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## The Educational Weekly

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TORONTO, APRIL 22, 1886.

At the last meeting of the Toronto Public School Board there was an exceedingly animated discussion on a curious motion, viz., that "The secretary be instructed to have all the Scripture text-books now in use in the schools collected at once and returned to this office, so that the teachers may not have a chance to use them, and that the inspector be instructed to see that the Bible is read as heretofore in all the public schools in this city." The chairman left the chair and opposed the motion. He defended the action of the Ontario Government in authorizing the books. "They met a want long felt in the schools. Although he believed that the Bible ought to be read by everyone from beginning to end, because good could be got from it, at the

same time there were certain portions of it which he would be sorry to read at morning prayer before his family and visitors, and which would make him feel humiliated. The Bible had never been turned out of the schools, and he hoped it never would be. As long as they had such men in the Ministry of Ontario and in the Opposition as at present, they would never have the Bible put out of the Public schools of the province. In the text-book certain portions of the Bible had been wisely left out. He could not understand why the motion had been brought forward. The only reason he could assign was that it was done to get a political slap at the Minister of Education. At present the books were only used as a guide by the teachers in making selections." Another member argued in reply, that "the chapters were mutilated for the purpose of confusing the pupil, although they contained nothing objectionable, in order to compel the pupils to purchase the books. It was a scheme of a body of speculators to make money by supplanting the old book. He said that the Bible should be put back in its original place in the schools." In the end the motion was put and carried by fifteen to four.

This is only a phase of the vexed "Bible in Schools" question. To us it seems that the matter lies in a nutshell. What is the avowed object of the reading of the Bible or of selections from the Bible in schools? Is it not to inculcate a high standard of morality? And will this high standard be in any way lowered if, instead of the Scriptures being read in their entirety, such portions as best conduce to teaching high principles of virtue be put in their place? Can there be any but one answer to this? Will vice be encouraged by a hiatus in the context, or truth be distorted if we omit details regarding the "little horn" or the "great beasts"? And after all, if the whole Bible is to be read, can teachers do more than make selections? To speak of the Bible being read in its entirety in schools is a stretch of imagination.

The following question was asked of the *School Journal* (New York and Chicago): "I am teaching a district school. My average attendance is thirty-five; ages ranging from five to eighteen years. I find it very difficult to keep the whole school at work all the time. I have graded them to the best of my ability, and have five grades. I could manage to superintend two or three grades, but the fourth and fifth are two too many. Could you offer any suggestions?" The answer was as follows. "Go to a town. Walk through some large toy store and expend a dollar or two for your scholars. You cannot take the time to interest little scholars continually, with five grades on your hands. They must amuse themselves. You must furnish the means. Purchase a box of toy money. When the weather is pleasant send them out to play store, breathe the pure air, exercise, and learn more in number than you can teach them in the school-room. Have three or four beautifully coloured picture books on your desk, and a box of coloured crayons—*strong ones*. They will never weary of them. You can guide them much or not at all in their use, and they will be happy and quiet. Another very pleasing diversion is one of the kindergarten gifts, weaving coloured paper into mats; and still another, card swans, monkeys, etc., cut in so that the pencil may be inserted in the slashes, and the figure traced on the paper or slate underneath. The above is designed simply for occupation after their little lessons are prepared and recited, or to fill up the long time between their recitations. Cultivate a taste for drawing. If a child in the C grade is idle, hand him his drawing-book or writing-book. If he has neither, place a knife, a lunch basket—some familiar object in a conspicuous place for him to draw. Send him to the board to draw a map. If you can get a little beach sand and a top to an old chest, convert it into a moulding-board, and send the unemployed here. Keeping them busy is the key to good discipline."