

all her sacrifices in the interest of spiritual freedom and independence. The Committee does not recognize the changes which have taken place in the matter of patronage as affecting the Erastianism against which the Free Church protested. It states frankly and kindly the opinion that in present circumstances the two Churches are far from a union upon the only basis which one of them could conscientiously approve. On the other hand, the deliverance of the Established Assembly "renews the expression of their hearty desire to take all possible steps consistent with the maintenance and support of an establishment of religion to promote the co-operation in good works, and the re-union of churches having a common origin, adhering to the same confession of faith, and the same system of government and worship." There is a dead-lock between the parties; the Claim of Right and the Protest clashing with the maintenance and support of the present Establishment of Religion. But we doubt not the negotiating parties will be led by the grace of God to see eye to eye, and the way will in Divine Providence be made clear for the re-union of both on honourable terms. At least let us hope and pray for this most desirable result.

The immediate benefit which will issue from the friendly communications which have taken place between the Committees of these sister Churches, will be the more hearty co-operation of the ministers and congregations in the great work of reform in reference to the evils which they both so deeply deplore. There has already been a good deal of fraternal exchange in the matter of pulpits, as there is also between the ministers of both these Churches and those of the United Presbyterian. The more of this the better for the country now and for the successful accomplishment of union in the future. But the principal matter to consider in this connection is thus stated in the reply of the Free Church Committee, "They feel assured that the Free Church will receive with very great interest such further communications as to the recognition which each Church accords to the other with reference to the fields it occupies and the work it performs. In some departments there may be practical difficulties in the meantime; but in other departments particularly in the foreign field, friendly arrangements would not only be eminently desirable, but thoroughly practicable." These are noble words, most promising for the work of Christ throughout the world, and containing in germ form the true basis of re-union. They are a happy response to the corresponding words to be found in the deliverance of the Established Assembly: "They renew their injunction to ministers to cultivate in their work the spirit of unity and the habit of co-operation with the ministers of all other Evangelical Churches." With such sentiments animating both parties, ultimate re-union is still probable.

What a commentary is all this upon the movements of the anti-unionists in this country? Without any such dead-lock as we have described between the Established and Free Churches of Scotland, the different branches

of Presbyterians in the Dominion were able to unite on an honourable and lasting basis. The very thing which the Establishment at home desires so earnestly, these, her would-be loyal sons, heedlessly fling from them and trample under foot.

### THE BIBLE IN OUR SCHOOLS.

IN advocating the use of the Bible in our schools, as we have from time to time been doing, we do not plead for any innovation. We can base our claim on conservative principles. Time was when the Bible was used in all, or in nearly all, our schools, and with good results. The evils arising from its disuse are already apparent. The greater part of modern infidelity and scepticism arises from ignorance of the Sacred Writings. The very leaders of the infidelity of the present day are woefully deficient in knowledge, not only of the principles of Christianity, but of the very letter of the Scriptures. We plead, not for the introduction of the Bible into our public schools, but for its preservation and use in them. We are not aware that it has been entirely set aside except in those schools in which Dr. Ryerson's cast-iron programme, which did not recognize it, was most strictly adhered to; and the present Minister of Education has declared that its use is quite consistent with the existing school law. Further, in this matter we, as a people, are in quite a different position from that occupied by the people of the United States, for example. Our civil Government recognizes Christianity and the Bible. The common law of England takes Christianity for granted, and admits the Bible as part and parcel of its substance. We are not very loud in our admiration of signs and symbols when used in connection with ecclesiastical matters, but we do think a good deal of the cross on the British flag.

Our attention has been specially called to this subject at the present time by an article in the March number of the "Canada Educational Monthly." It is written by the Rev. John Laing, M.A., of Dundas, and it treats the subject in a terse, comprehensive, and still in an exhaustive manner. After forcibly and conclusively shewing the folly and unreasonableness of the Spartan policy of allowing the State to interfere between parent and child, and proving that the child should be dealt with by the State only through the parent, Mr. Laing proceeds to combat the dictum that "the State as such has no religion, and should know no religion." This theory arose out of a necessary and praiseworthy opposition to Erastianism; but in opposing that evil it is quite possible to go over the fence on the other side of the road, and this Mr. Laing demonstrates with convincing clearness. He then replies to the objection that "the jealousies and rivalries among Protestant denominations render any religious instruction in schools impracticable," as follows:

"Were this true, we would only say the more shame and pity, and a remedy must be found by individual denominations in the establishment of denominational schools. This would be a less evil than to give our children a purely secular education. But the objection is opposed to fact, for: (1) In many places, in the past, the Bible has been taught, and in many public schools it is now taught, with the cordial

approval of, and perfect harmony among all the Protestant churches. (2) In our private schools and denominational colleges no objection is made to the religious instruction given, and still they are attended by pupils of all denominations. (3) So far are many Protestants from any deep feeling on this subject that they even send their daughters to convent schools, while they dissent entirely from the religious instruction and observances of these institutions. (4) In the national schools of London, England, where the Bible is read and prizes are given for excellence in Scripture knowledge, 'with respect to the 150,000 children, being the total number in the schools, only fifty parents withdrew their children from religious instruction (i.e., one in three thousand); nor was a single complaint made of improper interference during the seven years in which the regulation has been in force.' These facts furnish a complete answer to the objection, showing as they do that the Bible can be used in schools without infringing on individual rights of conscience or disturbing the harmony that should exist among neighbours who though belonging to different Protestant churches, hold in common the prime authority of the word of God."

Surely the danger of sectarian teaching is not so imminent as to furnish good reason for the exclusion of the Bible from our public schools. The common ground of accepted truth among Protestant denominations is wide and easily defined. Of all sects the infidel sect is the narrowest and most bigotted. The injury inflicted on our children by leaving them without religious instruction is much greater than any that could arise from sectarian teaching. There is a theological college in Australia in which students belonging to three or four different denominations are prepared for the ministry of their respective churches, and it is said to work well. If the professors of a theological institute can find common ground whereon to train ministers of different denominations to preach the gospel, surely a public school teacher can be at no loss to keep himself and his pupils clear of sectarianism as far as they go. It is all very right and proper for us to maintain our peculiar principles when that is necessary, but it is utter folly to sacrifice our common Christianity to denominational scruples. Besides it is not strictly in the interests of religion alone that the Bible is required in our schools. As Mr. Laing says:

"The Bible lies at the foundation of the British constitution and law; and is the bulwark of liberty and only safeguard against anarchy. We need not tarry to dilate on this point. Our beloved Queen and her advisers, by many a worthy word and deed have illustrated it. The coronation oath, the oath of allegiance, the laws regarding an established church, the Sabbath, marriage, evidence in courts, as well as those against Atheism, licentiousness, perjury, etc., all more or less directly rest on the authority of the higher law of God. In our own Ontario a decision given last year in the Court of Appeal by Chief Justice Moss, which affirmed the right of the authorities of Nanapanee to refuse the use of public property—the town hall—for the purpose of proclaiming atheistical and infidel sentiments was based on the fact that our law assumes the truth of Christianity. Surely then our children should be taught that book which so powerfully influences the conduct of state affairs. But the Bible alone teaches the principles of true liberty and obedience. The man who fears God will vindicate his own rights and respect those of others. Tyrants in church and state fear and hate the Bible. They cannot enslave and trample on those whom God's truth has made free."

We have not space for further extracts from Mr. Laing's valuable article, which we are glad to find occupying a position which is apt to render it effective, in the columns of the "Educational Monthly," neither can we make room for any further remarks of our own at present, but we will probably return to the subject shortly.

WORK resolutely for some great purpose in life; make up your mind to that, and never relinquish it. But remember the infirmities of your own nature, to guard against them. Remember that hours of despondency will come, and days from which the light will seem to be utterly shut out.

A HABIT of self-discipline indicates a want of self-discipline. The machinery has got from under our hands, and has fallen to grating and destroying itself under the friction and perplexities of life. "Possess thyself" is a more important rule than "Know thyself." Without this primary virtue, we are not in a condition to receive much good ourselves or to afford aid to others.