

casting themselves loose from their old theology; whether their movement on the "down grade" is as rapid and ominous as Mr. Spurgeon fears, or whether they will be led to a grasp of more Catholic doctrine as we must hope, remains yet to be seen. The following is extracted from the *Globe* of 8th December.

Referring to Mr. Spurgeon's withdrawal from the Baptist Union, one of the members of the Baptist Union Council expressed himself in the following fashion: "Again and again, Mr. Spurgeon has declared that many Baptist ministers deny inspiration, reject the atonement, and make light of future punishment. Who? Where are they? When have they done so? The charge is calumnious. . . . To be plain, Calvinism has had its day. It is sick unto death. All the restoratives so diligently administered by its friends will not save it. Thank Heaven the world has out-grown it, and has nothing for it but a smile of pity on account of its ignorance. One leg is in the grave, where will the other be in fifty years? There let it lie forever."

This revolt from Calvinism must not be confounded with infidelity, as it is by Mr. Spurgeon; though, of course, it may lead to it, unless the void caused by its rejection is filled with better doctrine. The Calvinism of the *Confession of Faith* and of the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, of which Mr. Skelton has given a condensed summary—which has its logical outcome in the doctrines of Mr. Spurgeon, and its distortion in the works of Toplady and other Evangelicals in the Church of England—is doomed, doomed beyond all hope, in spite of the "restoratives so diligently administered" by little schools of divinity calling themselves "Protestant and Evangelical." Something more sound, more healthy, more amenable to reason, more in accordance with the better instinct of humanity, more worthy of an Almighty and All Loving Father—and all this is afforded by Catholic doctrine—must take its place, or the thinking portion of the Protestant world will speedily drift into the unbelief of Col. Ingersoll.

G. J. L.

## QUESTIONS PERPLEXING.

SIR,—If you will kindly lend me space in your valuable and instructive paper for a few questions, which are perplexing in the last degree to me, I shall be very much pleased and relieved. I have noticed some very interesting sketches on the present season of the year in your paper of late, but still I cannot see any strong point brought out in it to convince obstinate people of the holiness of the Lenten season, so I refer to you for light on the subject. Will you kindly inform me if a fairly good Christian should abstain from all gaieties, such as dancing parties, cards, etc., during Lent, and if so, why? My opinion is that one should make some sacrifice or self-denial to acknowledge the command made by the Church, but that one is not supposed to abstain from all worldly affairs any more than at any other time of the year. Christ fasted for forty days, but did not Moses and Elizabeth fast also? Of course, He was of greater consequence than they, but it was a greater sacrifice from them than it was from Him, for could He not have fasted eighty days as well as forty? or at any other time? We are told to keep it in commemoration, but may we not commemorate it as we would a joyful, as well as a sad festival? Now, if you will kindly enlighten me on the above I will be greatly obliged. I am seventeen years of age, and a member of the Episcopal Church for two years, and when my friends have asked me why I would not go to dances in Lent I told them it was wrong, but I do not know why, only that my parents have raised me in that belief, so when I am pressed further I hope I will be able to give better reasons if you will kindly give this your consideration, and if you think or can prove that it is wrong to do so, I will close hoping to see this in your interesting columns.

Respectfully yours,

"Enquirer."

## THE BOOK OF SELECTIONS.

SIR,—I have no desire to trespass unduly on your correspondence columns, but the position taken up in your last issue appears to me so entirely at variance with the facts of the case; as well as distinctly opposed to the action of the Church since 1882, that I must ask permission to state my reasons for so thinking.

First, as to what has been done by the Education Department. I have nothing to add to what I stated before that it is "perfectly open to any School Board to use either the Book or the list of Readings as they desire." How I could imply under these circumstances that all that has been done to provide a lectionary, I do not know. The regulations, which are reprinted in the new Scripture Readers, are very plain and speak for themselves. "The Scriptures shall be read daily and systematically, without comment or explanation, the portions used may be taken from the Book of Selections appointed by the Depart-

ment for that purpose, or from the Bible, as the trustees by direction may select." Further, trustees may also order the reading of the Bible or the authorized Scripture Selections by both pupils and teachers, at the opening and closing of the schools."

It is, I think, quite clear, first, that a Book of Scripture Readings has been prepared and issued, secondly, that when the use of a book is objected to, the trustees may order the Bible to be read, either using the list published by the Department, or, if they prefer, may order the Bible to be read without any such list, at the sole pleasure of the teacher.

Whatever objections may be against this arrangement, it certainly cannot be said to be an interference of the government with the use of the Bible in the Schools. The local trustees are made the sole arbiters as to the form in which the Bible should be read. The Bible is neither prohibited, nor put under any ban.

Secondly, As to the reason for the issue of Selections at all, or as you put it, "Who demands a Ross Bible?"

The DOMINION CHURCHMAN is quite confident, not only that the only argument for this is the dictum of Archbishop Lynch, but also that this fact is known to every person of ordinary intelligence. Surely the ordinary sources of information were sufficient to at least greatly modify, if not entirely exclude, this view. On referring to the Toronto papers of Oct. 25th, 1882, there will be found an account of a gathering of one of the largest and most influential representations of all the religious bodies of Ontario, except the Roman Catholics, ever held, at which gathering, after full discussion, a memorandum was adopted and presented the same day to the Ontario government, on the subject of religious education in the Public Schools. These accredited representatives of the several dioceses of the Church of England and of the other Protestant bodies, formally petitioned the government to authorize and make obligatory in all the Public and High Schools, the use of selections from the Sacred Scriptures. To quote the words of the memorandum: "The passages of Holy Scripture to be read each day, being described by the Department in conformity with the recommendations of a committee of this conference, or of some other representatives of the various religious bodies in Ontario." It was afterwards urged that such selections should be placed in the hands of the pupils as well as of the teachers. This is the reason for the Book of Selections, and the action of the government in issuing such selections was called forth by the demand of every Protestant body in the community—Churchmen, Wesleyans, Presbyterians, generally, united in asking for authorized Scripture selections. When the Book was issued it was accordingly welcomed by the Bishop of Toronto in his opening address to the synod of 1885, and the report of the committee was unanimously adopted, recognizing the issue of the Book of Selections as a great onward step taken by the government of the province. At a later time when further opportunity had been given for careful examination of the volume, it was discovered that some of the selections were open to grave objections in regard to their nature and composition. It was freely stated that such objectionable features were due to Roman Catholic influence. My own conviction, having carefully examined the matter and been chiefly engaged in it from the first, is, that the faults were due to the rationalising tendencies of the original compiler. One thing at any rate is certain, that the great mistake made by the representative committee was in consenting to revise selections already prepared, instead of undertaking the work of preparing the selections from the beginning, as has now been done. Whatever opinions may be held on this point, the resolutions of the synod of Toronto of 1887 conclusively show that the synod has not departed from the position previously expressed by its representatives—of desiring an authorized list of selected passages to be placed in the hands of the teachers, rather than entrusting the teachers with the duty of selecting any passage at will. The synod of 1887 endorsed the report of the committee, that "for the reading of the Bible in Public and High Schools, enjoined by the regulations of the Education Department, an authorized calendar of readings selected by a joint committee appointed by the various religious bodies of Ontario, should be issued by the government." I repeat, therefore, that the reason for what you call "a Ross Bible," viz., the selecting certain portions from the Sacred Scriptures for use in the Public Schools has been the action both of the Church of England and other religious bodies of this province for five years past, and I am confident to leave the Church and other Protestant bodies to defend themselves against the charge you prefer, of thereby making "an open declaration to every child in the province that the Scriptures are unfit for instructing the young." One remark more to prevent misconception: you quote from Dr. Eldersheim as to the importance of the Old Testament, adding, "which the Ross Bible so largely withholds." It is clear from this remark that your strong aversion

to the Book of Scripture Selections must have stood in the way of a personal acquaintance with that volume—both in the first Edition and in the New Reader, the Old Testament lessons occupy considerably more than one-half of the whole Book. In the first Edition, 198 pages were taken from the Old Testament out of a total of 360, and it will not be necessary to say any thing further to prove that the Old Testament is not "largely withheld" in the Scripture Readers.

C. W. E. BODY.

We shall not pursue the controversy as to this unfortunate affair. Provost Body seems to have kept himself wholly uninformed as to the reception the Ross Bible met with from such men as Canon Dumoulin. Had he no respect to the Synod, &c.? We very much regret that our correspondent utterly ignores the great excitement which the province manifested over the Ross Bible, hundreds of articles were published and many scores of speeches were made against it, almost every clergyman openly condemned it, and we had scores of letters from eminent laymen thanking us for our outspoken opposition. To write to us now explaining the origin and purpose of the Ross Bible, as though the topic were new, is somewhat a trial of patience; it is very ancient history, and in view of the fact that that book is now withdrawn, is somewhat irrelevant. We are thankful that this corpse bears the mark of our sword! Down amongst the dead men let it lie.

Even the Provost admits that that book showed "rationalising tendencies." A very pretty state of affairs, truly, for the Church of England to be committed to a reading book for the young showing rationalising, that is infidel, tendencies! And this rationalising book was sent forth to be a substitute for the Bible! The Provost gives away his case when he quotes the report of the synod committee to the effect that they recommend, mark, not a substitute for the Bible, as has been done, but "an authorized Calendar of readings." Now a Calendar involves the use of the Bible in the schools, but the Book of Selections involves the ejection of the Bible from the schools! If the Provost sees no difference then between a calendar and a book of selections, well, all we can say is that his vision is not perfect. The Bible is now practically under the ban of the Education Department, the next inevitable step will be to put it under the ban of public opinion, by a generation growing up who were educated without ever seeing a Bible, but only hearing of it as a book that was not allowed to be used in a large number of schools. We have delivered our souls in this matter, and now throw this terrible responsibility upon those who in this crisis have given, we believe, the most serious blow to the Bible it has ever yet received in Ontario.

Ed. D. C.

## SKETCH OF LESSON.

3RD SUNDAY IN LENT.

MAR. 4TH, 1888.

Israel's Backslidings.

Passage to be read.—Judges ii. 11-23.

The lesson describes how God put Israel to the test; and what was the result of the trial.

I. *Israel Proved.*—You remember what we learned about the Conquest? It was not perfect or complete. The Canaanites were not quite driven out; they lived in some places amongst the Israelites. Perhaps some of the Israelites had no wish to drive them out, and did not try to do so. The Canaanites were heathens, many of them very wicked. God had kept them among the Israelites to prove His people. For a long time (until the death of Joshua), Israel did well, but afterwards they fell away.

II. *Apostasy and Punishment.*—It is a sad thing to see one going wrong, especially one who has known the right way! This is often through bad company. If we read the twelfth verse of our lesson, we shall notice how sadly Israel fell away. "They forsook the Lord God of their fathers." They showed ingratitude and folly. "They mingled among the heathen, and learned their works." Then God left them to themselves, and the Canaanites oppressed and plundered them. Their land became one great scene of distress and misery.

III. *Repentance and Deliverance.*—While the Israelites were prosperous, they forgot God. When grievous trouble and oppression fell upon them, they cried to Him for help. A bitter wail rises up to Heaven, "God be merciful—Lord help us—Deliver us for Thy name's sake." And God's marvellous mercy and long suffering is shown in that He hears their cry and sends a