

by coercive legislation, and certain parts of the administration of justice were committed to what came to be called "the Courts Christian" in which ecclesiastical Judges presided; and these Courts successfully claimed jurisdiction in many matters which are now in England and Canada administered in temporal Courts. As long ago as before the Norman Conquest, marriages in England were by law required to be solemnized by "a mass priest." In the middle ages statutes were passed in England for the suppression of heresy, and by temporal law heretics were liable to be burnt. Indeed, it was not until the reign of Charles II., that the Writ "De hæretico comburendo" was abolished though it had then, for some time past, fallen into disuse. The English Parliament by statute in former days endeavoured to compel all people to attend, at public worship on the Lord's Day and gave the sanction of temporal law to a formula of public worship according to Christian rites, and forbade all other, but from that position it had to retreat. In those days our ancient lawyers might have been justified in saying that Christianity was a part of the law of the land. But we have changed all that.

In a land where toleration of all religious beliefs which are not manifestly offensive prevails, and where no compulsion, except of a purely moral and persuasive character, to adopt any particular religion exists, it is obviously untrue to say that Christianity is part of the law of the land. For no one can by law be compelled to accept the Christian faith and no one can by law be compelled to lead a Christian life.

But though the law does not give any coercive sanction to Christianity as a system of religion it does nevertheless still give a positive and coercive effect to many parts of the moral law of the Christian religion. It cannot and does not attempt to compel men to believe in the Holy Trinity, or to love, or worship God, or to adopt the golden rule regarding their duty to their neighbours, and yet it can, and does, impose penalties for blasphemy, and it does restrict labour on the Lord's Day. It cannot compel children to love and honour their parents, but it can, and does, compel them to help them when in need. It can and does impose penalties for murder, stealing, and bearing false witness; but it does not adopt