope they will succeed in so good an undertaking, and that the Hespeler public school will be honoured with the presence of the Bible.