

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

THE BIBLE IN OUR SCHOOLS.

MR. EDITOR,—The Rev. J. Laing, in his recent letters to the "Mail," has forcibly put his case respecting our public schools before the Minister of Public Instruction, and taken strong grounds in the field of public policy and religious exigency. Some time ago the Rev. Mr. McMullin, of Woodstock, spoke out on this question; and here and there we find faint efforts aiming in the same direction. The secular press is very faint on the question. One of our county judges, in a charge to the Grand Jury, has also set forth his opinion of the necessity for the Bible in the schools.

There is another body which ought to be specially appealed to, and it is the duty of those who value the influence of that body to speak out with bolder voice than has ever been yet employed. I mean the laity of the Presbyterian Church. There are special reasons why it becomes them to show their determination in this matter.

We have only to read the history of the parish schools of Scotland and find their habit and wont to see what kind of folk have come out of them. We have only to look at what Scotchmen and Scotchwomen are, the world over. We have only to look at their descendants in the United States and elsewhere, and see what they are, and ask ourselves the question, "Is there not a cause?" I say, sir, yes. I am able to answer the question—*emphatically, yes*. I am able to demonstrate the cause, beyond a doubt, which is, that the religion of the Bible is the religion of Scotland and of Scotchmen, and we ought to make it the text-book in the education of their descendants in this Canada of ours, and Presbyterians ought to see to it that it is done.

I am not a Scotchman nor a Presbyterian myself, but I profess to respect both wherever I meet them, for the most obvious of all reasons. It is simply because they love and reverence that Book of God—the Bible! For it is that book revered by the one and withheld from the other which made all the difference between the Scottish and the Irish Celt, and between the Protestant and the Romanist in Ireland a few years ago.

A story went the rounds—and I believe it was true—that during the existence of a previous administration the Prime Minister was approached in a somewhat presumptuous tone by a Methodist, who set up for a sort of leader amongst the ministers of that body of Christians, and asked why it was that no Methodist was taken into the Government! That he himself and others thought their "numerical strength" and "influence" entitled them to demand that a member of their Church should be, as in the previous ministry, taken into the cabinet; and that they had as much right to demand it as the Romanists had to demand similar consideration for their Church. The reply was a very worthy one, and spoke well for the wisdom and honesty of him who has been since laid aside to give place to another: "Mr. W—, I do not see that in selecting a cabinet it is at all necessary to examine into a man's religious tenets. It is the aim of the party to which I belong to know nothing of sectarian preferences. We choose men to take part in the administration of affairs and government of the country for their personal fitness, irrespective of their Church alliances. For instance, I was not chosen because I am a Baptist or a Scotchman, but because I enjoyed the confidence of my party, and if we were to act on your ideas of the fitness of things, the people to whom we should naturally turn would not be towards the Methodists, but to our best and most reliable supporters, the Scotch Presbyterians; for, without their sanction and hearty support, the Ministry to which I belong could not exist a single day; and yet there is not a Scotchman besides myself or a Presbyterian in my Ministry. The Presbyterians find no fault and make no such demand as you are now urging."

I cannot vouch for this story; I give it for what it is worth. It came to me as true from a source which I considered reliable, or I would not repeat it now. I make use of it as an illustration to point a moral, and to serve the purpose that I have in hand—*i.e.*, to urge upon your earnestly evangelical readers that if they are backward in pushing forward their political pretensions as others do, they ought to insist that

their religious principles should not be trifled with or their rights as parents and citizens trampled upon, simply because it is known that they are reliable on questions of expediency in other matters affecting the public weal.

I would have the Presbyterians of this land who value the Bible—who know anything of the history of Protestantism—to be alive on the subject of the Bible in the schools, and act with other evangelical Protestants; to arise in their might and assert their determination that this question shall not receive the go by from either the Ministry or the Legislature! There are no politics paramount or equal in importance to our religious and civil liberties.

The Ministry of the day have no right to turn, for the sake of keeping themselves in power, to the fancies of the papal hierarchy, or to the unsettling of principles and religious convictions by the insidious aims of infidels and agnostics, or the antics of ritualists and the cunning of priestcraft, or to the insidious dangers of broad Church views, and so-called free-thought. These are undermining the standards of truth, which we revere—for which our martyred forefathers have fought and bled and sacrificed their lives.

That the fear of God may be taught in our schools is the first essential in education; and the love of God and man can only be taught out of the open Bible. The experiment of a closed Bible and a Godless education has been tried, and proved a failure. There is no way in which God's grace can be brought to bear upon the young without their being taught as God has appointed by their being made acquainted with revealed truth, as set forth in the Word of God. The objections made to it are all futile, and if objectionable to any of our fellow subjects for any reason sufficient in their eyes, we who believe in the religion of the Bible have a right to insist that our liberties are being trampled under foot when we are obliged to support a system of education which is confessed to be Godless and agnostic, or when we are obliged to send our children to a teacher who is an agnostic or an atheist, or to a school which ignores the very existence of a Supreme Being.

The real difficulty lies in the degraded and depraving politics of the country, and for the present condition of things, Scotchmen and Presbyterians are largely responsible. The education of our youth must be lifted out of this slough. We must not be contented to let matters go on as they have done in the past. We do not stand on the same ground as our Romanist fellow subjects in this matter. The only education they wish the people to receive is to be taught their duty to the Church—*viz.*: subjection and obedience, and the absurd and superstitious legends on which popish imposture rests, to the total exclusion of duties to their country and neglect of the primary duties "of serving God, honouring the Queen, and obeying the law." The religion that should be inculcated by all is: "The open Bible—the Word of God written." When that is taught, and the principles of Holy Scripture inculcated, the Church will not be neglected or dishonoured; nor will the State or anyone suffer wrong, but the reverse.

If our rulers do not like these principles, for fear of offending the papal hierarchy, or losing the support of the Romanists, and right shy of the subject, with a view to pleasing the broad Church or infidel wing of their followers, and deliberately disregard the convictions of the evangelical Christians of the country by insisting on an agnostic school and college system, then it is time that Presbyterians of all shades of politics found some new standard around which to rally; for the subject of which I speak transcends in importance all questions of public policy or party.

Elgin, Aug. 27th, 1883.

JOHN RILAND.

THAT LEAKAGE—IV.

THE REMEDY IN OPERATION.

MR. EDITOR,—I promised in this my closing article to present the proposed remedy in actual operation. In doing so, I do not mean to say that the *modus operandi* here suggested is the only one within reach, nor is it assumed to be the best possible; I merely wish to show that the proposal made in article I. (August 15th), is practicable and not difficult of execution.

We have already all the machinery in existence we need, and that is a great deal. Nothing revolutionary is contemplated, nor need there be any derangement of any established usages of our Church. The Home

Mission Committee and the respective Presbyteries interested have only to work in unison to effect all that is now proposed. The former meets at present twice a year, when it passes under review the financial aspect of all supplemented charges, and also occasionally makes appointments of ordained missionaries to outlying posts.

Suppose, then, that this same committee be entrusted with the additional work of appointing all the men to supplemented charges or other weak fields, where such appointments are agreed upon; this would occur twice a year by the Home Mission Committee. Then, if between the half yearly meetings of said committee any Presbytery should find it necessary to make a like appointment, it could do so by virtue of its own inherent rights. Thus, were the Home Mission Committee and the several Presbyteries to work hand in hand in this matter, the proposed scheme could be simply and effectively carried out. Nor need any suspicion be entertained that too much power would be entrusted to the Home Mission Committee in this matter, for what is the Home Mission Committee but a condensation of Presbyteries for business purposes, whose members are the several delegates appointed by the respective Presbyteries, whose instructions they are sent to carry out?

But it may be asked, How shall Presbyteries and the Home Mission Committee know what men are available for settlement as proposed, and what congregations? Answer. First, Let a column be secured in THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, and also in the "Record" (paid for of course), in which shall appear weekly in the former and monthly in the latter a full and correct list, (a) of all vacancies in our Church—the supplemented charges distinguished by the letter "S" added, (b) of all licentiates and ministers (with post-office address) who wish settlement, in whatever form. Such lists would be useful beyond the immediate purpose now in view. Second, When the Home Mission Committee meets in fall and spring let a full list of all places to be filled, and of all the men available, be before it, and forthwith the gaps over the land would be filled up, at least a goodly number would be. The prediction may be safely hazarded that, on the whole, the appointments thus made would give better satisfaction than at present result from a similar number of calls; for proof, see the appointments of students to mission fields, and of ordained missionaries to Midland, Farry Sound, etc.

If in the judgment of wise and experienced men in our Church the method now proposed of carrying on the scheme is not the best possible, I hope that any divergence of opinion on this point will not prevent a favourable consideration being given to the whole matter under discussion, nor gender a feeling of despair that present defects cannot be amended.

I may be permitted to say in closing that the proposal in question, if carried out, would, besides all the advantages named in former articles, benefit our work in the North-West not a little, and in this way. Men would accept appointments to that distant field who do not now, if they knew that on their return to Ontario two or three years hence, should they find it necessary to return, they could at once enter upon some field of labour here and get a home for their family, without the ordeal of candidating for half a year or more. The Methodist missionaries have this advantage when any one returns, and this greatly lightens the task of an appointment to the North-West. Give our men two strings to their bow as our Methodist cousins have, who have gone out there and it will not be so difficult to find recruits. I thank you, Mr. Editor, for the generous space afforded for these articles. The great importance of the subject itself, and its far reaching bearings are apology for occupying so large a place in your columns.

Lindsay, Sep., 1883.

JAMES HASTIE.

P. S.—It is only proper to add that the omission of any scheme for the settlement of strong and self-supporting congregations is intentional on the writer's part. To attempt too sweeping a change at once would be to accomplish nothing.

Peu à peu, "little by little," in this matter. On the principle that weak folk and sickly need more tending and earlier than whole and robust natures, it is here proposed to first attend to the ailments of our "supplemented" charges, and self-supporting ones which do not rise above \$750 stipend.

Then, when by and by the benefits of this new departure have become widely patent, larger congregations will get their eyes opened to the folly of hear-