

THE CANADA CHRISTIAN MONTHLY.

MAY, 1876.

EDITORIAL.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS:—OR SHOULD THEY BE SECULAR, OR SECTARIAN, OR RELIGIOUS?

WHAT IS THE STATE?—THEORIES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION—WHY DOES THE STATE EDUCATE?—THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE—THE LAMP OF WISDOM—CICERO'S OPINION OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION—DR. DUFF ON SECULAR SCHOOLS—WHAT RELIGION IS TO BE TAUGHT.

Should the National or Public Schools of a country be Secular, or Sectarian, or Religious, is one of the vexed questions of our Dominion—we may indeed say, of our Continent—at this moment. To be able to answer this question intelligently, it is necessary to go back to first principles, and to enquire—What is the State? and In what relation does it stand to the education of the people?

WHAT IS THE STATE?

In a country like this, and with the political freedom we possess, the State is just the people acting through their representatives, under God and the Constitution. The State is not, as in the despotisms of old, a king or an

emperor acting out (without fear of God or man) his sovereign will; nor is it, according to the communists of our day, the people doing as they choose, without regard to the constitution under which they were born, and the God in whom they live, move, and have their being. The State, according to the Christian idea, is the people conducting their public affairs under law to their Constitution and their God. The precise question, then, under discussion at present, in its first aspect, is—In what relation does the State, so understood, stand to the instruction or education of the people?

THEORIES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION.

1. There have been eminent men in our day, such as John Stuart Mill, who hold that there should be free trade in education. Such men hold (as Dr. Rigg, Principal of the Wesleyan Training School, London, explains the theory of which he is a disciple,) "That Government should require for every child a good education; should take proper manner to have the educational condition of children (especially before they are allowed to go to work, whether whole time or half-time), of electors, or competitors for