

necessary to complete, to elevate, to ennoble and to unify all the other instruction of the school, does not common sense demand that the simplest, most direct means available should be used to impart such a training? Where is a knowledge of the ethics of morality so clearly stated as in the Bible—a morality which lives and grows and gathers force and will continue to grow until it fills the world? Then the constitution of our country and our public institutions such as our Law Courts, our Parliament and Legislature, all acknowledge their dependence upon a divine Being and base the relation of man to man and of man to the state upon the morality taught in the Bible. Is not this reason sufficient in itself why future citizens, presumably good citizens, should be taught the principles upon which the morality they are to practice is based?

But it is contended that the State has no business to teach religion. Undoubtedly this contention is correct, if by religion is meant sectarianism. But when it is remembered that the "Conscience of Christianity is more potent as a police agent than the standing armies which enforce the wills of the most powerful despots," this is a peremptory reason for the state seeing that each child is receiving proper religious and moral instruction, for what is put in the schools is certainly found in the country.

In addition to using the Bible as a text-book to inculcate morality, there is another phase of the subject which must not be overlooked. Our literature is so permeated with allusions to Bible truths and circumstances, that one ignorant of this book cannot appreciate much of what is finest and best. We think in its style; we feel in its imagery; and whatever our creed,

our highest and most lofty aspirations find their natural expression there. The Bible is a great book of literature and history. It is the classic of classics. In its descriptions, its poetry, its illustrations, its interpretations of life, it is peerless. Judged by every canon of literary criticism it is the most beautiful, most inspiring, most ennobling, and most fascinating literature in the world, and which itself has exerted and is exerting an unparalleled influence upon our best literature. To keep a child ignorant of this book is to exclude him from his just heritage.

But although the Bible is the great text book of civilization and contains the most marvellous literature ever penned and is the only manual of Christian ethics, there are difficulties, grave difficulties, to its use in Public Schools. It is usual to associate the Bible and theology together and to regard it as impossible to teach it except from the standpoint of creed, thus enabling the teacher to enforce his peculiar sectarian tenets upon his pupils. This fear of sectarianism has no doubt influenced those responsible for our Public School system in making the present provisions for the use of the Bible in schools. There is real force in the objection. Few teachers are religiously colorless. Almost every one has a religious bias of which he finds it difficult to divest himself when he reads the Bible. With some parts he is very familiar and holds in peculiar esteem. His questions and remarks show his bias in spite of all he may do conscientiously to appear unprejudiced. If our teachers are trained to know the Bible as a book of literature and history and ethics, in the same way as they know Arithmetic or Grammar, this objection would rapidly