

must logically admit its force in the other. No one doubts for a moment the high motives that animate very many who insist upon using the Bible as a textbook, not to teach reading, but to make the mind of youth intelligently acquainted with the claims of religion. But that it is practicable, however desirable, to attempt such a thing in view of the diverse creeds that exist does not seem to be the growing opinion of the leading minds in church and State. The number indeed who insist upon religious instruction in the fullest sense of the term is exceedingly few, at least among Protestants, and becoming fewer every day, while in the old world there are indications that the days of State churches as they now exist are coming to an end. What the Canadian churches of all denominations have accomplished without fear or favor of the State proves that religion is not only purer, but Christian effort and liberality immeasurably greater, where the people not only choose their own pastors, but support them without the endowments of the State. The view held by Dr. Ralph Wardlaw and a few sturdy Scottish independents nearly a century ago, that "the province of the State in respect to matters of religion is, that it has *no province at all*," has, in the light and experience of later days, been adopted by many who were foremost in advocating the right and duty of the State to administer and propagate religion. This, indeed, was the view held by the framers of the constitution of the United States.

#### **Divergent Claims of Opposing Sects.**

Of the many theories held regarding State provision for religious teaching or otherwise in the Public schools of Ontario the following may be briefly noticed :

#### **Rapid Increase of Opinion in Favor of Secular Schools.**

(1) Those who advocate complete secularization of our Public school system ; the entire exclusion of the Bible and all religious exercises. While it may be but a small minority that holds this view, *that minority is increasing very much* because of the continued and persistent efforts of certain parties to have other religious exercises added to what the schools have at present. This they regard as but the initiative to denominational and dogmatic teaching, as in the Separate schools, and eventually to a system of State-aided schools for every denomination.

#### **Dogmatic Religious Teaching Impossible in the Public Schools.**

(2) Those who insist on the Bible being used to explain and enforce doctrines and polity, according to the creeds and discipline of the various denominations as they are represented in the Public schools. Now, it is freely granted that there is no better body of men and women in our country than the teachers in our Public schools. The great majority of them are, we presume, members of some evangelical church. They seek not only the secular and mental welfare of their pupils, but their higher interests. But how few have been trained in historical theology to fit them to be the guides of youth in matters of doctrine