

# The Examiner.

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EDWARD WHELAN

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

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No. 33.

## THE BIBLE QUESTION.

### MEETING OF PROTESTANT MINISTERS AND THEIR FRIENDS AT THE TEMPERANCE HALL.

On Friday evening, the 13th instant, in pursuance of notice, a meeting was held in the Temperance Hall, for the purpose of advocating the introduction of the Bible as a class-book in the public schools. At an early hour, a great number of persons were in attendance, and before 7 o'clock the Hall was filled to overflowing. At half-past 7 o'clock, it was moved by Capt. Orlebar, R.N., that Colonel Gray take the Chair. The Rev. Mr. Duncaun opened the meeting with prayer.

COLONEL GRAY then addressed the meeting: Ladies and Gentlemen—Having been called to this chair I avail myself of a prescriptive right to say few words declaratory of my sentiments and opinion on the subject to be brought before you this evening, and I trust no one in this room will accuse me of imitating those who, the essence of intolerance themselves, are always the first to cry out for toleration from others. It has been my lot to pass many years amid diverse nations,—among people professing the various creeds of Greeks, Romans, Copts, Jews, Moslems, Bloodists and Pagans,—and all my experience has taught me that no good ever arises from coercion, persecution or reviling. I would rather convince my fellow men by fair argument and sound reasoning, than by rougher means. But at the same time that I am willing to accord all license of thought and practice to those who choose to arrogate to themselves the worship of other Gods than the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who deny, decry and repudiate the truths in God's Holy Word, as a descendant of forefathers who slept on the heather, who were hunted like wild beasts and mercilessly shot down with their wives and little ones, because they would not forego their right to worship God, but according to the doctrines and commandments of men, but in accordance with the plain truths and commands set forth and enjoined in the Bible,—I say, I would be a recreant, if I could view with apathy and unconcern, the disposition of the Board of Education, under this Government, to deprive my fellow countrymen of what they should value dearer than life itself,—the privilege of having their children daily exercised and instructed in the sublime truths only contained in what has been so aptly and properly termed, "that most wonderful Book, bright candle of the Lord, the star of Eternity, the only star by which man's bark can navigate the sea of life and gain the Port of Bliss securely." (Applause.) It is only a few months ago I passed some hours in conversation with one of the most estimable and pious of the noblemen of England, one whose unbounded benevolence, vast philanthropy and earnest zeal in the good cause has gained him a character which must be well known to you all—I allude to the Earl of Shaftesbury—better known to the children of England as Lord Ashley. This excellent man was exulting over all the good I felt to accrue from the fact of the people of England having just sent out two million copies of the holy Scriptures translated into the Chinese language, to the people of that country, for the purpose of disseminating in their village schools. (Applause.) Now, I ask, what would this great man say if he were told that the children of Protestant parents, in a Protestant colony, under a Protestant Queen and Government, are placed in a worse position than the heathen themselves. Is this to be? I think I hear you all say no; ("No! No!") and I call upon you my dear fellow countrymen, to prove by this evening's proceedings, that standing shoulder to shoulder, you will not bring such a stain upon our memories as that of a people who would sacrifice their children's birthright and their religion!

The Chairman then sat down amid the most enthusiastic applause.

Rev. Mr. LOCKHEAD. I beg to propose the following resolution—

1. That this meeting desires to express their deep sense of the services of the Rev. D. Fitzgerald and Mr. Stark, in bringing under the notice of the Protestants of this Island the letter of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Charlottetown, and their opinion that the two gentlemen above mentioned have acted in an honorable and conscientious manner in their places as members of the Board of Education, and that had they not acted so, this meeting is of opinion that they would have been guilty of a betrayal of Protestant interests. Further resolved, that the Roman Catholic Bishop's letter be printed forthwith.

I am sorry this meeting has occurred so soon after the preceding one, as I have scarcely had time to recruit my mind. It may not be improper, however, to offer a few crude and undigested remarks. Those who are acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald will be convinced that he has acted at this crisis as a true lover of religion; and his services, I am convinced, are appreciated by all of you. (Applause.) There may be some who would object to printing the Bishop's letter—I say he may be some who say he was wrong in copying it; but I say he has done right. (Applause.) If he did not do as he has done, I should consider he betrayed the Protestant interest. (Applause.) Hints have been thrown out by some of the Government officials that he would lose his seat at the Board of Education; for his activity in exposing the danger with which we are menaced. Thus threatened, will not the meeting endorse the course he has pursued, and throw over him their protecting aegis. It is resolved that the Bishop's letter be printed. The letter has been read at many meetings; but it is fit that it should have a more extended circulation, as it is desirable to know the Bishop's intentions more fully. Some think he did not mean to exclude the Scriptures from the public schools, nor debar the children of Protestants the free use of scriptural teachings; and indeed a certain portion of the Press supported this opinion; but it is evident the Bishop had other intentions, the least dangerous of which was the exclusion of the Bible. Did the Bishop mean to tolerate the Bible in the public schools—and did he write the apologetic letter in good faith? If he did, it would be sufficient, and we should take him at his word. But we have reason to know that the true cause of such a course was a fear of the consequences of Protestant indignation. (Hear.) I wonder how the Bishop could have the assurance to write such a letter to the Board of Education. He must have thought the Protestants too inert if they would submit to have the Bible put out of the public schools. The Bishop seems to forget that public schools are supported by Protestants as well as Catholics, and who would not subscribe to the system of darkness and superstition he holds to. Could he dream the Protestants of Ireland or Scotland—where Knox is loved so well—would submit to his impudency or godlessness? Let him and his supporters remember we are descended from those who fought and bled for the truth; and we will not be behind them in our zeal for the good cause, but be ever willing to live or die in defence of the Bible, in defiance of Rome and its masters, who have massacred them! (Applause.) Still I am willing to live on good terms with Catholics—many of whom I entertain a great respect for—of whose Christianity and love for the Bible I have no doubt, and whom I expect to meet in Heaven. But in the meantime I will maintain—to the death maintain—the sacredness of the Holy Scriptures inviolate; because they are the Word of God—because they concern my eternal salvation—because they are the true guide and constitution of mankind—and because they are the best guarantee of eternal salvation. (Applause.) Then the Bible is of the first importance in a temporal point of view—it is the only true standard of right and wrong. To show that the Bible is of the first importance in a temporal point of view, let us look at the countries where it is read, and the countries where it is never known. Look at England and Scotland, and to what are they indebted for their prosperity? To the Bible. Look at Spain and Italy. Contrast their present condition with that of Protestant countries. View the abyss of poverty, crime, degradation and superstition into which they have been plunged; and what is the cause? The sacred page of Holy Writ has never been opened to them, and they are groping in the dark, far from Christ and his Holy

Word. They have not the Bible—they never had it. (Applause.) The Bible is the Word of God. It is a good book to read. If so, we must read it when we are young; for as we grow up the duties of life leave us little time to read. Besides, youth is the proper season when the lessons of that sacred book will sink into the heart, and incite it to look up to God as the giver of all grace and the controller of destinies. Therefore, we cannot do without it in our public schools, and we must have it there—not by sufferance, but by authority. (Applause.) The Bible gives a stability to character which, without its aid, would at best be of an indifferent stamp. Ignorance of the Bible is followed by moral and social degradation! Look at Spain and France. What is the cause of the assassinations, suicides and robberies, practised in these countries? It is because they have not the Bible. (Applause.) Look at the United States of America. What is the cause of so much infidelity and disregard of religion in that country? It is because the Bible has been thrown out of their public schools, and its free circulation interfered with. But it is said that Catholics are as much interested in keeping the Bible in the schools as Protestants. It is also said that Catholics have their own Bible, which they do not object to put into the hands of their children. Give them their own Bible then, and let the Protestants have theirs; we want nothing but fair play, a fair field and no favor. (Ap.) There may be some difference in the plans of teachers; yet if objection should be made by Catholic parents to their children being instructed in the Scriptures, the reading of them might be left till the last, and they could have an opportunity of withdrawing from the school. In fine, whatever plan be adopted, if the Bible is left out of the public schools, all our agitation will go for nothing. It is said that the Catholics give as much for the support of education as Protestants; and are they to be treated as inferiors—as if they had not equal rights with Protestants? Assuredly not. If they pay as much as Protestants, they are entitled to the same rights—the same privileges. Then let us proceed in our determination to have the Bible in our public schools—God will assist our endeavors, and crown our labors with success! (Applause.) But those who oppose us for political ends may be assured they will not have peace here, nor happiness hereafter. Ladies and gentlemen,—You will perceive that the resolution asks your concurrence in saying that Messrs. Fitzgerald and Stark have done what is right—have done what was their duty as Christians and Protestants. It is due to you in the meantime to explain why they have so acted in this matter. The Board of Education is composed of individuals of various denominations. When Mr. Fitzgerald first took his seat at the Board, he was opposed to having the Bible left out of the public schools, and entered his protest on the books. It may be asked—Why did he remain? Why did he not resign? Because he thought that by remaining he could do good there. All was peace and harmony until the letter from the Bishop was received—a letter so full of danger to Protestantism. He read it; he felt impressed with a sense of impending danger; and copied it. He believed he was doing right; and so long as I have a voice it shall be heard demanding that his services to Protestantism shall occupy their proper position. (Applause.) Will you then forsake these gentlemen who have incurred the displeasure of Government to serve you; and who are stigmatized as betrayers of secrets? (Cries of "No! No! No!") No, you will not; you owe a debt of gratitude to them, and so do all lovers of the Bible. (Applause.) I might say something on the subject of religion, and what we owe to it as professors; but I have already trespassed too long on your patience. What I do say, however, I say in earnest. You will hear from some of our country ministers, who have come to assist us, to stand by one another as Protestants. I ask the rev. gentleman to read the Bishop's letter. Its contents should be known.

Gov. ORLEBAR, R.N., seconded the resolution.

Rev. DAVID FITZGERALD. I confess I did not think, when I copied that letter, it would cause such commotion—that it would arouse, as by a common sense of danger, all who had the interest of their eternal salvation, and that of their children at heart; but there is an overruling Providence above us, which reads the hearts of men, like an open volume, and whispered to our fears that danger was abroad. But he who can raise the whirlwind can subdue the storm. Then, when God thus moves us, let us in unmistakable language tell them we are determined to have the Bible in our public schools. (Applause.) In copying the Bishop's letter, I did it because I felt it incumbent on me, and a duty I owed the cause of Protestantism, to make its contents known, that Protestants might be prepared to ward off the blow aimed at the foundation of their religion; and that they might protest against the perpetuation of a system which they have reason to distrust. The Bishop's letter to the Board, I am convinced, was intended to work a change in the present school system. I will read the letter and you can judge for yourselves—

Rev. Mr. LLOYD. I am sorry that I have been selected to move the second resolution; but I will not hold back when an occasion of so much importance demands my voice and action.

2. Whereas "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding," and as this fear and knowledge are made known to us in the Holy Scriptures, which are given to us of God, to teach us our several duties on earth, and to secure to ourselves the blessings of eternal life.—It is resolved, that no education, national or otherwise, can be good or suited to the rational and immortal nature of man, from which the Word of God is excluded.

I think the system of national education is good. It is now adopted in most Protestant countries. But in a place like this, where two religions exist, great caution should be used. I regret that this movement was not made when the present School Act was first brought into operation; if it were, the Roman Catholic Bishop had never written that letter. I do not agree with all that has been said here to-night; but I do agree with the Chairman when he says that no good has ever yet arisen from persecution; and that he so ably depicts the sufferings of his Scottish ancestors, I am reminded that I, too, am a persecutor, and must myself be merciful. We have all been persecutors in ages past—even Calvin himself condemned a man to death. It is better, I think, to extend the right hand of fellowship than to coerce, or force our belief upon any man. Let us offer them the Bible, and if they refuse it, offer it again and again. Believe me, persuasion is more potent than force, and in giving them the Bible we give them a gift from God. National education is a good thing to great countries; but it is not good if not founded on the word of God. What is education if it has not for its base the Bible? It is nothing; for "what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" I have read it said that politics and religion should go together—and why not? Is politics of such a cast as to need not the assistance of religion? I can not believe it. If this letter had not been written we had remained inactive; but now that we are fully aroused we should be vigilant, and knowing where we were to look for danger—politics should be watched! I shall give my opinion on the propriety of retaining the Scriptures in the schools. Suppose the revelation should be excluded, and secular education made the order of the day,—it will not be denied that all knowledge is proper; but if education is not attended with the revelation it is useless. If you educate for the common purposes of life—is it not necessary to mingle with it the spirit of God's word and commandments? If you educate for the State, would you leave untaught the lessons of Scripture? Assuredly not. We can see the want of religious instruction in our streets every day, when the unhappy victim is made the mark of each constable's staff, and hurried to imprisonment to atone for his ignorance. But if we obey the revelation, we shall find it for our interest to "do unto others as we would wish others to do unto us!" Without a knowledge of the Scriptures no domestic duties can be properly performed—the Bible points the way to happiness on earth and eternal bliss in the world to come. When we reflect, we see that spiritual is as necessary as temporal education; and if we have not the Word of God in our hearts, we will not—can not be good parents or children. It would be madness to allow the Scriptures to be taken out of our public schools. When I was first appointed to this Island, I lived in the country, and did not know what was in the School Act. But when I came to town, I found that I could not teach the Testament in the public schools. I mean no disrespect to the Governor, and feel there is a difficulty in his position; but a Roman Catholic has thrown down the gauntlet, and we will accept it. Let mixed schools be done away with! (Applause.) I do not wish to cast any reproach upon our worthy Governor; for I have always found him sincerely willing to promote the interests of all Her Majesty's subjects on this Island, and to whose liberality towards objects of public good I can bear witness. (Question?) I do not think I depart from the question. I hear that the subject under discussion is that we may guard against the attempts made to keep the Bible out of our public schools. I do not, however, wish to criminate any man—nor to force my remarks upon any one. The question is: To give Protestants the Bible—not the Catholics, over whom we have no control—and guard against the loss of the Scriptures in our public schools.

Rev. Mr. PATTERSON.—I regret that I have been called upon to second the resolution just submitted for your approval; but I would not be understood to say I do not approve of it. The reason is, I feel my incompetency to do it the justice it merits, and could wish that others, abler than I, would perform the duty. [Rustico resolution.] In taking this subject into consideration and submitting it to an attentive perusal, it is necessary to view the constituent parts of man, and learn what mode of education he is best capable of receiving. Education must necessarily be physical and intellectual; but it is of the greatest importance that it should also be moral and religious. The first object of man's pursuit is contained in that precious maxim, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all things shall be added thereto." In all ages, learning has been sought for, and has brought fame; but moral and religious education is of much greater importance; and without it we'll perish to eternity. It is a great privilege to possess the Bible. Many are strangers to it even in this Island,—I allude to the Catholics, many of whom are willing to receive the word of God, but are prevented by their priests—who are the inventors and upholders of a system of oppression, fraud and cruelty,—who seek to prevent others from reading, and will not read it themselves. I repeat it—If all Catholics were to receive the Bible they would be glad to read it—some of them have—but it was taken from them by their Priests. It is the duty of every Christian minister to spread the Bible, even among Roman Catholics. (Applause.) Ministers are given to teach us on earth and lead us to Heaven. They teach us to be good—to delight in the word of God, and follow Christ! (Applause.) I need not impress you with a sense of the importance of the Bible. It is

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intended to open Heaven to us, and secure our eternal salvation. The present generation is passing off the stage of life—the present actors are going to that bourne from whence no traveller returns. Who will take their places? The youth who are now springing up—whose character are not yet formed. Is it not necessary, then, that we should seek to make them pious, intellectual, moral and religious? Without these attributes they may become a scourge to society and a disgrace to humanity. It may be said—let Catholics, if they choose, give their children the Bible—their Bible—to read; and they will accord a similar privilege to Protestants! Let us suppose they do so, still there are many children who have not good parents or spiritual teachers; and are they to be left in darkness and spiritual ignorance? Forbid it Heaven! There are many persons, without children, who have to pay their share towards the support of public schools, who complain that religious education is neglected; and are told their property and lives are more secure from the fact of general enlightenment; but without religious education such an assurance would be a fallacy. Secular knowledge is not enough! (Applause.) But why is the Bible rejected? If we look at it as a literary production, we find it is superior—the grand mysteries it elucidates exalt the imagination, and the soul, transported with the view of omnipotence, is lost in wonder, love and praise. Compare the Bible, as to style, with any work of human production, and you will see it possesses a sublimity far beyond the narrow ken of a Plato or a Socrates! How touching is the history of the Bible—the history of Joseph! Can we find any book equal to it? A writer, eminent for his literary knowledge and soundness of judgment, has said—"We can spare any other book but the Bible." Is there any religious liberty in Spain? No! The law of Spain is that heretics be burnt alive! What liberty is there in Rome?—Naples? None! It is crushed under foot while yet a tender flower! But there might be, if it were not for the religion and superstition which prevail in those places! Whereas, the fear of the Lord is the best of understanding; and no education can be complete without the aid of the Bible.

The Chairman then put the resolution, and it was carried unanimously.

Rev. Mr. MACKINNON. The Scriptures are the only and the superior ground of faith; and as such, their importance cannot be over rated. I will read you the resolution which I am to propose—

3. Whereas the Protestants of this Island constitute the greater portion of its inhabitants, and contribute the larger amount of taxation for the support of the state and the maintenance of its public schools,—It is resolved, that—while they disclaim any intention to force upon others the reading of the Scriptures—they are entitled to, and do hereby claim from the Government who have taken into their hands the management of the public schools, as well as the nature of the instruction that is therein given—that the children of such parents as desired should be daily instructed in the Word of God.

As Protestants are more numerous than Catholics, they have a right to more privileges—as they pay more taxes, they have a right to have what instruction they please in the public schools, as if there were Turks among us, and wished to banish the Bible to make way for the Koran—would we submit to it? If Infidels or Pagans were to make a similar demand—would we accede to it? But we place the matter on higher grounds. The Catholics say it is not a school-book; we think otherwise, and will hold it in contradistinction to the Catholic Church. If we wish to have the Bible in our schools, it is because we know it to be the Word of God. Several objections have been made to this view. The first is, that secular education should be distinct from religious education. Is this true? Turn the eye to the past, and we will find man has become a learned demon! Turn to Rome in the days of Augustus, and to Greece in the days of Pericles, and we shall find that while men had learned heads, they had demon hearts. Let us go to Rome in the days of the Empire—pass through its classic streets—view without wonder and admiration its princely palaces—its magnificent temples—its godlike statues. Let us enter its amphitheatres—let us gaze on the gladiator's triumph in his death-struggle with wild beasts—and we shall see that while men had learned heads, they had demon hearts! Turn to Athens in the days of Demosthenes—behold a people wise in philosophy following the Bacchantean rout—sacrificing to blind gods—believing in oracles and fables, while Paul reproves in vain. They had learned heads, but demon hearts! Turn to the French Revolution—the Age of Reason—when all semblance of religion was banished—when Voltaire was their bible—Rousseau and Tom Paine, their testament. Look well at this universal brotherhood—this fraternity whose suicidal hand slew itself—see the streets of Paris running red with blood, and the Seine dyed purple with the wine of existence—and you will find they had had wise heads, but demon hearts! Look at Paris now. How long is it since the Archbishop was assassinated? What is the cause of it? Believe me, it is because the head is educated and the heart! (Applause.) Another objection to having the Bible in our schools is, that Catholics do not wish their children to read the Scriptures. It is necessary that strong action should be taken on this question. Is danger to be apprehended from doing right? Are our hands to be paralyzed because we are surrounded by physical and moral danger? Come what will, we must proceed in the course we have marked out for ourselves! (Applause.) What is Protestant instruction? The Bible. It may be said that no attempt was made to take it out of our public schools; but there has been such an attempt, direct or indirect. Were we to burn the Bible, the Atheists, Infidels—all bad men—and Catholics, would dance around the fire and shout for joy. Many are afraid of violence and faction; but they should learn that the time will come when each man must make a stand against this godless Church. It is rapidly approaching; but when it comes, let it find us prepared. Danger cannot be averted. Shall we cause a sea to become a stagnant pool? [Here followed a strain of imagery which, as it did not apply pointedly to the subject under consideration, the reporter did not note it down.] Must we not make a move through fear of physical danger, or because it might disturb the social harmony said to exist among us? But why should we pause for these considerations? why should we shrink from the consequences of doing right? Let them come! (Applause.) As many great things will come from this meeting, I could wish to go on and say more; but shall make room for better men.

Rev. ALEX. SUTHERLAND. In rising to address this meeting, I feel that more has been said on the subject than I could say. But I will say, as Protestants pay taxes as well as Catholics for the support of public education, they have a right to as much liberty. This is taking a low ground. Just now, in Britain, they hold that they shall have their educational institutions supported by the public finances and by legislation. It is the same in the United States. In this Island Protestants are more numerous than Catholics, being 33,000 to 32,000—consequently they pay more taxes—and have more rights than Catholics. The Bishop's letter says we must desist in our endeavours to have the Bible taught in our schools. When a blind interest in worldly concerns dictates, conscience is not a safe guide. The Hindoos can complain with the same grace against our giving their children the Bible to read, saying their conscience would not allow them to have their children read the Bible; but conscience is not a safe guide, it must be ruled by the Bible. One step is to say we will not have the Bible in our schools; another will be something else. Give secular without religious education to children, and they will grow up in ignorance of morality and thank themselves free, and act in disregard of all the moral usages of society. I know the Bishop of Rustico hates the Bible—he has directed it to be burnt, and I know where it has been burnt! (Sensation.) Are we, then, to see our children and truth swept away, by not having the Bible read in our schools? The Catholics say that our belief in the Scriptures is a damnable doctrine. They look for the time, when, like France and Spain, we shall be under the control of the priests! Priests are enemies to all Protestants! Under their control, we would be kept in ignorance of the