

THE CANADA  
EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY  
AND SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER, 1887.

THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN EDUCATION.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE PROVINCIAL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION,  
BY REV. A. SUTHERLAND, D.D.

(Specially revised for THE MONTHLY.)

THE question underlying the theme I propose to discuss is this:— Shall our educational system be entirely secular, or shall the religious element, in the form of Christian evidences and Christian ethics, be incorporated therewith? In some quarters there is a disposition not merely to undervalue the religious element in education, but to ignore it altogether. Men sometimes speak of "Science and Religion," or "Culture and Religion," as though they were things entirely separate and distinct; while some speak of the "conflict" of science and religion, and others try to "reconcile" science and religion, as if they were positively antagonistic. The thought is misleading; the divorce is unnatural. Culture and religion are not antagonistic; the one is the completion, or, rather let me say, the one is the soul of the other.

1. An education which excludes the religious element is defective. In the nature of things it must be so,

because it omits a vast amount of important truth. Considering the vast range of subjects open for investigation, human life is far too short to master them all; but while we may be compelled to omit some, perhaps many, subjects from the *curricula* of our schools and colleges, we should see to it that the most important are included, and, if character is to count for anything, there is no subject in the whole range of human studies that compares in point of importance with the great truths of God, and duty and destiny. The most serious defect in a purely secular education is that it supplies no adequate force for the development of moral character. If it be said that intellectual culture is sufficient for this purpose, I need only reply in the words of Herbert Spencer—a by no means partial witness—that "the belief in the moralizing effects of intellectual culture, flatly contradicted by facts, is absurd." If it be said that æsthetic culture is a