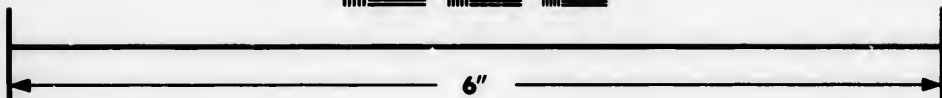
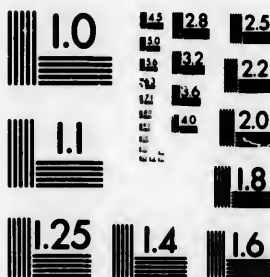


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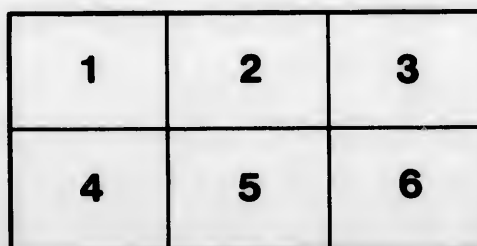
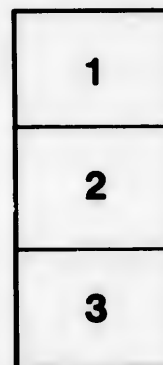
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RELIGION
IN THE SCHOOL:

A PROTEST.

BY THE

REV. WM. ROBERTSON, M.A.,

CHESTERFIELD.

PRICE, 10 CENTS.

TORONTO:
GLOBE PRINTING AND ENGRAVING COMPANY.

1882.

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RELIGION
IN THE SCHOOL

A PROTEST

REV. W. M. ROBERTSON, M. A.

CHICAGO

PUBLISHED BY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

1882

THE BIBLE
AND THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The Premier of Ontario has been waited on by deputations from the Church Courts of leading Christian denominations in the Province, pleading for a modification in the educational system as at present established, with respect to religious instruction. The number, dignity and representative character of these delegates indicate that the object of their mission is deemed of vital importance by the Courts that appointed them. The high motives of those urging this movement are recognized by the Christian community, and the end contemplated by them commends itself to every thoughtful mind as being worthy of the most earnest solicitude. And yet there are features in the proposed measure fitted to awaken anxiety in the minds of all concerned in maintaining a system of public instruction, and which seem to call for vigilance, if not also firm opposition, on the part of all who recognize the importance of the relations of Church and State being rightly adjusted. A glance at the nature of the proposed change will justify this view of its gravity. As the law now stands, it is the privilege of School Trustees to introduce the Bible into the

schools under their charge, if they deem it proper to do so, that it may be reverently read in connection with devotional exercises, at the beginning of each day's work ; this permission being supplemented by a recommendation, on the part of the Educational Department, that it should be taken advantage of by trustees as far as possible. The proposed emendation makes the reading of the Holy Scripture, together with the prescribed prayers issued by the Department, an *obligatory* exercise ; the passages of Scripture to be read each day being prescribed by the Department. But both in the law as it now stands, and in the proposed measure, provision is made that " no child shall be compelled to be present at religious instruction, reading or exercise, against the wish of his parents or guardians, expressed in writing."

The two measures evidently rest upon entirely different views of the relation of the civil government to the religious interests of the community. It is affirmed that this distinction is only apparent, and that in this respect they really stand on the same level, inasmuch as, under the present permissive law, the determination of school boards, who are Government officials, are as obligatory as if they issued from the central authority. A little consideration will show that this view of the matter entirely misinterprets the significance of the law as it now stands ; failing to perceive in its form, what it was plainly designed to express, the advance of public opinion in respect to the freedom and independence and voluntary character of religion. The present law carries with it by implication, the acknowledgment, on the part of the State, that

the religious training of the young lies beyond its province. The permission accorded to school boards is of the nature of a compromise with the Christian community, complaining that under existing arrangements sufficient opportunity is not afforded to them for attending to the religious wants of their children.

In the present exigency, the State, recognizing the importance of religion in education, allows the public schools and their machinery to be used for supplementing voluntary Christian effort. But a better order of things is anticipated, when the arrangements of Church and State, in regard to educational work, will be more finely adjusted. It will thus appear that the present school boards, in the use of the privilege accorded to them with respect to the Bible in the School, are to be regarded for the time being, not as Government officials, but as representatives of the Christian people who elected them to office; and that, as far as possible, the State, in this act, divests itself of responsibility for religious instruction, laying it on the shoulders of the people, to whom it rightly belongs.

Very different, however, from the spirit of this arrangement is that of the proposed amendment. The latter assumes that the State is responsible for the religious instruction of the children under its supervision, and justified in using the public funds for promoting this end. It asserts also the competency of the Department to determine the nature and amount of spiritual food that shall be served out to the children. It virtually says that, whereas, by weak submission to voluntary sentiment, the Legislature have heretofore allowed the children to suffer in respect to

their highest interests through the laxity of school boards, and wide-spread indifference among the people themselves, it is their duty, forthwith, to resume their proper functions, and link the Bible in the schools with the authority of positive law. The authority thus given to the State to prescribe in the matters of religion is really of a very despotic character. The same conscience clause indeed is appended to the proposed measure as to the law now in force, but it has a very different significance in the one connection from what it has in the other. As connected with the present law, that clause is a frank acknowledgment of the people's right to judge for themselves in the domain of conscience. The responsibility already thrown, as far as possible, on the people, is still further devolved on the individual. But in connection with the proposed measure, it is a mere concession, as if to ignorance or weakness, on the part of one deemed competent to judge what is for the best interests of the children, and responsible for the maintenance of their rights. If, for instance, the majority of the people should at any time urge that the rights of the children of the minority for religious instruction were being ignorantly, wantonly or perversely sacrificed, and that there was need for interference, the proposed measure could suggest no other reason than that of expediency, why, as in connection with other branches of education, compulsory legislation should not be resorted to.

It will thus appear that, though the change proposed seems at first sight a very small matter, it really proposes an action, on the part of the Government,

affecting great principles, in harmony with which the existing institutions of the Province have been largely shaped. It is evidently a retrograde movement, of the most serious character, from advancing public opinion in this and other lands in favor of the separation of religious interests and agencies from State control. It seems also strangely out of accord with the principles of His government, who so explicitly declared, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and while contemplating an immediate advantage in the interests of religion, to lose sight of others of wider comprehension and more vital importance. It is with the view of leading to the consideration of the subject in these fundamental aspects that the following remarks are offered.

I.

The proposed change cannot be conceded, on the part of the civil government, without overstepping its legitimate province.

The outlines of a divine order, in harmony with which the work of the Church in the world should be arranged, were laid down by the Master himself before His departure into the far country, and, under His directions, were more clearly defined by His apostles. In these instructions, the Church was solemnly guarded against all alliances with the kingdoms of this world, and for the advancement of His cause she was taught to rely on himself, and without the aids of secular power, to work on in the spirit of love. During long ages this order was violated by adulterous unions into which the Church entered

with the world. It was only after bitter experience of suffering, and when awakened to the consciousness of her deprivation of spiritual power, that the necessity of reverting to the original order began to dawn upon her mind, and that organized efforts were put forth by her members in order to realize it. But even where it is now clearly understood and candidly acknowledged, as is for the most part the case throughout this country, that the ordinary work of the Church is most successfully accomplished in freedom from and independence of State support and control, the idea lingers in many minds that, for the religious instruction and training of the young, an alliance with the State cannot be dispensed with. Surely, however, it cannot be that the principles, in harmony with which the other arrangements of the household have been made, do not extend to those which have reference to the children. On whom then does the responsibility rest for the religious instruction of the young? Who all are responsible for their nurture and training, and is it possible to define with accuracy their respective obligations? In fine, what is the duty of the Church in this Province with respect to existing arrangements?

In Christian communities, a threefold responsibility is acknowledged for the nurture and training of children, arising out of the relations in which they stand respectively, to their parents, the Church, and the State. In meeting these obligations there should be no disharmony on the part of those on whom they devolve, for in the divine order which they express, there can be no collision of duties, and conflict can

arise only through the imperfection of human arrangements. The obligations of parents, being the most deeply vital, cannot be superseded by those either of the Church or State. They run in the same direction and should harmoniously blend. The *religious* training of their offspring is the most important and inalienable branch of parental duty. No parent can neglect it without incurring great guilt. But at this point the responsibilities of the Christian Church coalesce with those of parents. It is the duty of the Church to provide for this object, in virtue not only of her constitution, which embraces the children of the Church and her organization as an aggressive power to make inroads upon the kingdom of darkness, but also of distinct divine command. Hence she holds her members responsible for the order of their households, and makes special provision for the religious instruction and training of their children; while she is greatly encouraged, in her labors of love for the children of those beyond her pale, by the discovery that even after religion has been driven out of every other department of the life, it may be found lingering at the fountain of parental love.

But further, a special training is needed by children for the intelligent and faithful discharge of the duties of their future citizen life. Without this training of their intelligence, they would be cut off to a large extent from the living world around them, and fit only to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; and it is necessary that from their earliest years their conscience should be educated to the recognition of their own rights and those of others, to a sensitive regard

for truth, and hatred of wrong. Systems of public instruction have been established in most modern states with these ends in view. Experience has sadly shown that this branch of education cannot be intrusted to mere voluntary effort; and it is now generally admitted that this duty devolves upon the State, not simply on grounds of expediency or interest, but of moral obligation. For the children belong to the State, as well as to the home or the Church. A large heritage of national life cannot indeed be claimed for the children of this land, as for those in older lands, where their very life-blood is tinged through innumerable living connections. Already, however, the hearts of the children here have begun to throb with a kind of national sentiment, and it is easy to trace in their young lives the lineaments of a forming national character. The State has thus a living interest in their welfare. They are part of her life, and on their intelligence and moral character her future depends. Thus, responsibility falls on the State, not merely for shielding those whose powers might be left uncultivated through the inability of their parents, or selfishness or ignorance, but for the adequate education of all; and experience has shown that this responsibility can be met only by a system of public instruction, in the excellence of which the obligations of parents may be duly satisfied.

But here a difficulty is encountered; religion, covering with its sanctions all human relations, and carrying in its bosom the highest moral obligations, justly claims admission to the schools, where, as in a miniature state, the children are educated and trained

for the duties and privileges of their future citizen life. This claim is all the more forcible when it is considered that moral instruction and discipline are essential features of the State's educational work, and that morality and religion, being united by a living bond, cannot be disassociated without destroying their life; the moralities of life, when severed from the divine authority which sanctions them, becoming mere conventionalities which have no nourishment in them, and can impart no vigor to a human spirit.

But can the State undertake the work of religious instruction? Shall the civil authorities determine its nature and amount; or permit the Churches, as far as they can agree, to prescribe in the matter; or is there no other way in which religion may enter into and pervade the schools without the danger of her silver plumage being ruffled by the hand of civil authority? The Church of Rome demands the control of public education in all lands where her power is dominant, and separate schools where her supremacy is not acknowledged. This demand is in harmony with her general doctrine as to the relations of Church and State. For it is maintained by her doctors that "in whatsoever things, whether essentially or by accident, the spiritual end, that is, the end of the Church, is necessarily involved, in those things, though they be temporal, the Church may by right exert its power, and the civil State ought to yield." Thus, in this Province, a dark blot fell upon the statute book, under a former Government, by their conceding the establishment of separate schools. And now, is it not strange to see the ecclesiastical courts of Protestants assuming

virtually the same attitude toward the civil power? Is not the alliance they are seeking with the State for the protection of their religious views, as far as they can agree to express them, merely a feeble reproduction of the Romish claim? If their present action is justifiable, their former opposition to and outcry against Roman Catholic separate schools was altogether unwarranted. Now, with trembling step, they hasten to follow where Rome has led the way.

It is maintained, that it is not only competent for the civil Government, but their positive duty, not simply to protect, but to take active measures for promoting the religious interests of the children of the community. This plea is urged on a variety of grounds, the sufficiency of which may well be questioned. It is argued, for instance, that under representative government it is the part of the Government to give expression to the will of the majority; of which it is assumed, in the present case, that the Church Courts represented are the exponents, though it does not appear that the mind of their constituents has ever been asked. But this is a very unworthy view of legislation. The representatives of the people are not to be regarded as mere mouthpieces for their constituents. It is their duty to determine and express the rational will of the community; and in the exercise of their functions, principle and not voices should be their guide. For majorities are shifting, and legislation has to contemplate the future, in reference to which there is no safe conduct but in adherence to principle with undeviating rectitude.

It is further urged, that both the Common and the

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Statute Law of the land are favorable to the proposed measure, and that on this ground no reason can be given for its rejection. It is true indeed, that in the Common Law of England, which this Province has received as its heritage, the idea of a civil protectorate over the Christian religion has been imbedded from time immemorial, and has found expression in countless enactments on the Statute book. But a marked change in the spirit of English legislation, with reference to religious interests, has for many years been in progress. This tendency to the separation of religion from State control has been very rapid and decided in the colonies, and has found large expression in the institutions of this land ; and it is in view of this development that Common Law must be interpreted. If then, we consider the significance of the Common Law of this land, in view of the policy which commuted the clergy reserves, thereby securing the Church's freedom and independence ; withdrew public grants from denominational colleges, and having freed the Provincial university from ecclesiastical control has resisted all attempts to desintegrate its endowments ; and if we remember that separate schools were allowed finally to be established by the leading Reformers of the country only under extreme pressure, it will appear that the recognition of Christianity by the Common Law of the land can now mean little more than the recognition of its right to be left untrammelled, unaided, to prosecute its beneficent work, supported by its heavenly King. It has been shown already that the proposed measure diverges widely in its spirit also from the present statute law upon the subject. It is

not therefore a measure to which the Government of this Province can, with consistency, assent. It is surprising that it should be urged, with any expectation of success, on a Government the course of whose history has been marked by decided opposition to class legislation of every form.

More particularly; it is evident that such an alliance as that proposed for the word of God with civil authority, rests upon an entire misconception of the nature and functions of civil government, and is at variance with the spirit and doctrine of the Bible itself. For though an ordinance of God, civil government derives its sanction not from direct divine revelation, but indirectly, through the recognition on the part of men (by means of the faculties given to them by God) of the need of some controlling power to regulate the movements of society, especially to maintain its moral order. But as the stream cannot rise above the fountain, so, in legislation, the State has no right to appeal to the Bible as its warrant, nor to employ it as its instrument in any department of its work. On the other hand, as a supernatural revelation, the divine origin of the Bible needs to be proved, therefore its authority is not universally acknowledged; it expressly concedes the right of private judgement for its interpretation; teaches that men are responsible only to God for its acceptance or rejection, and seeks to win its way to the heart of the world by the spirit of love which it breathes; rejecting all aid from the kingdoms of this world, as tending only to enfeeble its influence and hinder its progress. These elementary truths, however, are not positively denied by the majority of those who

plead for religious instruction as a branch of the State's educational work. On the contrary, they are tacitly acknowledged in the conscience clauses usually appended to their measures, through which it is imagined that their application to the schools is successfully evaded. It has been shown, however, that the liberty conceded in these saving clauses is marred by the assumption which they contain of the State's right to grant or withhold liberty, where rights of conscience are concerned. It is therefore only in semblance that the higher law, to which reference has been made, is not violated by measures assigning to the civil power the patronage of religion in the school, because of the petty provision made in their conscience clauses for the prevention of local or individual wrongs. To this higher law the legislation of this Province has been gradually approximating. Will it begin now to recede?

It has been shown, however, that religion *justly* claims admission to the schools, and that the moral instruction and discipline of the children demands the recognition of its awful sanctions. On this ground, it is argued by the advocates of the proposed measure that in Christian communities the requirements of the people for the moral education of their children cannot be adequately met without the use of the Bible, and they are, therefore, warranted in insisting upon its authoritative introduction into the public schools. It is further urged, that for the State to confine itself to the province assigned to it would render the schools Godless institutions; the children would be robbed of their most precious heritage, the rights of parents trampled on, and the claims of the Church set at

naught ; her labors for the good of the children in other directions being, at the same time, largely neutralized. This plea appeals very strongly to the heart and conscience. It is supported by reference to the apparent increase of youthful depravity, the evidence for which is gathered from police reports, and which the laxity of religious instruction, under the present permissive law, is deemed sufficient to explain. The force of this argument, however, in support of the plea can scarcely be admitted, when it is considered that in the centres of population where juvenile criminality most prevails the Bible is systematically read in the public schools ; and, on the other hand, that the living roots of the evils complained of can be distinctly traced, not only to their immediate surroundings, but beyond, to spheres of moral influence little suspected—the political arena, the speculator's office, the marts of business, while the too frequent gilded saloon supplies continual nourishment. But if it were true that a national system of education, confined strictly to its legitimate sphere, excluded the religion of the Bible, one could have no hesitation in denouncing it as demoralizing in its influence, and a violation of the divine order so flagrant as not to be tolerated by a Christian people. It is certainly a gross misrepresentation of the truth and actual facts to speak of schools thus constituted being Godless institutions. For the idea of God, as the source and fountain of all law, underlies that of civil government, and is implicitly involved in every department of its work ; in special branches of which it is accordingly appropriate and dutiful that public prayer should be offered for divine

help and guidance. Anarchy, revolution, decrepitude, death—these words tell the history of the nations that have sought to banish God from among them. Unhappy France! with its Godless system of public instruction. Through what revolutions has it yet to pass? What a terrible revulsion from a system of education entirely under the control of religious teachers, to one of gloomy atheism! *Sed omen absit.*

It is no less a misrepresentation to say, so far as Christian communities are concerned, that in those schools where the Bible is not systematically used as a text-book or reader, the standard of morality is thereby lowered. On the contrary, where the people are of different religious creeds, the spirit of the Bible may be more fully exhibited by its withdrawal from the ground common to all than by its enforced presence, while in such circumstances its gracious influences will have a wider sphere, being brought to bear on hearts and lives that would otherwise be beyond their reach. For the gospel has other modes of finding access to the schools than by legislative authority, and can pervade them in other ways than by departmental regulations, so that its glory as the word of God is undimmed, its authority unimpaired, and its influence unfettered. There are living channels along which its light and love can freely pulsate, pervading all the engagements of the school. These channels of sacred influence are more numerous and delicate in the school room than in any other department of the State's work, or in the ordinary life of society, where, however, they may with comparative ease be traced. In Christian communities, the moral

obligations that bind men together in social life are satisfied only in compliance with the law of the gospel, which, as expounded by Christ, and unfolded by the Church in her teaching and in the lives of her members, commends itself to every man's conscience. Thus the moral sentiment of the community finds expression in Christian sentiment. The law of the gospel becomes the recognized standard of duty in society, and the sanctions of morality brighten with the glory of Jehovah. No man can fall beneath the level up to which this law is realized in ordinary social life without conscious degradation, and being regarded with compassion or indignation by his fellows. No teacher would be tolerated by the Christian people of this land whose life or precepts sunk beneath this standard, and he would be regarded as wanting in faithfulness if his teaching and training were not in harmony with the principles and spirit of that law to which their consciences bow, however far their lives may be from conforming to it. In like manner it might be shown that, in Christian nations, legislation, though not appealing to the Bible as its warrant, is becoming Christianized, the generalizations of political economy are being moulded by its spirit of love; and though in the midst of Christian communities mournful degradation and destitution are to be witnessed, yet new opportunities are thereby given for the circulation of Christian life, as manifested in the multiplication of those benevolent institutions for the relief of the helpless and the reclamation of the outcast, which are the glory of Christian lands. It is by the free circulation of the currents of Christian life, to which these happy

results are mainly due, that the work of the Christian Church is telling on the world; and so long as the Church continues faithful to her Lord, there can be no fear but that she will contend successfully against all antagonistic forces. But just as in the ordinary life of society, so in the social life of the school there may be a rich and varied play of Christian influences, originating in different sources, and transmitted through various channels, often along the most delicate lines of purpose or of feeling. Here also the children of light are more powerful than the children of darkness. The moral tone of the teacher's life is undoubtedly the most potent and pervasive of these influences. It is reassuring, accordingly, to reflect that no teacher could long retain his position, whose moral conduct fell below the ordinary standard of Christian life in the community. But in an especial manner it is gratifying to learn that, with very few exceptions, the teachers of this Province are members or adherents of Christian churches. For if the teacher be a Christian, his conduct will furnish an exposition of gospel truth the value of which cannot be too highly estimated, and shed an influence throughout his school well fitted to awaken a spirit of inquiry, and turn the faces of children, even from irreligious homes, towards the sanctuary. In connection with the moral instruction and discipline of the children, there is of course a wide and open channel for the transmission of this influence. But, even though the teacher's desk were a sealed fountain in this respect, it is not to be forgotten that the majority of the children have been under religious instruction and training

in the church and Sabbath school, and that the schools must be very few in number, if there be any at all in this Province, in which some have not enjoyed the supreme advantage of nurture in Christian homes ; and therefore the views with which they have been indoctrinated, and the sentiments with which they have been imbued, mingle with and circulate through the varied life of the schools with which they are connected. No doubt there are manifold reactions of evil to these healthful currents, sometimes powerful and pernicious. Here, as in ordinary society, there are conflicts of light with darkness and of good with evil. But even to one child in a school, who has been trained to reverence for sacred things and regard for truth, who stands fast in the hour of temptation, and shrinks from every form of impurity in speech or conduct, the consciences of all the others, however careless or depraved, do silent homage. They are restrained by his presence, and the contrasts of their lives may lead to serious questionings.

It is by means only of these indirect influences that the Bible can *legitimately* enter, so as to pervade with its light and love schools under State control. God has entrusted His word to His Church and people individually, holding them responsible for its use in His service. They may not delegate the charge thus assigned to them, nor shirk responsibility in regard to it, in any department of the work to which they are called.

On the other hand, as has been shown, the State has no warrant to assume the responsibilities devolving on the Church, and cannot do so without violating the

harmony of the divine order indicated, and which the course of history, during the past century, has very fully developed. No one can speak slightly of the indirect presence and influence of the Bible in the schools, to which reference has been made, as if by themselves they were of little value, without throwing contempt on the religious instructions of the Church and the Christian home, and ignoring the possibility of their greater efficiency. It is true, indeed, that where the bonds of Church and State connection have been severed, the Church has found herself limited and hampered in her endeavors to prosecute the Master's work in this department. It might justly have been expected that, as the result of the severance of these ties, the field of work, for a time, would be greatly disorganized, and that new means and agencies being called into requisition, many futile experiments would be made. Nobly, indeed, has the Church in all her denominations met her obligations in the great departments of her work and their many supplementary branches. What a glorious tribute of love to the Master are the churches erected for His service, and sustained by voluntary effort, all over this land! In two different ways, however, have the Church's labors for the benefit of her own children, and those beyond her pale, been greatly restricted. On the one hand, her sense of responsibility has been weakened by former connection with the State in her work. Habituated to trust to national schools for religious teaching, and to regard religious and secular instruction as inseparably associated, it was only when the Church saw that in schools controlled by public authority, religious

exercises had degenerated into mere routine, cold and lifeless, that she recognized the necessity of organizing agencies under her own control, and imbued with her spirit. What noble work her Sabbath schools have accomplished! Inestimable, however, as is the good that has thus been accomplished, and multiplied indefinitely as the agencies in operation are, it is yet obvious that if the necessities of the case are to be adequately met, more systematic work, effective machinery and trained agency are imperatively demanded. But why not gird up her *own* loins for this enterprise? Why seek to lull her sense of responsibility asleep? On the other hand, the Church has just reason to complain that, under existing arrangements, she has not full scope and opportunity for meeting her obligations; for under the new order of things the State has monopolized the ground which formerly belonged to both. It is in view of this deprivation of the Church by the State of her former opportunities, and in recognition of the fact that there are not a few children whom, with the means now at her command, she could not otherwise reach with a word from the Book of Life, that the present *permissive* arrangement is deemed justifiable. It is, as has been indicated, of the nature of a compromise. The responsibility for the work is brought as near as possible to those on whom it should rest, while confidence is placed in their judgment as to the course they will adopt in their special circumstances, it being taken for granted that they will not unduly interfere with the rights of others, or hinder the proper work of the State. Under this arrangement, the evils resulting

from the State's overstepping its province are by no means entirely avoided, especially in mixed communities; but the danger of rights being trampled on is reduced to a minimum. A period, however, is anticipated when the relations of Church and State will be adjusted more harmoniously; when a truly national system of education shall be established, and the agencies of the Church shall be so improved, and the channels for the transmission of her influence so multiplied, that she will no longer need a helping hand from the State for the performance of her work, but find in the multiplication of loving hearts a surer means of putting the Bible in the school.

II.

The State cannot thus overstep its province without inflicting wrongs and injury in many and grievous forms. This aspect of the question has been so exhaustively dealt with in the discussions to which the action of the Church courts referred to has given rise, that it seems necessary to do little more than mention a few leading points in order to the full presentation of the subject. First, It is impossible, among a people holding different religious views, for the State to assume the functions of a religious teacher without undue discrimination between them. Even the conscience clause, which is regarded as adequate to protect the rights of individuals, as associated with the assumption on the part of the civil authorities that they are competent to determine what is best for the religious interests of the community, is the means of shedding a measure of opprobrium on the views of those who

take advantage of its provisions. But further rights of conscience are violated, when the religious interests of a section, even though it be the majority of the people, are protected and fostered at *the public expense*. The wrong is not the less but rather greater, when the majority take advantage of their strength to inflict it. For the money belongs to the people as a whole, and it is misappropriated when used for any other than civil purposes. It is certainly used in violation of the rights of conscience when devoted to the maintenance and propagation of religious views in which all are not agreed. Thus, the establishment of separate schools under a former Government was a grievous violation of the law of equity. The support of these schools out of the public exchequer by a people the majority of whom are Protestants, is not only an incongruity but an injury. And it is easy to discern in the claim now put forth by Protestant Church courts the expression of this feeling. It is not simply a cry for help, but an outcry against injustice by which their consciences have been wounded. The course that has been adopted for compensation, on account of this wrong, cannot indeed be justified. The advocates of the measure, virtually say, "The Bible is the religion of Protestants, and we will plant it in the centre of the educational system of the country. We are the majority." They fail to see, however, that by indorsing the principle on the ground of which separate schools were conceded, they are acknowledging the justice of that concession, seeking to commit the Government to a policy fitted even more than the Acts of Confederation to perpetuate

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that wrong, and opening a door for similar viola-
 tions of justice among themselves, on the part of
 those denominations who are sufficiently strong or
 persistent to secure special patronage. Second, The
 free circulation of the light of the Bible is obstructed
 by measures of this kind. Whatever may be said of
 protection in other forms, it may be unhesitatingly
 affirmed that protection in matters of religion is a
 suicidal policy. There are not less than twenty-five
 thousand children, in this Province, already secluded
 from the light circulating in the social life of the
 public schools. It is probable that not a few now
 attending these schools will be at once withdrawn, if
 the petition of the delegates is granted, by parents
 who will not allow their children to take advantage
 of their citizen rights in schools where they are treated
 as aliens and are present merely by sufferance. Third,
 Shall the Church's sense of responsibility for the reli-
 gious instruction of the young—now roused to the
 recognition of the necessity of more organized efforts
 for the accomplishment of this object, more faithful-
 ness in maintaining the order of the household, and
 greater earnestness in the conflict with intemperance,
 to whose malign influence youthful depravity is so
 largely due—be allowed to lapse into feebleness
 through the vain thought that provision has been
 made for the attainment of this end in the daily
 services of the public school. History is not wanting
 in illustrations of the danger of thus transferring
 responsibility. Fourth, If this movement is success-
 ful, the schools of the State, instead of uniting and
 binding the people together, become divisive in their

influence. The children of separate schools are as foreigners one to another. In fine, this movement portends the dissolution of the educational system which is now the glory of the Province and the pride of the people generally ; for it is not to be imagined that the morsel now sought, if granted, will satisfy those who are pleading for it.

May the light of the Bible lead the rulers of this Province, in their deliberations on this momentous question, to a decision in harmony with His mind and will who is the source and fountain of light.

