

## CHURCH AND STATE.

BY REV. WM. MOORE, D.D., OTTAWA.

*(Special Revision.)*

## II.

TO be sure, these tendencies are in a large measure restrained in most Christian countries, notably in our own, by the fact that an immense majority of the people are Christians; and so, with very few exceptions, are our teachers. The teachers in our public schools being God-fearing men and women, no matter how strict the surveillance may be, they cannot but exert a wholesome influence. The character of our teachers may retard, but cannot wholly arrest the process. Principles are stronger than men and gradually mature their fruits in spite of all efforts to restrain or counteract them. Slowly but surely they form to themselves a people fashioned in their own image and then all the restraints of a timid conservatism are swept away.

If there was any other alternative; if, for example, there was any way by which our children could be withdrawn from such unwholesome influences and educated on sound Christian principles, so that their training for the earthly citizenship might be auxiliary to that which should fit them for the heavenly citizenship, perhaps this matter might be of less importance.

But there is not. The hour we have the children in the Sabbath school, which is particularly the children's church (or, for that matter, the hours of public worship one day in seven), is utterly insuflcient to enable us to counteract the influence of mere secular teaching given continuously for six hours a day for five days in the week, and that for two

reasons. (1) The mode of instruction is necessarily less direct and effective. The vicarious reading of the Scriptures and the sermonic form of address cannot compete with personal reading, and instruction by question and answers. (2) And, besides, neither in Sabbath school nor church can we teach history and the sciences permeated with a Christian spirit, which we must needs do in order to offset the spirit of the age. Moreover, there are far too many children of whom it is true that if they do not get some notion of religion at school they will stand but a poor chance of ever getting it at all. And what is more, though the sons and daughters of Christian families may be safeguarded to a large extent, I contend that it is not fair to antagonize, and undermine the home training by excluding religion from the school life and substituting for it a subtle spirit of unbelief, which, in spite of its plausible insinuating profession of respect, is distinctly hostile to revealed religion. I know perfectly the feeling and outcry there is against teaching *dogma*, but I cannot understand why it is not as just and reasonable to teach Christianity as it is to teach materialism. The latter is every whit as *dogmatic* as the former. I say, therefore, we are compelled to choose between a religious or an irreligious, a theistic or an atheistic state. This being so, I have no hesitation in saying that the State must have positively a religious character, and that it should in its own schools teach religion as a necessary part of education. If you ask what religion, I answer that for a Christian