

week by week that, while they may prosecute all other studies in common, they must be parcelled out into "denominational" folds before they can receive any spiritual nutriment. I regard the plan pursued by the ministers of three churches in Port Perry, according to which the children are taught together by each minister in his turn, as a very much better one. That it has been successful in Port Perry is evidence that it is quite possible for the representatives of various branches of the church to agree on a basis of religious instruction common to them all. This plan might, I believe, be followed in many small towns and villages.

While, however, it is a good thing to have religious instruction given once a week for half an hour or an hour by clergymen, it would be better to have it given *daily* by the teachers. Fifteen or twenty minutes each day devoted to this object at the beginning rather than at the end of the school hours, would produce a marked effect in the course of two or three years. The ignorance of the contents of the Bible, which is now so lamentable, would give place to some measure of intelligent acquaintance with the teachings of the Book, and the devout teacher would often find in the lesson material to be used as a moral lever throughout the day. I believe that the majority of teachers in the schools of Ontario are capable of giving such instruction. I have no means of knowing how many Agnostics or Secularists there are amongst the Public School teachers: I should suppose them to be extremely few. Such cases would have to be treated as exceptional: there might be a conscience clause for teachers as well as for scholars. If Christian parents were sufficiently alive to the importance of the matter under discussion Boards of Trustees would be obliged to take into account a candidate's fitness to give religious instruction.

The training of a child cannot be properly carried on except by a religious man or woman: if a community is convinced of the truth of this statement, it will not employ Secularist or unbelieving teachers. The Secularist must then find employment in a community of persons indifferent as to the religious element in the training of their children, or he must turn his attention to some department of labour in which his non-Christian opinions will not interfere with the discharge of his duty. If this is regarded by Mr. L<sup>e</sup> Sueur as putting a man at a disadvantage on account of his religious opinions, I can only say that it is a disadvantage arising from the nature of things, and that to banish religious instruction from the schools lest the interests of some Secularist should suffer would be to place the overwhelming majority of parents at a very decided "disadvantage."

I have no fear that teachers would take advantage of their position to inculcate sectarian views. The realm of truth common to all branches of the Church of Christ is enormous in comparison with the patches which have been hedged in here and there for private use. A sense of honour and decency would keep a teacher from introducing the distinguishing tenets of his own church.

The plan of having religious instruction given by the regular teachers has been tried for many years, I understand, in the Board Schools of the City of London, and has been found to work smoothly and well. If it has succeeded in England, it is more likely to succeed in Ontario, for there is no country in which there is greater harmony amongst Protestant Christians than in Canada. I, for one, shall rejoice if the real unity which exists underneath the superficial diversity of Protestant views of Biblical doctrine can be manifested in connection with religious teaching in the Public Schools.