

the hands of all school authorities ; nor have I failed from time to time to press their importance upon all parties concerned. It is, however, worthy of remark that in no instances have those parties who have thought proper to assail the school system, and myself personally, on the question of religious instruction, quoted a line from what I have professedly written on the subject, or from the regulations, which I have recommended, while such parties have more than once pretended to give my views by quoting passages which were not at all written in reference to this question, and which contained no exposition of my views on it.

As some prominence has been given to this question during the year by individual writers, and some vague statements and notions put forth, I will offer a few remarks on it in concluding this report.

1. My first remark is, that the system of common school instruction should, like the legislature which has established, and the government that administers, it, be non-sectarian and national. It should be considered in a provincial, rather than in a denominational point of view—in reference to its bearing upon the condition and interests of the country at large, and not upon those of particular religious persuasions as distinct from public interests, or upon the interests of one religious persuasion more than those of another. And thus may be observed the difference between a mere sectarian and a patriot—between one who considers the institutions and legislation and government of his country in a sectarian spirit, and another who regards them in a patriotic spirit. The one places his sect above his country, and supports or opposes every public law or measure of government, just as it may or may not promote the interests of his own sect irrespective of the public interests and in rivalry with those of other sects, the other views the well being of his country as the great end to be proposed and pursued, and the sects as among the instrumentalities tributary to that end. Some indeed have gone to the extreme of viewing all religious persuasions as evils to be dreaded ; and as far as possible proscribed, but an enlightened and patriotic spirit rather views them as holding and propagating in common and great principles of virtue and morality, which forms the basis of the safety and happiness of society ; and therefore as distinct agencies more or less promotive of its interests—their very rivalships tending to stimulate greater activity, and therefore, as a whole, more beneficial than injurious. I think a national system of public instruction should be in harmony with this national spirit.

2. I remark again, that a system of public instruction should be in harmony with the views and feelings of the great body of the people, especially of the better educated classes. I believe the number of persons in Upper Canada who would theoretically or practically exclude Christianity in all its forms as an essential element in the education of the country, is exceedingly small, and that more than nine-tenths of the people regard religious instruction as an essential and vital part of the education of their offspring.—On this, as well as on higher grounds, I lay it down as a fundamental principle that religious instruction must form a part of the education of the youth of our country, and that that religious instruction must be given by the several religious persuasions to their youth respectively. There would be no Christianity among us were it not for the religious persuasions, since they, collectively, constitute the Christianity of the country, and, separately, the several agencies by which Christian doctrines and worship and morals are maintained and diffused throughout the length and breadth of the land. If in the much that certain writers have said about and against "sectarian teaching," and against "sectarian bias" in the education of youth, it is meant to proscribe or ignore the religious teaching of youth by sects or religious persuasions ; then is it the theory, if not the design of such writers to preclude religious truth altogether from the minds of the youth of the land, and thus prepare the way for raising up a nation of infidels ! But if on the other hand, it be insisted, as it has been by some, that as each religious persuasion is the proper religious instructor of its own youth, therefore each religious persuasion should have its own elementary schools, and thus denominational common schools should supersede our present public common schools, and the school fund be appropriated to the denominations instead of to the municipalities ; I remark that this theory is equally fallacious with the former, and is fraught with consequences no less fatal to the interests of universal education than is the former theory of the interests of all Chris-

tianity. The history of modern Europe is general, and of England in particular, teaches us that when the elementary schools were in the hands of the Church, and the State performed no other office in regard to schools than that of tax-assessor and tax-gatherer to the Church, the mass of the people were deplorably ignorant, and, therefore deplorably enslaved. In Upper Canada, the establishment and support of denominational schools to meet the circumstances of each religious persuasion would not only cost the people more than five-fold what they have now to pay for school purposes, but would leave the youth of minor religious persuasions, and a large portion of the poorer youth of the country, without any means of education upon terms within the pecuniary resources of their parents, unless as paupers, or at the expense of their religious faith.

3. But the establishment of denominational common schools for the purpose of denominational religious instruction itself is inexpedient. The common schools are not boarding, but day schools. The children attending them reside with their own parents, and are within the charge of their own pastors ; and therefore the oversight and duties of the parents and pastors of children attending the common schools are not in the least suspended or interfered with. The children attending such schools can be with the teacher only from 9 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon of five or six days in the week, while during his morning and night of each week-day and the whole of Sunday, they are with their parents or pastors ; and the mornings, and evenings, and Sabbath of each week, are the very portions of time which convenience and usage and ecclesiastical laws prescribe for religious studies and instruction—portions of time during which pupils are not and cannot be with the teacher, but are and must be under the oversight of their parents or pastors. And the constitution or order of discipline of each religious persuasion enjoins upon its pastors and members to teach the summary of religious faith and practice required to be taught to the children of the members of each such persuasion. I might here adduce what is enjoined on this subject by the Roman Catholic, and the several Protestant Churches ; but as an example of what is required, in some form or other, by the laws or rules of every religious persuasion, I will quote the 59th canon of the Church of England,—which is as follows :—

"Every Parson, Vicar or Curate, upon every Sunday and Holy-day, before Evening Prayer, shall, for half an hour or more, examine and instruct the youth and ignorant persons in his parish, in the Ten Commandments, the Articles of the Belief, and the Lord's Prayer ; and shall diligently hear, instruct, and teach them the Catechism set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, and all fathers, mothers, masters, and mistresses, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices, which have not learned the catechism, to come to the church at the time appointed, obediently to hear, and to be ordered by the Minister, until they have learned the same. And if any Minister neglect his duty herein, let him be sharply reprov'd upon the first complaint, and true notice thereof given to the Bishop or Ordinary of the place. If, after submitting himself, he shall willingly offend therein again, let him be suspended ; if so the third time, there being little hope that he will be therein reformed, then excommunicated, and so remain until he will be reformed. And, likewise, if any of the said fathers, mothers, masters, or mistresses, children, servants, or apprentices, shall neglect their duties, of the one sort of not causing them to come, and the other in refusing to learn, as aforesaid let them be suspended by their Ordinaries, (if they be not children) and if they so persist by the space of a month, then let them be excommunicated."

To require, therefore, the teacher in any common day school to teach the catechism of any religious persuasion, is not only a work of supererogation, but a direct interference with the disciplinary order of each religious persuasion ; and instead of providing by law for the extension of religious instruction and the promotion of Christian morality, it is providing by law for the neglect of pastoral and parental duty, by transferring to the common school teacher the duties which their church enjoins upon them, and thus sanctioning immoralities in pastors and parents,—which must, in a high degree, be injurious to the interests of public morals no less than to the interests of children and of the common schools. Instead of providing by law for denominational day schools for the teaching of denominational catechisms in school, it would seem more suitable to enforce by law the performance of the acknowledg-