

## The Monthly Record.

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THE subject of religious education in common schools is of such importance that no apology is needed for devoting some of our space to its consideration. The different nations of the world are now brought into such intimate contact through the great advancement made in the mechanical arts that our circumstances and relations as a people have changed accordingly. The duties of people as citizens and church members are daily becoming more complex; and the knowledge of our duties which was sufficient in one period may be by no means sufficient to direct us aright in another, when social life demands at our hands the solution of more difficult problems. It is acknowledged on every side that the great commercial frauds which have lately threatened to overwhelm our country arose not so much from a lack of intellectual, as from a want of moral training. When men who are moving in the foremost ranks of society, in the commercial metropolis of this Dominion are threatened with the penitentiary for conspiracy and fraud; and when through *failures and assignments* in this Province itself, hundreds awake to find their hard-earned savings swept away at the hands of men in the front rank for intellectual ability, it is evident that a more thorough training in the principles and practice of morality is sadly needed.

The penitentiary is a poor remedy for the evils complained of. Nor will intellectual education alone suffice to restore society to a healthy condition. There is evidently something lacking in the systems of education hitherto made use of. Take for example the case of the great German nation where every child is compelled to attend school, and to attain a remarkable degree of proficiency; we find a people—to use the language of a recent writer—"unable to maintain either political freedom or reasonable faith; whose citizens are for the most part either devotees of the Romish Superstition or actual if not avowed athe-

ists; who either bow submissively to military despotism or break out in manifestations of wild socialism." Such being the state of matters in a land foremost among the nations of secular education, what security have we that our own country shall escape the evils which threaten the very foundations of society.

The slightest reflection will show us that the circumstances or to use the modern phrase, the environment of our youth, has greatly changed within the past few years. Already most of the children in the land are better scholars than their parents. Who will venture to say that they have the same lofty standard of morality, or to use a simple phrase that they have the same fear of God before their eyes. Is there no danger that in these circumstances parental restraint and authority will be disregarded or treated with contempt?

In order to meet the wants of the country all thoughtful persons who take an interest in the welfare of the young are attempting to insist on and to encourage religious education in common schools. In England since the passing of the School Act of 1870 this matter has received much attention. In every part of that country with the exception of the city of Birmingham which is governed by the tyrannical will of a majority of Radicals and in one or two insignificant sections in Wales where sectarian bigotry rules, Biblical instruction is insisted on by all the School Boards, a body of officials corresponding to our school trustees. No sectarian teaching of any kind is allowed. In Scotland the Shorter Catechism is taught we believe after the ordinary school hours, and only to children whose parents desire it. It is gratifying to learn that the system has worked so well that to take the case of the city of London alone, with a population equal to that of the whole Dominion—not a single complaint has been made during the whole term of the Board's existence and that "not more than one in four thousand of the children attending the schools has been withdrawn by its parents, although by the rules of the Board any person who objects to his child receiving Biblical instruction may require that during the time set apart for this