

trious plagiarists. Let us renounce the pseudo-original, and be satisfied with the materials at hand. Let us not wait too long, or pray too earnestly for the inspiration of originality, lest we also produce a Frankenstein monster, endowed with all the elements of

vitality but the soul-spark, the essence of the immortal genius; a cold corpse fashioned from the clay of an uncongenial clime, that we cannot hope to animate with a spirit of its own, and that cannot be made to accord with the spirit of another.

THEOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY W. D. LESUEUR. OTTAWA.

IT must be a great satisfaction to all who are interested in the question of Bible teaching in the Public Schools to find so competent a writer as the Rev. Mr. Macdonnell coming forward to take part in the discussion. The reverend gentleman finds matter for criticism in my "Open Letter to the Public and High School Teachers of Ontario," published in the December number of this magazine; and, as he seems to call upon me for a further defence of the position I have taken, I have much pleasure in responding to the challenge of so courteous and reasonable—let me add so liberal—an opponent.

Let us see what it is we want to know. We want to know, if I mistake not, whether in a country like Canada, in which there is no State Church, and, professedly, no State recognition of any particular theology, the Bible should be used in the schools with a warrant from the State that it is the Word of God. That is the only question that I have set myself to discuss. To the use of the Bible as a text book merely, on a par with other text books, and subject to the same free handling as other text books, I have never objected, nor had occasion to object, for the simple reason that no one has ever proposed such a use of it. Those who demand its use in the schools demand that it shall be used *as the Word of God*, and

in no other character. But how is its use in that character exclusively to be secured? By making it compulsory upon teachers to introduce it to their scholars in that character, and punishing those teachers who present it in any other light. Therefore, I say the question is, whether the State should enjoin the use of the Bible in the schools and authoritatively declare it to be the Word of God. I have tried to show cause why the State should not do this. I have impugned the competency of the State to decide any such question. I have maintained that it is not the business of the State—under our system of government at least—to decide such questions. The case is different where there is a State Church acting as a co-ordinate branch of the government. In that case the secular power can refer to the spiritual authorities all questions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and can proceed to visit with condign punishment all heretical persons, and, in a general way, give effect to the directions of the Church in spiritual matters. But here we have no established spiritual authority to refer to. If Mr. Mowat wants guidance upon a point of law he can consult himself as Attorney-General; but if he wants guidance as to the inspiration of the Scriptures, there is no one officially qualified and authorized to advise him. Now it does seem to me that I