

people, which we are, as there is but one sun in the heavens so there is but one religion—the religion of the incarnate Son of God.

If you ask how it is to be taught, I answer by putting the word of God into the hands of both teachers and pupils, by making it a regular textbook to be diligently studied and to be faithfully taught every day until the youth of our country have the great essential facts of revealed religion fixed in their memories and its precepts treasured up in their minds, to become, under God, the great controlling and moulding power in after life. How else can a Christian State educate its citizens to be true, pure, honest, upright and virtuous? There is no living root for morals but the faith of Christ, and the surest guarantee of liberty, whether civil or religious, is the recognition of it as the gift of God.

If such be or should be the attitude and duty of the State toward religion, what is the relation of the State to the Church?

It may be said, and it has been said, that if the State is a religious body, in the sense of being actuated by the fear of God, and that it has a right to teach religion in the public schools, then it ought to go further and take the Church into alliance with itself, support the clergy as officials of the State, and enforce church discipline with such temporal sanctions as fine and imprisonment.

To this we reply that such an inference from our doctrine proceeds on a radical misapprehension. It overlooks the essential difference in the origin and purpose of Church and State.

II. THE CHURCH.—The Church is a society organized under the mediatorial authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to secure the present and eternal salvation of men by the

regeneration of the Holy Spirit, through the knowledge and belief of revealed truth. The domain of the Spirit is, therefore, the sphere of the Church. Its weapons are purely spiritual, the word of God, and its powers simply educational and disciplinary. As a teacher, the Church must teach divine truth, "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little." Waiting with endless patience for the maturing of the soul in faith and knowledge and righteousness through fellowship with God.

The discipline of the Church is simply the bringing of the truth to bear on the heart and conscience for the reformation of morals and the perfecting of the soul in holiness. In those sorrowful cases in which the salutary influence of the word, and prayer, and affectionate remonstrance prove unavailing to secure a walk and conversation becoming godliness, discipline also proceeds to an anticipation of the final judgment by cutting off the unworthy member from the fellowship of the Church. The sentence of the Church carries no civil disabilities or penalties. It simply debars from the Lord's supper and from baptism and the spiritual benefits which accompany the right use of these ordinances.

The sentence of exclusion is not nugatory, because it is unaccompanied with civil penalties. It professes to be based on the word of God. It brings the offender face to face with God and raises the question of his eternal salvation. If the judgment of the Church be well founded, and the sinner persists in his sin, then exclusion from church fellowship on earth is the standing reminder of exclusion from the General Assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and the visible and present forecast of ever-