

be a less evil than to give our children a purely secular education. But the objection is opposed to facts, 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 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 which should exist among neighbours, who though belonging to different Protestant churches, hold in common the prime authority of the Word of God.

The space allotted us will allow of little more than the statement of some reasons why the Bible should have a place among our school books. Our readers must for themselves consider the full bearing and wide reach of what may be suggested.

1. We claim in the schools of Ontario a place for the Bible by *prescriptive right*. Our province has drawn

her colonists from many countries. In the fatherland of all these colonists the Bible was a school book. In England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Sweden, this was the case. In all reformed countries the zeal for education was the result of a deep conviction that nothing but acquaintance with Scripture truth would be a safe-guard against the assaults of Popery, or secure for the nations the religious liberty they had come to enjoy. Hence the determination to have a church in every parish and a school beside every church, where the young might learn to read the Bible and be instructed in Christian doctrine. In these schools the Bible and catechism were the books first and chiefly used. Modern scientific education had not been dreamed of, and literary attainments were a secondary object, aimed at by a very few.

When these colonists reached this western land, they founded schools, which did good service before the present more efficient system had been devised on the Alpine heights. A principal part of the work of these schools was Biblical and religious instruction. When these primitive schools had become merged in the Common Schools, the Bible was still taught. After a time in the hope that our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens would unite with Protestants in support of a national system, the Bible was to a great extent dropped to avoid giving them offence. The hope was vain. Our Common Schools, bereft of their religious teaching, were denounced as godless, and the state was forced to establish and maintain Separate Schools in which the religion of the Romish Church is taught. Why then shall not the Bible be restored to the place it ere-while held? Why should Protestants be denied the privilege which Roman Catholics enjoy? We only plead for a restoration of a precious privilege which for