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# STATE EDUCATION

CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO

PREVALENT MISCONCEPTIONS

ON

RELIGIOUS GROUNDS.

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## PREVALENT MISCONCEPTIONS

ON

## RELIGIOUS GROUNDS.

BY THE

REV. BADEN POWELL, M.A., F.R.S., F.G.S., F.R.A.S.,

*OF ORIEL COLLEGE; SAVILIAN PROFESSOR OF GEOMETRY  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE great question of education is one which is at all times important to be discussed; because as changes and improvements are constantly taking place in the state of society, so corresponding advances in the preparatory course of instruction, one at least of whose objects is to fit men for properly filling their position in society, must be continually called for. And the careful consideration of the means of extending and improving education, grounded, as it must be, upon an examination of what are its essential principles and objects, becomes a matter of the deepest concern. More profoundly interesting do such questions naturally become when they occur to those upon whom depends the diffusion of so essential a benefit to others: more particularly, that is, when the question relates mainly to what is termed "primary education," or such as has for its specific object to confer that instruction which is suitable to the wants, capacities, and position of the poorer classes, whether by the private benevolence of the richer orders, or by public enactments and national institutions.

To rely on the former of these sources for the

means of advancing so truly *national* an object is, I believe, generally admitted to be both inadequate to the end proposed, and extremely unjust on the benevolent individuals. A national object must be supported by national resources. It is then in this latter point of view that I propose at present to consider the subject ; to discuss the question of the systems and principles of primary instruction, as connected with legislative measures, and the public institutions of the country. To express the subject briefly, I have adopted the term "State-education" as the most appropriate.

As to the general necessity of primary instruction and national education, there is at the present day little difference of opinion ; there are now hardly to be found any avowed advocates of ignorance *as such*.

Equally general is the existing persuasion of the necessity of some great, vigorous, and comprehensive measures for forwarding this object in a way commensurate with its national importance.

At the present time, when various educational schemes have been brought prominently forward, and some steps actually taken towards a great national measure having so momentous an object in view, the question, in all its varied bearings, has naturally been forced on public attention.

The measure of discussion which it has received has, however, been too much influenced by party considerations. In much of the declamation, and



sometimes the attempts at argument, put forth in avowed opposition to the object which the legislature has begun to promote, and in the vehemence with which even the first, and most apparently unexceptionable, steps taken towards its gradual introduction have been assailed, we cannot but recognise that determined political animosity, mixed up with, and hurried on by, a professed zeal for religion, which renders men quite inaccessible to all rational considerations, and indeed purposely and resolutely deaf to all dispassionate argument.

Yet in offering the following remarks, grounded upon a deep conviction of the extreme importance of the subject in itself, and the peculiar necessity for a full and fair discussion of it at the present time, it is my aim to conduct the inquiry, not with reference to the support of a party,—a blind devotion to any specific scheme,—or any considerations whatever of mere temporary expediency, but with regard to the grand and stable principles of right and of truth, on which alone such a subject can be worthily treated.

That the whole question is too commonly involved in the grossest misconceptions, even apart from the falsehoods with which it has been mixed up by reckless party spirit, has appeared to me manifest even upon the most casual discussion or mention of the subject in conversation, or the publications of the day. That these misapprehensions are, at least in many instances, *honestly* entertained,



and that there is a speciousness and plausibility about some of the positions currently assumed as axioms, cannot be denied.

To trace such misconceptions to their source, to investigate calmly and dispassionately some of the main positions which have been advanced as first principles, to unravel the perplexities and expose the fallacies in which they have been involved, is my main object.

To pursue this design more distinctly, and therefore more effectively, it will be expedient to take first in order some considerations relative to education in general, and thence proceed to the more particular question of its promotion by legislative measures.

In reference to these questions, it is impossible not to remark, to how extraordinary a degree the objections and arguments commonly urged turn upon points almost wholly of a *speculative* and *theoretical* nature. On most subjects there is a popular outcry against mere theory, and nothing will be listened to but the results of experience and the decisions of *practical* men. On the subject of education the order seems to be reversed; and nothing appears to be less considered than the value of reasoning upon facts or rational grounds of utility, and the whole contest seems to be one for *abstract principles*.

That such is the case may perhaps be allowed as a reason why the subject may, without presump-



tion, be taken in hand by a writer who has no pretensions to be versed in the practical details of educational systems. From such details the nature of my position and avocations has in great measure kept me. But it is to the questions of theory and first principles which constitute so main a part of those actually debated that my attention has been drawn, and it is to these almost exclusively that the following observations refer.

I can, however, add, that with regard to the more practical points, I am not without access to the ablest and soundest aid and advice, from those who have devoted a large portion of their time and attention to the actual prosecution of the great work of primary education, in various circumstances ; and have amply put to the test of experience the improvements suggested by enlightened liberality, accompanied by the most earnest zeal for the inculcation of Christianity in all its purity.

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### *General Education: Unity of System.*

A GOOD education (whether only of the primary or of any higher class) ought, beyond question, to include a complete and comprehensive course, applying to "the whole man," to *all* the faculties, and to *all* the departments in which the individual, in his several relations, needs to be improved and rendered fit for the position he is to occupy, as an intellectual, moral, social, religious being\*. This is a truth, on all hands allowed and even insisted on, whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the details of its application.

It is also true that the term "education" has been sometimes used in too partial and restricted a sense, and that, in some instances, what has been proposed and adopted as a complete and *general* education, has been in truth but a very *partial* and *limited* one.

And that the substitution of such a *partial* scheme, is not merely a *defect*, but a positive injury, is also too manifest to need much remark, were it not that there is so strong a tendency among many educationists to be blind to the very partial and

\* This, and many other important topics, will be found ably discussed in the letters of Mr. Simpson to the Marquis of Lansdowne, collected in the *Monthly Chronicle*, Nos. 21, 22.



limited nature of the system they adopt, under the name and pretext of a complete scheme.

From what has just been said, it follows that a complete education must include many branches. These must undoubtedly be *all* made essential and integrant parts of any good system. There must be instruction in the rudiments of mere secular knowledge in its several departments: and there must also be an inculcation of moral duties and of religious truth. This, as a broad principle, is admitted on all hands. That in the adjustment of the detail of its application great difference of opinion arises, is also sufficiently notorious; and to those differences we shall advert hereafter. At present let us consider more precisely the bearing of the principle just laid down of the essential *union* of these different departments in one combined system. This is strongly insisted on by some parties in the dispute in such a way as to render it evident that a *peculiar sense* is attached to the term "union" or "combination" of departments, which it may be desirable briefly to examine.

That these different departments of instruction have each a considerable bearing upon the other is quite undeniable. That they are, nevertheless, in themselves distinct, and are based upon principles of a widely different kind, is equally clear.

When it is so strenuously contended that they must be combined and united, is it meant that they must be all taught confusedly together? the pre-



cepts of the one built upon the grounds of the other?

Or, is it intended to attach a peculiar importance to the circumstance that the several branches of instruction must be in the hands of one and the same teacher?—or even under his direction?—or be carried on, necessarily, in the same place?—or at the same time?

It may perhaps be thought I am raising up imaginary difficulties; but, in truth, some notions not more intelligible than these, are actually made the basis of a host of objections, the nature of which we shall more fully perceive in the sequel: but it may be well here to consider, *in limine*, the first principle.

As it is difficult to imagine any real advantage from *insisting* on such a mode of teaching; so when education is carried on upon a sufficiently large scale (and such is the case to which these remarks principally apply), it is surely obvious, that as the separation of the departments is clearly *practicable*, without detriment to any, so will it necessarily be attended by all the important advantages resulting from the great principle of *the division of labour*.

It may fairly be presumed that, as in all other operations carried on on a large scale, so in the work of systematic education, the want of division of labour will always entail the less perfect performance of the work, as the adoption of that principle will infallibly secure its better and easier accomplishment.

When such terms as "the unity of system," and the like, are used in any reasonable sense, it is surely manifest that a *separation of departments* does not involve the smallest disregard of the great principle of *complete education*. Still less does it imply any *degradation* to any individual branch that it should be taught distinct from the others.

But there may be some cases in which special reasons render a division of departments not only useful, but unavoidable. Such we shall find to be the case, in an eminent degree, with respect to moral and religious instruction. In such cases, it will become a main object in conducting the secular departments, carefully to avoid all topics which can come into collision with the points of religious difference. This, indeed, is not unattended with difficulty, and must suppose for its successful attainment, teachers, both better-informed and more liberally-disposed than are commonly to be found. All that I contend for, at present, is that such separation of the departments as it involves no disparagement to any; so neither does it in the least impugn the completeness or unity of the system.

In reference to the main object of these remarks, it is no part of my design to discuss the various branches of merely secular knowledge which it may be desirable to introduce in primary education. My principal concern is with the questions relative to moral and religious instruction. To these, therefore, I now proceed.



*Instruction in Morals.*

WITH regard to instruction in the simple precepts of practical morality, it may appear, at first sight, that the introduction of it in a comprehensive scheme of education, would be unaccompanied by difficulty or objection: yet the object is one which, when fully considered, really demands much care and caution. In point of fact, it is a branch of knowledge which is much less generally attended to than it ought to be. The exposition of the grounds of moral obligation has been pursued chiefly in the way of abstruse speculation; and too commonly regarded as having little relation to the purposes of elementary instruction.

The difficulty has been even increased by some of the most popular writers, as Paley, from mixing up moral principles (as he does), with religion, and thus depriving the science of morals of its peculiar and characteristic attributes.

Yet persons of all religious persuasions who think at all on the subject, probably allow some distinction between *morality*, properly so called, and *religion*:—with some sects, in fact, the two are held to be in no small degree distinct from, and even at variance with, each other. But where these notions are not maintained, there is a very general feeling, among many religious parties, that instruction in *moral* duties, as such, is objection-

able: and with justice, if such instruction really involved a disregard of the higher sanctions of religion. That such an interpretation might be fixed upon the avowed adoption of the practice of *moral* instruction, is unhappily what we should be prepared to anticipate from the prevalent misconceptions on the subject. To introduce any separate systematic instruction in morals is something so much beyond the scope of nearly all prevalent courses of education, that it might well be expected to call forth much objection, merely as an innovation, if nothing worse. But the main objection will arise from that prevalent, but most irrational notion, to which we have already referred, that to recognise the importance of any separate branch of instruction, is to disparage combined and general education. Such prejudices only require to be perspicuously stated to expose their absurdity. But they are not the less on that account most mischievously efficacious in the minds of a numerous class. They cannot be brought to see, that to teach one branch without mixing it up with another, is not to undervalue the branch so kept separate.

The exposition of moral principles and duties, as such, is not only distinct from all consideration of religion, but the principles laid down must cease to possess the character of simply moral principles, precisely in proportion as they are mixed up with the doctrines and precepts of religion. While it is this very separate and independent teaching, which



confers on moral subjects the power of affording proof and support to the truth of religion; by which, in turn, they are again placed in a new light, invested with a higher importance, and enforced by more exalted sanctions.

It does not concern my present object to go further into this topic than to observe, that if any comprehensive scheme of education were being chalked out, though there would in the first instance exist much difficulty in reconciling many religious persons to the introduction of mere moral instruction, as such, yet I cannot help thinking a great part of the difficulty would be got over, when it had been clearly pointed out precisely *what* was the sort of instruction intended. The difference of opinion existing at present, as to the actual province of *ethics*, properly so called, is alone a material difficulty to be encountered by any one who would attempt to frame a system for common use in elementary schools. Thus, while some uphold the principle of *utility* as the basis, others refer to the *Mosaic Law*, others, again, to certain *innate sentiments*. Such an elementary system as I am supposing, must of course keep clear of all these jarring principles, and be carefully restricted to laying down, on some very simple arrangement, the most primary and necessary distinctions of right and wrong, in regard to the several relations of man; a work, simple as it may seem, of no ordinary difficulty to execute.

*Instruction in Religion.*

IN every sense the most momentous, and at the same time the most difficult, part of the whole question, is that which relates to the introduction of *religious instruction*. That such instruction ought to be regarded as the highest department of education is hardly denied by any party. It in fact follows from the consideration of the different capacities and relations of man before adverted to: with reference to every one of which, due cultivation is indispensable to the very ends of all education. And if among these, the relations in which man is placed as a spiritual and accountable being, be the highest, due instruction in regard to those relations must of course claim a corresponding pre-eminence in every good system of education. And, further, on the same grounds, it may be truly maintained that religious instruction is not merely *an important part* of education, but that all real education ought to be *based upon religion*: that it is not to be regarded merely as one essential *branch*, but as the very *root* of all sound and really profitable instruction.

In positions so accordant with every sentiment of truth, and with a regard to the highest interests of mankind, it is to be hoped nearly all parties are agreed. Nowhere has such avowal been more explicitly and emphatically made than in the terms



and provisions under which the parliamentary grants have in all cases been proposed in the reports of the committee of the Privy Council, but more especially in the rule explicitly laid down for the proposed formation (though since abandoned) of Normal schools, that in them "religion was to be combined with the whole matter of instruction, and to regulate the entire system of discipline\*." And this was in close accordance with the express terms of her Majesty's gracious declaration of her wish, "that the children and teachers of this school should be duly trained in the principles of the Christian religion, while the rights of conscience should be respected†."

Now as this is admitted to be the most fundamentally important part of the subject before us, so it is here that the *main difficulty* is found in the arrangement of any comprehensive scheme of national instruction: a difficulty which arises obviously and necessarily out of the differences in religious belief, which must unavoidably exist wherever religious belief is founded on free inquiry and rational conviction. We cannot remove the difficulty by treating the differences as unimportant; the points on which parties divide must be such as in their estimation are *essential*, or they would not separate upon them. It therefore requires little reflection to see the obstacles which must stand in the way of

\* Minute of the Privy Council, 11th April.

† Quoted in the Minute of Council, June 3rd, 1839.

any system which is to be adapted to the wants of the whole nation, and of which religion is to form an essential, or rather, the most essential part. Without entering at present into the details of the difficulties and objections thus arising, it will be peculiarly desirable, in the first instance, to refer to some considerations of a more general nature. We may thus discover some main sources of those difficulties, and thereby be at least enabled to see our way more clearly in any suggestions for obviating or diminishing them.

That "sound education must be founded on religion," is allowed by all. Certain parties, however, in upholding this undeniable position, take it in a *peculiar sense*, and urge it to very *extraordinary lengths*. The extreme views thus sometimes adopted are not indeed so expressed as to be capable of being always distinctly understood; but it seems certain that, in the views thus upheld, many of the most serious difficulties and misconceptions which beset the subject take their rise. While the general principle is fully admitted, we may yet canvass the particular inferences to which it is made to lead; while the main object is allowed to be of vital importance, we may question the precise means resorted to for its accomplishment.



*Union of Secular and Religious Education.*

WHEN it is affirmed that *all sound education must not only be founded on religion, but in all particulars mixed up with it*, let us dispassionately inquire *what is really meant*.

Is it intended that the acquisition of the first rudiments of knowledge is to be based upon religious belief? Such a notion, however apparently preposterous, is not without its serious advocates. As there have been learned divines and philosophers who have referred to the Bible for systems of astronomy and cosmogony, for the squaring of the circle, and the true standard of weights and measures; so have they not wanted followers in the more humble but equally useful path of devising Bible alphabets and scriptural systems of arithmetic and grammar. It is held that there is a peculiar merit in the use of the Bible as a book of reading lessons, and a mystic virtue in exercising the memory by the repetition of chapters and psalms.

Such, clearly, according to a certain party, is the meaning of education based upon religion; and that it is seriously insisted on, is manifest from the diligence with which elementary books, displaying the most objectionable familiarities of this kind, are got up, and patronized by religious societies, even under the sanction of the heads of the Church. But can any reasonable person believe that the due



influence of religion is to be secured by such incongruous mixtures of its most solemn truths with the childish rudiments of letters? that such a continual introduction of religious allusions can have any real tendency to create a reverence for divine things? or the incessant recurrence of names and words relating to scriptural subjects tend to give due honour and dignity to religion in the eyes of the pupils? On the contrary, it seems difficult to imagine any plan better adapted for making religion an object of contempt and aversion, than thus perpetually associating it in the young mind with the drudgery of school tasks. Scriptural spelling surely cannot lead the learner to think Scripture anything better than a spelling-book; nor Bible arithmetic teach him otherwise than to place Christianity and cyphering on the same level. The most solemn truths mixed up with the puerile illustrations of the alphabet, the words of divine instruction made vehicles for teaching orthography, Scripture language used for conveying instruction in grammar, the sacred events of Divine revelation employed to furnish examples for arithmetic, are methods of teaching which may indeed secure a familiarity with religion, but it is the sort of familiarity which breeds disrespect. If such a system do not, of itself, lead to profaneness and irreligion, at least it supplies the best possible preparation for such a result. With their only impressions of religion derived from such teaching, the pupils are afterwards ready at the first sneer or cavil



to cast it off. Their only conceptions of revelation being of so low and trivial a stamp, they readily fall in with the suggestion of the infidel, that it is but a vulgar superstition. Having their notion of Christianity mixed up only with such idle associations, they easily adopt the insinuation of the unbeliever, that it is nothing better than a fiction.

### *Fundamental Doctrinal Instruction.*

BUT with those who do not go the length of maintaining such lamentable perversions as those we have glanced at, in their literal extent, there is, nevertheless, a very prevalent adherence to certain principles nearly allied to them.

It is held by many religious systematists, that there ought to be, at the root of all education, a solemn and absolute inculcation of certain great doctrines; that these are to be taught positively, dogmatically, and authoritatively, to be treasured up, whether understood or not; and all questions respecting them to be silenced, on the ground that a submissive reception of them is the true exercise of faithful obedience, and will, in due time, produce its fruit. There must be no sinful compromise, or half-measures. Partial instruction is worse than none; it is a mutilation and dismembering of what God has joined together. The truth must be taught all at once, as a whole. Any other course is but the suggestion of a carnal mind, or a self-sufficient



heretical spirit, and tends to cast doubt on the power of the divine word, the influence of grace, on the authority of the Church.

Now if this be to found education on religion, it is difficult to see what dependence the one can be supposed to have on the other. When such a system is adopted, I do not see that there is even an attempt at carrying on the two kinds of instruction in *connexion* with each other: it is nearly equivalent to an avowed *disunion* of them.

And as to the results of such a plan, it hardly need be remarked how direct is its tendency to make the learner mistake words for things: to suppose that because he has on his tongue a catalogue of Bible names and Scripture events, that he is therefore versed in the Scriptures; that because he can repeat dogmatic formularies by rote, he therefore understands the great truths of Christianity. That such is the result in too many instances is clearly shown by positive evidence\*. And practical proof of the effects of such a system, too commonly in operation in a greater or less degree, is abundantly furnished in the existing state of popular information, or rather misinformation, on religious subjects, and the unworthy and degraded notions of Christianity too generally prevalent.

In a rational and intelligible sense, such phrases as "Education based on religion," and the like,

\* The Evidence of Professor Pillans and Mr. Wood. See also Marquis of Lansdowne's Speech, p. 29.



clearly mean that the use and application of all other knowledge is to be guided by religious principles; that those high and sacred considerations ought to exercise an influence over all others,—to qualify, to restrain, to direct, all secular objects and pursuits.

If this be just and true, as it undoubtedly is, it obviously implies that those other departments of instruction *are* separately attended to, and the higher principles of religion also distinctly and intelligibly taught, for the very object of being thus effectively applied.

There is surely no way in which the due influence of religion over all education can be effectually and rationally secured, but by a serious, well-considered, distinct course of elementary instruction, duly proportioned in gradual developement to the capacities of the learners,—commensurate with their progress in other studies,—and carefully impressed with all the sanctions derived from the reverence shown to the subject—from the high importance the learner will see attached to it, when it is reserved for a subject of separate inculcation, removed from all immediate contact with lower objects, and freed from all degrading associations.

If it be the practical object of religion to bring down heavenly truth to sanctify common every-day duties, then it is surely most essential to that great end, that the heavenly nature of those truths should be first *distinctly* instilled *before* they are mixed up



with secular considerations. When so unworthily and incongruously inculcated, they are contaminated and deprived of their virtue by the mixture,—their spiritual power is neutralized,—the waters of life have lost their freshness,—“the *salt* has lost its savour,” and then “wherewith will ye season it?”

### *Progressive Religious Teaching.*

THAT the great truths of Christianity, if recognised *at all*, must be recognised *fundamentally*, is undeniable, nor do we wish to omit a single particular of its doctrines; but the question is, *how* are they *best to be taught*, and most effectually inculcated? Can we, upon any sound view of the use of Scripture, really imagine that such a method, or rather absence of method, as that just referred to, can at all secure the object? or can it be shown that there is anything in the nature of revealed truth in the smallest degree *inconsistent* with a *more gradual system of teaching*?

Or will not the adoption of some judicious *progressive* lessons, advancing according to the opening capacity of the learner, be at least the surest *approach* towards the attainment of the object? Will any one, however devoted to spiritual views, seriously contend that *human means* of learning are not to be used as far as they will go? Will it be asserted that we are wrong in giving children some first elementary lessons before we proceed to the



higher? That we may teach first the most simple moral duties, next some of the plainer and more simple truths of religion, and so on by degrees to the higher doctrines of revelation?

So far from disjoining these several parts of the great system, we surely take the most effectual means to connect and unite them. We may surely trust that to teach Christian principles, so as to make them understood, is not to teach them unfaithfully;—to instruct in one portion only at a time is no disparagement to the completeness of the gospel as a whole. And to any one not wholly given up to mystical contemplation, we may confidently suggest the inquiry, whether this mode of gradual instruction be not precisely that which we trace throughout the whole progress of the divine teaching recorded in the Scriptures;—a progressive adaptation of the *mode* of conveying the truth to the capacities and wants of the parties addressed; —“line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little and there a little.”

### *Comprehensive Religion.*

WE find then no real difference of opinion on the grand principle, that all education ought to be secured on a religious basis; no opposition offered to the assertion, that an education without religion is defective in its foundation. The sole question at issue is, that which regards the *mode* by which

this grand object can be most successfully effected ; the *most practicable means* by which a religious education may best be secured, *under the particular circumstances* in which we are called upon to provide it.

Now here there is one main principle, which has been much discussed, under the name of "General, or comprehensive religion,"—or religious instruction of such a kind as shall apply to all denominations, without including what is offensive to any. Some such principle (to which it is difficult to give a perfectly appropriate name) has been as strenuously upheld by some parties as condemned by others.

By some zealous friends to general education, it has been upheld as a measure of the best and most salutary kind ; to which objections can only be entertained by the most exclusive bigots ; which, in reality, presents none of those difficulties in practice with which it is sometimes thought to be surrounded in theory, and which is eminently accordant with the truly catholic and conciliatory spirit of genuine Christianity.

On the other hand, the suggestion of such a scheme has been denounced as at once chimerical and profane, as aiming at objects wholly impracticable and illusory, and seeking to promote them by means clearly implying a total absence of all real religious belief.

Instead of violently espousing either one side or



the other of such a question, let us rather pursue the more rational course of inquiring into the precise *meaning* of such terms as those in which the principle discussed is proposed, and in examining *how far*, and *in what sense*, any common universal elements of religious instruction, from the nature of the subject, are capable of being distinctly laid down, so as to become the topics of systematic teaching.

It has been maintained by some, that it would be quite practicable to teach to children of all denominations in common the great essentials of pure and practical religion, without touching upon those points of doctrine on which difference of opinion exists : a distinction has been drawn between teaching *theology* and *religion* ; the practical principles of *Christianity*, at least, it is said, may be fully inculcated in a way which no sect will disapprove, and that this would, in fact, be all that a system of general education could be expected to embrace.

Appeal is made to some institutions in which such principles have actually been reduced to practice with the happiest results ; and there can be no doubt that a system of this kind is fully adequate to the inculcation of *much* religious feeling and instruction in *many* Christian duties. It seems to me that the chief point of controversy arises from each party mistaking the object at which the other aims. Those who object to this system object to it *because it is incomplete* ; those who support it con-



tend that, as *far as it goes*, it is *excellent*. The two assertions are perfectly compatible.

The advocates of this comprehensive scheme do not deny, when pressed on the point, that it does not and cannot embrace a systematic teaching of what are deemed fundamental doctrines; its opponents do not deny that it may teach much which is good in itself, as far as it extends. If its friends intended to assert (and perhaps, in some instances, they may be so understood), that these general and practical principles are the *whole* of real religion, they will of course be immediately condemned by those of *every* denomination, who all equally insist on *some* positive doctrines not merely as *true*, but as *fundamental*. If its opponents maintain that to teach a *part* of religion is as bad as to teach *no* religion, they may be fairly charged with the most narrow ideas, and want of common sense.

The fact seems to be, that no denomination can consistently allow such instruction to be *sufficient*, though all but the most exclusive bigots may allow it to be *good*. Thus, on all hands, something *more* is demanded. There must be some more special instruction superadded for each creed. Yet this need not supersede the introduction of *some* general religious instruction in common to all, regarded as *introductory* to the more special.



### *Subjects of Common Religious Instruction.*

HERE, then, the only question which can arise is, *What general principles* can be thus taught in common? *How far* can any *comprehensive form* extend? Or, *What books or subjects* are capable of being selected thus adapted, without objection, to all alike?

These questions are of the highest interest and importance. To suggest what may be little more than a few desultory hints in reply to them is all I can here attempt, but it may not be without its use.

There are difficulties in any comprehensive plan of this kind which may not at first sight appear. The task of keeping clear of points of difference is a far more delicate one than it might seem to a superficial observer. Let us look briefly at one or two leading branches of religious elementary teaching, in which it might be supposed that little disagreement would be found, and which are on all hands admitted to be essential parts of such a course of instruction as it would be desirable to include in a system of primary national education.

### EVIDENCES OF RELIGION.

1. The *evidences* of religion, natural and revealed, it might be presumed, would, in the estimation of all, form a very necessary groundwork, and that with respect to such a subject little difference of

opinion could subsist. Yet, even here, a little inquiry into the sentiments of various parties in the religious world will show that a strong feeling of jealousy exists. Even among educated persons, of all creeds, the most unhappy misconceptions too widely prevail as to the proper design and tendency of the study of the evidences, and of the relative dependence, and respective proper provinces, of natural theology and revelation. By many the study of natural theology is looked upon with suspicion, as setting up reason above revelation, and the inquiry into the evidences of revelation as little better than covert scepticism, and a disposition to set aside the simplicity of faith on the one hand, or the authority of the Church on the other.

In the evidences of natural religion there are other difficulties of a peculiar kind to encounter. The very notion of such evidences presupposes considerable acquaintance with the facts and laws of the natural world ; the standard of secular education must, therefore, be raised much higher than it at present is before this branch can be introduced with full effect. Yet what faith can be called rational which cannot assign some grounds for believing that there is a God ?

On the evidences of *natural theology*, though we have abundance of profound and scientific treatises, we have not one of that simple character, and in that small compass, which is necessary as a text book for national schools ; and what a difficult



task would it be (from the very simplicity of the conditions proposed) to draw up such a treatise.

If we turn to the evidences of revealed religion, the task is certainly less difficult ; the nature of the subject is such as to require less preliminary information,—the facts are learned as matters of *history*,—and the great argument itself is more congenial to the uninstructed mind than that of natural theology.

Here no want of a text-book need be an obstacle ; the little work of this kind\*, entitled *Easy Lessons on the Evidences of Christianity*, being one which unites all the qualifications required for the purpose in the highest degree in which it is perhaps possible to combine them. I cannot help, however, by the way, pointing out the great injury done to the simplicity of the original work, by the altered form in which it has been published, as adopted by the Irish Education board. I refer particularly to the introductory remarks which they have prefixed, and which contain matter which would be positively objected to by many.

#### SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

2. The *Scripture History*, considered *merely as historical*, both of the Old and New Testament, is a subject which, it would seem, might be taught without offence to any party. Yet there are many

\* Originally inserted in the *Saturday Magazine*; since published separately by J. W. Parker, West Strand.



who would object to the very notion of teaching it *simply as history*. It would remain to be seen how far such objections might be surmounted, if a very judicious and comprehensive outline of the historical facts (with the requisite accompaniments of the geography and chronology) were drawn up, and a strict adherence to it insisted on; but this must be done by no ordinary hand.

Connected with the question of Scripture History, there is one point to which it may be perhaps thought I am going quite out of my way to allude; yet it strikes me as one which must, in the present age, force itself more and more on our attention, especially in connexion with elementary instruction: *In what light are we to teach children to view the Old Testament account of the Creation*,—whether in Genesis, or in the Decalogue\*? Are they to be early habituated to take it in its literal sense, and to hold it *historically* true as an article of faith? and then, when they afterwards come to hear (as we must expect all educated persons will,) the facts of the case elicited by geological research, so wholly at variance with the reception of it *as history*, are they to be left exposed to the inferences of the sceptic, and the attacks which the advocate of infidelity will not fail to found on the contradiction? are they to be thus made the victims of a timid prejudice and weak dread of meeting the question fairly?

\* On this subject, see my work on *The Connexion of Natural and Divine Truth*, p. 253, &c.; also, DR. PYE SMITH on *Geology and Scripture*.



On the other side, it is not to be denied that it would be very difficult to frame any view of the case to meet the apprehensions of the learner: the difficulty, however, will hardly excuse us from making the attempt.

#### BIBLE READING.

3. The study of *The Bible* itself, though a point to which no denomination absolutely objects, is yet, as to the particular mode in which it may be practised, a subject of the warmest dispute. The questions, as to the *version* to be adopted;—as to the degree in which any, even grammatical and verbal explanation is to be applied;—as to the order of reading;—as to the omission of certain parts;—and, by consequence, the great question of *selection*, or, as it is termed, *mutilation*;—all these are the apparently interminable points of difference which seem to place insuperable difficulties in the way of any comprehensive scheme of Scripture reading.

It remains, however, to be seen how far a very well chosen manual of a few of the simplest practical lessons, of the most striking parables and illustrations, or of most general and sublime declarations, might be brought into use; not with any pretence of *superseding* the reading of the Bible in the distinct classes of religious instruction, but merely as an aid and introduction to it. In any discussion of the practice of Bible reading, it must not be forgotten that there are many religionists of various

persuasions, who entertain a peculiar view of the spiritual efficacy of the mere continual perusal of the letter of the Sacred Volume ; through which, they contend, an impression of saving truth will, at some due season, be infallibly made on the reader's soul by divine grace.

This elevated view, not of course always avowed or entertained to the full extent, forms the real basis of much of the earnest argument and zealous protestation in support of the use of the *whole* of the inspired volume, without diminution or selection.

We may trace also to this source, in a great degree, the prevalence of the opinion (so strongly opposed in other quarters) that by the reading of the Bible alone, without note or comment, children of all denominations may be sufficiently taught the great fundamental principles of Christianity\*. This is of course most strenuously denied by the Roman Catholics, and a certain section of the Church of England, who believe that the written Scripture is only a *part* of the word of God, there being also an unwritten word committed to the teaching of the Church. But it would also be objected to by many other parties on other grounds.

By some we hear it suggested that certain particular portions or passages of the Bible might be selected as *compendious codes*, or *summaries* of faith and practice. To these, adopted as standing

\* See the Evidence of Mr. Dunn, before the Education Committee.



forms of general instruction, they think no party would object. Thus, for example, the Ten Commandments, or the Sermon on the Mount, or the practical chapters from some of the Epistles, or other similar passages, have been proposed to be thus adopted.

To all of these there would be strong objections on the part of many religious sects. But most of all would such a course appear objectionable, in proportion as we come to consider the contents of the Bible in a more rational and discriminating manner. To take these, or the like passages, as *in themselves* constituting a summary of religion, is to forget all distinctions in the design and import of the different parts of Scripture, and of the reference which those passages bear to the particular circumstances under which they were delivered.

The Judaical decalogue in particular has been long thus insisted on by those whose opinions lean towards the puritanical school, as being identical with the moral law ; an opinion not less strongly objected to by others, as in itself unintelligible, and leading to the most serious misapprehensions of the grounds and extent of Christian duty.

#### FORMULARIES.

4. There remains, perhaps, one further mode of comprehensive religious instruction to be considered, viz., the possibility of composing any *general*



*formulary* which might be applicable to all alike, and to which no denomination would object.

When such an idea has been broached, it has been at once met with every species of opprobrium, and denounced as a sinful compromise of all essential doctrines, and a softening down and explaining away the whole of Christianity. No vague general truths, couched in ambiguous language, it is urged, can be admissible as Christian instruction.

Perhaps with the view of obviating such charges a system of a more precise nature might be imagined, which should still be sufficiently comprehensive for the object in view. A plan which should include *nearly* all denominations, calling for some slight concessions on all sides; or at least, perhaps, embracing all denominations of *Christians*, or all sects of *Protestants*; somewhere, probably, a line must be drawn, yet it might be so drawn as not to exclude any considerable number. Such a system, it might be said, would at least show a wish to conciliate all, while it upheld steadfastly certain great truths, and taught such a creed as it might be plausibly contended no sect ought in reason to object to.

Yet it would be manifestly idle to affirm that any forms *ought not* to be objected to, if in fact we find that *they are*. And a very little acquaintance with the actual views and sentiments of different religious parties would, I believe, show that such a



plan is hardly capable of introduction in the present state of religious opinion.

If, by narrowing the principles of common instruction, we could arrive at a point where some few of the parties should come to a tolerable agreement, this must, in fact, amount to the exclusive assertion of a dominant creed; and the limits prescribed must be inconsistent with the *professed* object of *national education*, *coextensive with all the varieties of the national belief*.

In one instance, indeed, a step towards the proposal of such a form has been actually made. I allude to the heads or outline drawn up under the sanction of the Bishop of Calcutta\*, for an educational institution in India, which was designed by its founder to embrace *all parties without distinction of creed*. Hence, the bishop advocates this plan, which he says comprises “*all the great doctrines of redemption*.” In what degree this meets the object contemplated, I will not stop to inquire. But looking at the scheme in itself, instead of critically disparaging, we should rejoice in giving it credit for whatever excellency it may possess: we cannot, however, fail to notice one defect stamped upon it throughout. Its whole *tone* is that of *dogmatism*, however wide; its exclusiveness is *positive* and *marked*, however large the limits. And to come to particulars, this formula, in the first place, profess-

\* See *Recent Measures*, p. 70.



edly excludes Jews, and all who do not receive the Christian faith. Secondly, it excludes all Christians whose opinions verge, however slightly, towards Socinianism, Sabellianism, or Arianism. Thirdly, it is worded in such *terms* as would be objected to by many who would not dispute the *substance* of the doctrines referred to. It adopts scholastic phrases, such as "meritorious sacrifice," "personality," &c.; and the tenet that the moral duties of a Christian are summed up in the Jewish decalogue; besides being accompanied by a direction to the teacher, which it is next to impossible that any teacher can fulfil, to inculcate all these points without touching upon any topic of controversy.

The conclusion to which these remarks point is, that no comprehensive formulary is attainable which shall *stand in the place* of a *complete scheme* of Christian instruction. But on the other hand, it is conceivable that a system embracing *some essential portions* of such instruction might be devised, though the task would be confessedly beset with difficulties. Such a form would not be fairly chargeable with building on a wrong foundation, if it were carefully and judiciously so framed and arranged, as to constitute a *progressive* series of lessons; in which nothing would be more continually and effectually put before the eyes of the learner, than that every successive step was but *in itself imperfect and only a preliminary* to something higher. The more common and elementary points would thus be taught as *far as*



*it might be possible* to those of all denominations in common; every one fully understanding that *this* instruction was only the mere *imperfect* rudiments, upon which that perfect and intimate knowledge of the higher doctrines was to be based, in the special religious instruction, to be given by the authorized teacher of his own denomination.

#### RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES.

5. A further point of very difficult adjustment among those of different persuasions, would be *what religious observances* should be kept up in any school on the comprehensive plan.

The use, for example, of *prayer* at the opening or conclusion of the school, besides the manifest difficulty of composing a form adapted to all persuasions, involves the keenly-disputed question of the use of any *set* forms, on which it is well known so wide a diversity of sentiment prevails. Some object not only to pre-composed human forms, but even to the use of the Lord's Prayer; while some, it is believed, dislike all *outward* acts of worship.

Again, the observance of particular *days* would, perhaps, involve no difficulty, if it consisted simply in closing the school altogether on those days; but this would, no doubt, be immediately construed into a total neglect of all religion.

If the school be open, there would be the widest room for disagreement as to the regulations to be



adopted. Some sects look upon the observance of any days except Sunday to be highly objectionable: whilst regarding that day as the Sabbath, they would peremptorily insist on no secular instruction being pursued, and no kind of sports permitted. On this point it is well known the warmest disputes have taken place. It is one on which the most fundamental difference of opinions exists. Many do not allow the tenet of the Sabbath as applying to Christians at all; and certain sects contend for the consistent observance of it according to the commandment on the seventh day, or Saturday. For these, and for the Jews, it would at all events be necessary to make provision for the cessation of the ordinary work of the school on Saturdays.

### *Church Instruction.*

IN the preceding remarks I have referred only to some *general* principles, which are necessarily involved in the discussion of different schemes of national education.

In proceeding to consider the more particular mode in which these principles may be brought into practice, we are led more immediately to view the subject in its relations with public institutions and legislative measures, so peculiarly the topics which demand our attention in the present times.

The intrinsic importance of general education being on all hands admitted, it is usually acknow-



ledged a fit object to receive public support, and to be promoted by national institutions; yet, considerable difference of opinion exists as to the particular way in which the cause should be thus publicly taken up,—the precise channel through which its benefits ought to be conveyed,—and the particular scheme which would be best to be adopted for carrying it on.

It being admitted (as we have already seen) that any scheme of State education ought to be founded on religion, the various plans proposed naturally take their characteristic feature from the particular way in which it is proposed to secure this most important and fundamental condition.

The principal distinct proposition of this kind is found in the claim which has been put forth, in more or less modified forms, for education in exclusive connexion with the established Church: in a word, Church education, rather than State education.

It is maintained, that as there is a national established Church, so there should be a national education established on a commensurate basis; though open to all, whether members of that Church, or not, yet wholly managed by its clergy,—carried on under the auspices of its hierarchy, and on the sole and exclusive principles of its creed. Something of this kind seems to be implied in the various arguments and declamations which have been put forth by a very dominant party in the establishment; such, at least, is the only intelligible sense they



appear to bear, though it must be confessed they are often of a nature very difficult to be understood.

Thus we have seen lengthened and laboured arguments advanced to assert "the right of the Church to be the instructor of all her children:" a position which, taken in one sense, is so undeniable as to render all argument superfluous; or, if otherwise understood, must covertly include claims which are altogether preposterous;—claims to a dominion over all, as naturally belonging to her empire;—an empty affectation of power which she does not possess;—the assertion of a nominal supremacy over those who might have been once her subjects, but who certainly, at the present day, are not disposed to own themselves such. If the Church be understood as thus claiming a right over the dissenters, is it meant that the object is to reclaim them to their allegiance? If so, is this object attempted? Are any steps taken towards it? Are any fair, open, and conciliatory means adopted for attempting the work of their conversion, and bringing them back to the true fold? Or is the furtherance of this work contemplated only by the artifice of entrapping the children of dissenters into Church schools, and thus early instilling safeguards against heresy, and enticing them into the right path? At all events, when the sectaries shall be actually reclaimed, or at least in fair prospect of being so, it will then be time to consider the demand of the Church for an exclusive supremacy in national education. The



more immediate question refers to things as they actually are: what is to be done while the national religion remains divided under many separate denominations?

As far as the Church claim regards the instruction of the children of her own members, it is manifestly incontestible. In regard to *religious* instruction, it is not merely a right, but a recognised duty of the clergy. And even if the claim extend to other branches of education, or to the necessity for mixing up all branches together, it is at least fairly allowable *within* the Church, if supported by the great body of churchmen.

If there exist some difference of opinion among members of the establishment on these points, still those who may withhold their concurrence do not dispute the *right* of the other party to adopt such a system for themselves, however they may question the wisdom or deplore the effects of it.

An ascendant section of the Church are surely at liberty to adopt any system of education, however exclusive, among themselves;—to maintain, if they think fit, that all branches of knowledge are to be taught on the foundation of the Bible;—to mix in their lesson-books alternate lines of Scripture and syntax, of psalms and sums; to combine orthodoxy with orthography, and instil piety with the pence-table. We in no way deny their *right* to uphold such a system, however we may consider the system itself wrong;—however objectionable it may be in



principle thus to degrade the word of God ;—however delusive to the learners thus, “when they ask for bread, to give them a stone.”

But the material question regards the pretence of extending such systems to others ; how is this intended to bear upon the case of those who do not own the dominion of the Church ? Since they cannot, or at all events will not, be brought into subjection to so exclusive a system, is it meant that the Church is still to provide them some wholesome nutriment, perhaps indulging them so far as to omit what may be repugnant to their taste ; to take them, in a certain degree, under her protection, and while she still claims a pre-eminence for her formularies, yet, perhaps, to waive them in certain cases ? Still to assert a supremacy, though conniving at some little departures from her standard ; and assuming always the right of enforcing obedience, yet to grant dispensations for occasional obliquities and delinquencies. In a word—are the ends of *national* education to be secured by a system which would instruct dissenters *on sufferance* under the supremacy of the established Church, and feed them with crumbs, like dogs, under their master’s table ? To this we apprehend the dissenters would be prepared to give a sufficient answer if the question lay only between the establishment and themselves, and were purely one of a religious nature.

But the question is not one which is of an *unmixed* religious character, nor does it lie simply



between the church and the dissenters. It is a question of a secular as well as a religious nature ; and it lies with the *whole nation*, and with the *legislature*, to determine. The nation at large and the legislature will, I conceive, view the question as one not merely of ecclesiastical claims or of religious pre-eminence, but as one of national importance and of State concern. It must be treated on considerations derived from public utility, and the common rights of all denominations of the subjects of the government to partake in its care for the dissemination of the advantages of general instruction. For this purpose, it is sufficiently clear, no scheme founded on any dominant creed, no system whose first feature is religious exclusiveness, however widely stretched, can be regarded as really meeting the object in view.

But the main point of difficulty seems often to be overlooked, viz. the question of *funds*. If the established Church intended from its own resources to carry on this work of education, not only for those who *are* its own children, but for those who *ought to be*, little further need be said of it. It is, however, all along understood, and even (as we shall presently see) in some instances avowed, that the *State* is to furnish the necessary *supplies*. We must then proceed to inquire to what schemes of education can we legitimately look for such support, and under what conditions.



*Interference of the Legislature in  
Education.*

THE discussion of plans of education supported by the state, must mainly turn on the view taken of the general grounds and motives on which the interference of the government ought to be directed to such objects, and the extent to which it should be carried: points on which it is notorious that considerable difference of opinion exists.

The more obvious and manifestly reasonable grounds of public utility, on which common sense would found and define the duties of the legislature, are not indeed denied by any party; but there are many who contend for much more, and seek for the origin and consequent nature of legislative obligations in principles of a far higher and more abstruse nature. We shall best advance to the examination of these views, by confining ourselves in the first instance to a few points of easier comprehension and of a more directly practical and intelligible nature.

It may be presumed that all reasonable and reflecting persons agree thus far, that at least the immediate end and object of all government and legislation is the good order and well-being of the community; and wherein this consists must obviously depend upon viewing the body of the people in their *aggregate relations*, social, civil, and



national. To the well-being of the *body* in those collective relations, and to matters referring to the temporal welfare of such a community, is the concern of the legislature properly directed.

On such grounds alone, then, it is evident we may safely rest the claim of *education* to fall within the province of the legislator; and according to this view, education of *such a kind and to such extent as tends to make men better members of the community*, is that which the *government* is interested to promote.

And here we may briefly notice one argument sometimes dwelt on. Though (as before remarked) there are not, at the present day, any who venture openly to advocate ignorance *as such*, yet there are a numerous party who uphold ideas of a somewhat similar tendency,—who contend that it is unwise and prejudicial to give the lower classes an education *beyond their sphere*, and knowledge *improper for their condition*; and it is especially urged, with reference to the legislature, that it cannot be desirable to push popular education too far, because the ignorant are the most easily governed. We need only remark on this (it is to be hoped nearly obsolete) argument, that its cogency will depend on the *sort of government* contemplated,—for a government aiming at despotism it is no doubt valid; and where it is the object to repress the desire for innovation, and encourage or enforce the maintenance of things as they are, and the grand principle



“whatever *has been* is right,”—then such restrictions on education are no doubt most consistent and congenial.

The ignorant make the best slaves; and the principle of no innovation is carried to its legitimate extent by savages. So also, in other instances, those resist improvement most who most need it; and those who are left uninstructed in their own civil rights become the aptest subjects for tyranny or corruption, and (it should be also considered) equally disposed, when opportunity offers, to break their chains and disregard and trample on the rights and property of others.

At the present day, then, we may well presume it is allowed by most reasonable persons, that under a free government, and where all men have certain civil rights and duties, good education is desirable, and even necessary, for the very purpose of teaching them those rights and obligations, and enabling them to use and value, to fulfil and cherish them.

And here we may further briefly dispose of another notion, often maintained in the opposite extreme: viz., that of *compulsory* state education. The advantages of the practice in other countries of Europe have been insisted on; but it will, perhaps, be sufficient to observe, that what is excellent there will not necessarily be so here; and that the mere consideration of the *practicability* of measures is one which, however humble, ought not to be overlooked.



State education, then, having for its object to make men good subjects of a free state, rightly understanding and using their civil privileges, and discharging their civil duties, must include the main parts or branches of a general or complete education, as they bear upon these objects.

Secular knowledge, the training of the mental faculties, and instilling of information on such subjects as are concerned in ordinary life, will be of the first importance: but to these must be joined, as *essential* elements in state education, instruction in those duties, and the inculcation of those moral principles which can alone secure the right application of other knowledge, and make men good members of the national community.

### *Knowledge and Crime.*

THE practical arguments in support of the influence of education in improving the condition of the state, are mainly derived from what are termed the "Statistics of knowledge and crime." The conclusions arising from an immense assemblage of facts bearing upon this question, have been abundantly discussed. And if, in some instances, doubts were once entertained as to the tendency of the results, it has been now, I believe, admitted on all hands, that the conclusion is decisive in favour of education.

It is neither necessary, nor does it form any

part of my design, to go into details of this nature. The whole subject is fully put before the public in the semi-official pamphlet, *Recent Measures for the promotion of Education, &c.*, p. 38.

I will rather proceed to observe generally upon the nature of the case, that even mere secular instruction, as such, must be eminently an object of government concern, as necessarily tending to the diminution of *certain classes* of crime, and those of great magnitude and frequent occurrence; especially in the present times.

It needs but little reflection to be convinced that a very considerable class of crimes originate in *mere ignorance*, and would never be committed by an *instructed* population, simply because they would understand the *uselessness and absurdity* of the objects in the prosecution of which those offences occur.

It is hardly possible (for example) for any one, in reading in the most cursory manner the evidence elicited in the Chartist trials, not to be struck by the predominant feature of *extreme and brutish ignorance*, which much more than any directly criminal disposition, appears to have been the source of so large a portion of the mischief. A half-barbarous populace is easily deluded into the wildest schemes of which an instructed people (however badly disposed) would be too wise to become the dupes.

It will hardly be necessary to do more than mention, as the mere results of *ignorance*: the suicidal



war of the incendiary against property; the combinations to destroy the *very sources* of profitable employment; the hostility to the introduction of *machinery*; the associations to force an *artificial standard of wages*; the attempts on the part of the trader to maintain *his own interests* to the injury of those of the *public*; or the resort to physical force in maintaining the redoubtable position that "*every man has a right to a maintenance from the soil on which he was born.*"

Where do we see the want of those habits of forethought and reflection which even secular education can supply, more powerfully displayed, than in that most fruitful source of misery and vice, the reckless improvidence and thoughtless expenditure, which so widely prevail among the operatives, during a period of high wages; and which, in the inevitable fluctuations of all trade, leave them, in the season of its depression, the victims of destitution, and the ready perpetrators of every species of crime?

Education alone gives that strength and independence of mind which enables a man to stand out against the ridicule or intimidation of his companions,—alone the *real* origin of a vast proportion of evil; by yielding to which, large masses of the operative classes, otherwise well disposed, are systematically driven into the most noxious combinations, or into habits of intemperance and prodigality; which, on a stagnation of trade, consign them to ruin or guilt.



Secular education, without going to higher principles, at least teaches men to calculate the results of their conduct. To take one more instance, it thus surely tends to check that frightful train of wretchedness and crime, which results from improvident marriages;—the procreation of pauperism;—the wholesale murder of rearing families for starvation.

Thus, *even in this imperfect sense* of the term education, it is sufficiently apparent how essential an object it must be in the eyes of an enlightened legislature.

In alluding to such instances, I am not to be understood as wishing to ascribe any undue effects to mere knowledge as such, or to make “political economy the poor man’s Gospel.” Even in such instances as these, it must be evident, that something more than mere worldly wisdom would be highly desirable (even on the lowest view) for effectually securing the desired result. And this is the more remarkably pressed upon our notice, when we find in how strange a manner some of these very schemes of popular agitation have assumed a character professedly adopting the sanctions of religion. The most singular feature of chartism has been, its pretending to a connexion with Christian principles; and to defend its doctrines and projects by an appeal to the precepts of the New Testament. That such appeal should be borne out only by means of a monstrous perversion of the text from its reasonable



meaning,—that such tenets of disorganization should be discovered in the Gospel only by the most preposterous distortion of its language,—is indeed what will be seen at once by any person of real education and discernment. But when we look at the prevalent ignorance of the real spirit of the Gospel among those even who have received some sort of nominal instruction in it, we can hardly be surprised at this or any other perversion of it, finding ready acceptance in their minds.

This, then, while it furnishes a powerful argument even for the secular necessity of religious instruction, is a consideration full of importance of a higher kind to those who are the especial guardians of Christian truth. Could such a wretched abuse of the oracles of divine truth occur, if the right use of them were generally inculcated upon a rational basis? And what is the chartist interpretation, but the natural offspring of the same ignorant, indiscriminate misapplication of the *letter* of the sacred text, without regard to circumstances, which characterizes so large a portion of the so-called theology of the age?

But to return:—I have here merely glanced at one or two prominent instances to exemplify the general truth. The mischief arising from popular ignorance is, unhappily, an ample field. To survey it in detail, or to present anything like an adequate representation of its multiplied enormities and frightful dangers, would be beyond my limits; nor



is it necessary. These evils were forcibly pointed out by Adam Smith\* more than half a century ago, and have been the theme of the most enlightened political writers since his time, notwithstanding the advances which have been made towards popular instruction.

Nothing, I think, could be more convincing, to any one capable of being convinced at all, than the various statements so powerfully put forth in the course of the parliamentary debates of the last session: in no instance more unanswerably than in the speeches of Lord John Russell, and of the Marquis of Lansdowne, since published†; in the latter of which I cannot refrain from alluding, particularly, to the eloquent and irresistible appeal (p. 18) on the fearful effects of popular ignorance acted upon by unrestrained passions. While the whole subject is brought home to the conviction of every one, in connexion with the immediate dangers which threaten this country at the present moment, arising out of crimes mainly originating in ignorance, in the masterly exposition of the author of *Recent Measures for the promotion of Education*, &c., pp. 14 and 40.

The most prejudiced or sceptical reader must there, I think, find convincing and even appalling evidence of the state of the case, and of the pressing necessity for legislative measures of general education.

\* *Wealth of Nations*, b. v. ch. 1.

† Ridgway, 1839.



*State Education in Religion.*

MERE instruction in secular knowledge, then, is directly subservient to the ends of good government in a free state; but it must be obvious that this alone, though it will of necessity prevent the occurrence of certain descriptions of crime and misrule, cannot of itself secure the higher objects of good order and the general welfare. State education, to be complete, must include the inculcation of *duties* as well as of *knowledge*, in the subjects of the state. And in proportion as the importance of such moral instruction is recognised, will the necessity of some *higher principles* also become an essential question. To inculcate duties, and even to teach *systems* of such duties, is little, unless motives and principles, enforcing and sanctioning those obligations, are also inculcated.

Here, then, the importance of the religious branch of education is pressed upon our consideration. Now while we look at it only in this very limited point of view, there will be, perhaps, few who will not allow that it is at least a legitimate object in a system of *state* education to introduce these higher sanctions. But in inquiring how, and to what extent, this is to be done, we approach the most momentous and difficult part of the subject. The question of *state education in religion* derives its difficulty, not from the question whether religious



instruction is desirable and necessary for making men good subjects, but from considerations of a higher and more complex nature, which are almost unavoidably mixed up with it.

Taking, however, this simple and restricted view of the subject in the first instance, it will hardly be denied, that even a very slight and general kind of instruction in religion cannot fail to produce some good result, in connecting social and civil obligations with motives of an infinitely higher and more powerfully efficacious kind. The state, looking at religion as a powerful auxiliary to good government, would hardly do otherwise than feel the importance of making it, as far as possible, an essential ingredient part in any scheme of national education.

That religious instruction, *limited* to objects of this kind, would be of a *very defective* kind, cannot admit a question ; yet that some sort of instruction in the religious motives of social and civil duties might be communicated to the children of all sects in common, is also a point which will hardly be questioned. In any system of state education, including such general lessons, the addition of separate religious teaching, full, systematic, and precise, for those of each denomination, at the hands of the ministers or authorized instructors of that denomination,—the express recognition and enforcement of this as an essential part of the system,—the injunction of it as equally essential with any part of those instructions which are given in common



and by common instructors,—and thus, its perfect incorporation into the body and scheme of education as one connected whole,—the sole distinction being a separation in time and place, where such separation is unavoidable ;—all this, strictly insisted on, it might be thought, would amply satisfy every reasonable or conceivable demand upon the *state* for providing religious instruction. It might be imagined a complete refutation of the charge of latitudinarian indifference to all religion, that such ample security was provided for separate instruction as must imply the deepest concern for religious truth. It is, however, to be lamented that this is not the case ; there is yet too prevalent a feeling of jealousy, and too exclusive notions of religion, to allow many, even of the better instructed classes, to perceive that if the state adopted such a system it would be doing the utmost which lies within its proper province.

### *Obligations of the Government.*

IN discussions on these points instead of a reference to intelligible principles of legislative wisdom and sound policy, we too commonly find the question debated upon quite other grounds, of a nature, it must be confessed, not a little difficult of comprehension. Thus we hear some talking of the moral obligations, others of the conscience, others of the religion, of the government,—and thus



inferring what ought to be its conduct, or censuring in no measured terms the course which it pursues.

All such disputes (*so far* as we can regard them in the light of *honest* discussion) it appears to me can only be satisfactorily adjusted by the simple process of *defining* what we mean by such expressions ; or rather, in general, considering what is or can be the nature of such obligations. Now such phrases as the " obligations " and the " duty " of government to promote sound and religious education, and the like, are clearly intelligible if they are taken to mean what is the legitimate office and proper province of the government, and the obligations which, as a body, it incurs, consistently with the recognised constitution of the country. It is our boast to possess a responsible government, which has its peculiar duties as well as the lowest of its subjects. And in accordance with those obligations, which have a reference to the proper objects and ends of good government, must its measures be regulated ; on such a ground its promotion of a system of sound national religious education is manifestly a duty of the most urgent nature. But something more than this is evidently meant. Arguments of the class alluded to are urged on certain very abstruse and almost mysterious principles of a theological nature.

We are told of the duty of the state to promote the true religion, and the obligations of the govern-



ment of a Christian country to support education solely on Christian principles ; and, more precisely, by Christian principles, we are taught to understand an exclusive adherence to the formularies of the Church of England. We are told that “the state has a conscience \*,” and hence it must own the duty of promoting the truth, and the criminality of countenancing the propagation of error. “That religion which is established according to the conscience of the state, is the only true religion ;” and hence there should be no *state* schools except such as teach the established religion. In this way education, by a comprehensive scheme, becomes sinful. To teach any common principles of morality and religion, implies and leads to irreligion and atheism : equally to tolerate separate teaching for each creed, is to evince an unbelieving indifference to all creeds.

Such are some of the religious views which are opposed to the plans of national education. It is hardly necessary to notice the extraordinary assumption seriously put forth on behalf of the *state* to determine the true religion. The infallibility of the *Church* has been esteemed by most Protestants a sufficiently monstrous claim ; but we are now, it seems, going some steps even beyond the Church of Rome in extending that claim to the state.

\* Mr. Gladstone's Speech, in Debate, June 20, 1839.



*Religion of the State.*

THERE are, however, many well-meaning persons who seriously perplex themselves with certain notions of this kind. There is a confused sort of idea, very commonly entertained, that there is a kind of "national religion" distinct from the mere aggregate of individual religious persuasions in the nation ; that there is a sort of responsibility in the state *collectively*, distinct from the responsibility of the individuals who compose it. Accordingly, many writers, entertaining some vague sentiment of this kind, have exerted all their skill to reduce it into a tangible form, to give to their floating and misty ideas a local habitation and a name ; and by laboured arguments, or more correctly, by torturing language to create imposing figures which might impress men as realities, they have succeeded in persuading their followers and themselves into a fixed belief in the substantial existence of such pure creations of fancy as the "conscience of the legislature," the "responsibility of the state," the "religion of the nation," as things quite apart from personal obligations and individual faith, even when viewed in the aggregate, or as existing in bodies combined in the profession of such faith, and the acknowledgment of such obligations.

When we bring such ideas to the test of facts and realities, I apprehend their intrinsic incon-



sistencies are found their readiest refutation. When it is found that men may differ in their views of the obligations under which they lie, when it is attempted to find the actual representative or depository of the state conscience, when the attempt is made to say what is the "national creed," it will soon be found, that so far as any definite meaning can be traced, it can be no more than this: *not* the obligations, the conscience, the religion, which the state *actually owns*, for these are diverse, but that which it *ought to own*. And then, again, *who* is to decide this? No one pretends to do so, but the parties who thus declaim: they are themselves the keepers of the state conscience. The religion of the state, therefore, means the religion which the state *ought* to uphold, in obedience to the dictates of these, its spiritual directors: the religious state education is that which the government is bound alone to sanction in dutiful obedience to its father-confessors. In a word, it is the duty of the legislature to receive and obey the truth so propounded: if they do not as yet, they are heretics and sinners; and it is their duty as sinners to repent!

We have perhaps a more distinct disclosure of this sort of doctrine, in the declarations of a Right Reverend Prelate, who speaks of "The state acknowledging the Church to be the true Church;" and afterwards of "that holy religion which the noble marquess and his colleagues, and which the



state itself acknowledges to be true; and if true, of course, to be *alone* true\*."

Now I would merely inquire what is here to be understood by "the *state* acknowledging the Church to be true." Does the *state* mean the *whole nation*? dissenters as well as churchmen? or, is it that the *legislature* decides the belief of the people? or, in other words, is *spiritually* infallible? Or is it merely that the members of the government acknowledge *their own individual* belief? and yet are to compel the people to support it? But, further, if the religion of the Church be true, we are told, it is therefore *alone* true. Where and how, I ask, does the state, or even the Church, make this inference? or how does it follow at all?

If we can at length consent to quit such abstruse theories, and condescend to come to common sense and plain matter of fact, we shall probably solve these difficulties by owning that the *state* acknowledges the Church as *established* by law, and upon the whole *beneficial* to the country: and that the Protestant Church of England does not, and cannot, pretend to be the *only* true Church, whatever an extravagant section of her clergy may pretend for her.

The notion of some religion belonging to the *nation collectively*, develops itself in a variety of strange and preposterous forms. Thus we hear

\* Bishop of Exeter's Speech, as quoted in his Lordship's Letter to Lord John Russell.



some contending loudly for the "essentially Protestant and evangelical Christianity of this country\*," and opposing to the uttermost, any scheme of education which they conceive violates this principle. But what is meant by this essential Protestantism of England? Does the country contain Papists and Jews, or not? are they subject to its laws? do they share its burdens? are they admitted to its rights?

A comprehensive plan of education which includes religious instruction to each sect, and permits each sect to use its own version of the Bible, of course allows the Papists the Douay translation. This, it is alleged, is a violation of the national Protestantism. Is it not equally so, that there should exist any Papists in the kingdom, and that they should use the Douay version at all?

The zealous Protestants who make these objections have dissented from the Church of Rome, and many of them from the Church of England too; yet they will not allow the Church of Rome to dissent from them. They claim the right of instruction in their own tenets, but will not allow the Romanists the same right.

The state, if it adopted the plan alluded to, would permit the use of what these Protestants

\* For full illustration of the arguments alluded to, the reader is referred to "Correspondence between the Wesleyan Ministers of Bristol, and the Honourable F. Berkeley, M.P.; reprinted from the Bristol Mercury. 1839."



consider a corrupt version of the Scriptures, to those who consider it a faithful version: *therefore*, they say, the state *authorizes* the corruption of the truth! The state *authorizes nothing*; but provides that each sect shall have unmolested means of teaching its own doctrines.

Such are the inferences of those who maintain the notion of a *state belief*. They cannot distinguish between the *government protecting* any sect or doctrine and the *nation acknowledging* it:—between *liberality* towards any creed, and admission of its *truth*. They cannot see the state uphold any persuasion which they disapprove, without considering *themselves* thereby implicated in *countenancing* it. They cannot hear of the *national* funds appropriated to maintain what they deem erroneous systems, without imagining *themselves* involved in *approval* of those errors.

### *Danger to Religion.*

THERE is a strong tendency in all exclusive creeds to aim at the sole pre-eminence, and moreover to seek it, not solely by evincing the spiritual superiority which belongs to truth, but from extraneous support and public countenance. Hence the jealousy felt by the disciples of exclusiveness at equal toleration, and the alarm experienced at any measures which tend to give the fair and due protection to other denominations whose tenets they



denounce as heretical ; hence the sacred war-cry of "danger to religion ;" hence the indefinite apprehension of coming evil, and the portentous anticipation of approaching ruin and subversion of the truth. And so entire is the possession which this religious panic takes of the minds of its votaries, that they conjure up imaginary terrors, and view every proceeding through a distorting medium of suspicion ; for often indeed are these misrepresentations the mere creations of blind party zeal. And in the reckless support of political faction or religious bigotry, the plainest principles of justice and honesty are overlooked, and the most entire perversions of truth and gratuitous fabrications of falsehood find a ready acceptance ; and in the current belief of such purely imaginary dangers has originated a large portion of the opposition to the designs of the government in establishing state education.

Apart from all party falsehoods, the extent to which *mere misconception as to facts* has carried many of the clergy in their opposition to the actual or supposed measures of government, would be almost incredible had we not evidence of it in print from high authority. Even by those whose general sentiments and politics were professedly liberal, and from whom, on all grounds, we might have hoped for better things, we hear the most serious alarm expressed at schemes for invading *Church of England schools*, for banishing *from them* religious



instruction\*, leaving it to the parents or ministers ; or for substituting, *in the Church schools*, the mere letter of the Bible† in lieu of all other religious instruction ; coupled with zealous denunciations of such schemes, as interfering with the right of the Church to teach her own formularies‡ ;—schemes which it is almost unnecessary to say never had any existence.

These alarms are not, however, confined to the Established Church ; among other parties, who do not altogether insist on schemes of so very exclusive a nature, we yet find the same sort of apprehension evinced in other ways,—for example, a considerable party express violent dread of the *variety of versions* of the Bible which must be adopted in the separate instruction of different denominations. This they contend is a most perilous thing, and will unsettle the faith of thousands. It never seems to occur to them that the very same danger already exists, in the actual use of those different versions ; and that any doubts arising from it must be injurious to religious belief precisely in proportion to the amount of popular ignorance. Whatever evil there may be in the circumstance, is clearly most likely to be diminished by enlightened instruction.

Such notions as those we have referred to are doubtless, in various shades and degrees, widely

\* See "The Church the Teacher of her Children," a Sermon, by the Bishop of Salisbury, 1839, p. 11.

† Ibid., p. 14.

‡ Ibid., p. 15, 17.



upheld, and they have acquired that religious authority which invests even the most irrational ideas with a sacred character. To assail them is deemed a species of sacrilege, and to argue against them is anathematized as impious. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that, with a very large class of the religious public, any scheme or institution which seems to set aside such principles should be denounced as antichristian. The spirit of political hostility takes a higher and more imposing tone from thus borrowing the supposed sanction of religion, and the *odium theologicum* becomes its most efficient ally in the warfare against all liberal and comprehensive plans which might be adopted by the state for the benefit of all its members.

### *Church Supremacy.*

IN the several propositions which have been advanced for placing the Church in more immediate connexion with the scheme of state education, we trace the influence of principles fundamentally the same as those we have been referring to, however diversified in their particular applications ; and from the sort of spirit which too widely predominates among the clergy, it is not difficult to see what the nature and results of such a connexion would inevitably be. Thus, in the scheme proposed by Lord Brougham \*, it is suggested that a supreme

\* See Letter to the Duke of Bedford, &c.



ascendancy is to be given to the Church; which his Lordship supports by arguing, that the *equality* of all sects is in fact chimerical and unattainable, and that the Church may and must enjoy a pre-eminence *among* other denominations.

This indeed is no more than what follows from the mere superiority of numbers; but it is surely a very different thing from asserting that the Church ought, therefore, to have a supremacy *over* other denominations, or exercise any dictation of the methods or terms of instruction; and it is this very notion, or in a word, any "*Church Bill*" whatever, which would precisely have the effect of destroying all the value of any general educational measure. We may be well assured no such plan for administering *national* education by the hands of a party whose first object would be to deprive it of the character of *nationality*,—no such scheme of exclusive dominion,—no such vain project for their own aggrandisement, by the empty title of teachers of those who refuse to receive their instruction,—would ever be accepted by the nation, or allowed by a wise government, as a real measure for national education.

Again, it requires no very profound penetration to foresee what sort of a result was contemplated in the proposition from another quarter, so adroitly glossed over with compliments to the Minister, for "*a conference between the committee of the Privy Council on Education and the Bishops*, for the pur-



pose of devising measures for carrying into effect his Lordship's very just and moderate principle ; *and* at the same time to give to *the Church* that public recognition of her being the *fit guardian and administratrix of national education* with which his Lordship's principle can be so well reconciled \*."

### *Appropriation of Funds.*

It is then on such grounds as the power of the *state* to determine the *truth*,—and on the plea of state-support being due to the true Church alone, on the allegation that the state religion is alone to be recognised in any measure of national religious education,—that we have the claim founded for an *exclusive appropriation of the public money* to schools in connexion with the established Church, or at least for entrusting such supplies without check or responsibility to the administration of the clergy. Thus, little as the doctrine of "state-belief" is calculated for examination as to its abstract truth, yet, as being well adjusted to the capacity of the many, we cannot but recognise its skilful adoption in the instance before quoted (p. 59) for the end in view,—the support of *a claim for a command of the national grants, on behalf of the Church*. The acknowledgment of the exclusive truth of the Church by the state, is the plea for the obligation of *the nation*

\* See Bishop of Exeter's Correspondence with Lord John Russell, &c.



to make a liberal vote of money, to enable the Church to educate in her creed all within her pale, and to "offer" the same education to those without. If the legislature, with a due regard to all denominations, as all alike contributing to the public revenues, were to agree to such demands on the part of the Church, it could in justice not do less than afford the same aid to every other religious body which might come forward with schools, in like manner instituted for the instruction of its children, or those whom it would claim as such. No privilege or exemption from control could fairly be allowed to the one which was not granted to the others; no irresponsible trust reposed in one which was denied to others.

But as all this must be the fair and legitimate consequence of government support given to *exclusive* and *irresponsible* Church schools, would the dominant Church party consent to receive support on such terms? Could they, consistently with their lofty pretensions, ever endure the humiliating spectacle of every dissenting sect equally patronized with themselves?—the lowest and most obnoxious schools of heterodoxy and schism, supported from the public funds, and holding an equal rank in the state with their own?—the government avowedly upholding every species of heresy, every variety of dangerous and deadly error?

Such a plan indeed would be sufficiently objectionable on other grounds; the general and secular



instruction must probably be of a far lower stamp than that which would be secured in schools upon a wider basis, and every branch of teaching would be tinged with the peculiarities of the religious sect with which it would thus be mixed up; the advantages of division of labour, of trained instructors, and uniform organization, would be, in a great degree, lost,—and as we know how much the *esprit de corps* animates schools, it is to be feared this system would but excite more fiercely the spirit of religious hostility, fix more indelibly the stamp of sectarian differences, and rivet more heavily the fetters of prejudice and intolerance. But a comprehensive scheme, which would include all denominations without specially patronizing any, is equally objectionable in the eyes of the bigoted of all persuasions. They can neither endure to see other denominations specially supported, nor a comprehensive system which recognises no distinctions. For the state either to support obnoxious sects, to which they will not even concede the name of Christian, or to treat all alike and omit to distinguish their own, is equally, in their estimation, to violate the national Christianity.

. . . . . Numina vicinorum  
 Odit uterque locus: cum solos credat habendos  
 Esse Deos, quos ipse colit. . . . .

JUVENAL, *Sat.* xv. 36.

It is, in fact, impossible ever to satisfy the narrow but grasping, the low but ambitious, spirit of

sectarianism, whether in the establishment or out of it,—a disposition which at once restricts all true religion to its own pale, yet claims dominion over all around.

### *Principles of the Government Plan.*

RELIGIOUS exclusiveness in the instruction, joined with exemption from responsibility in the instructors, are precisely the features in any system of education which ought most to exclude it from support out of the public revenues. Any plan which deserves the name of state education can proceed only upon the ground of an entire absence of these two most unjust and obnoxious characteristics. The government of a country, where all forms of religion are freely professed by law, can support no system which does not give education with equal and unrestricted freedom, either collectively or separately, to all parties ; and which does not own its responsibility to the nation for the right application of the funds which the nation may contribute to its support.

Upon these plain and intelligible principles we might be satisfied to let the question rest with the judgment of dispassionate inquirers. Unhappily, as we have seen, the subject has been so complicated and mystified by the misrepresentations of party and the extravagances of fanaticism, that it



requires no small extent of argument and exposition to disabuse the public mind on the subject.

It was just now observed, how strangely prone men are on this question to disregard matters of fact ; and in no particular has the truth of this been more strikingly evinced than in the astonishing ignorance which has prevailed as to *what is* the plan which government has proposed, or *what* the steps which it has actually taken towards national education. Were this not the case, it would seem superfluous to observe that the plan of comprehensive education for all denominations together, as far as possible, with separate instruction for each, has never been proposed by the *legislature* for *general* adoption. This is, however, the main feature which distinguishes the plans which have been adopted with such beneficial effect, not only in Ireland, but in some instances in England also \*.

Such, also, was the principle of the proposition which the Committee of the Privy Council suggested in their minute of the 11th of April, 1839, relative to the proposed establishment of a normal and training school ; a decision which was afterwards rescinded by the minute of June 3rd, and a simple resolution substituted, by which the sums voted by parliament were to be distributed in equal

\* For some interesting details relative to the working of such a system in the Liverpool corporation schools, the reader is referred to the Appendix to the Bishop of Norwich's Speech on Irish Education, 1838.



proportions to the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society, and in some particular cases to other schools,—always reserving the right of inspection, for which purpose certain inspectors have been since appointed\*. And from the instructions to those inspectors, issued by the Committee of the Privy Council, January 4, 1840, and the annexed appendices, we may collect more distinctly the nature of the broad and reasonable principles on which alone the government can or will consent to give support to any educational system: those principles are clearly no others than the two just referred to, *religious education for all persuasions, and inspection to secure the right application of funds supplied*. The last is a point so manifestly just and necessary that it will not need a word of observation, further than to point out how expressly and studiously it is guarded against any practical abuse, by the positive regulation “that the inspectors will not interfere with the religious instruction, or discipline, or management of the school†.”

With regard to the former, the grand principle of comprehensive state education, we may just remark that while, as yet, public misapprehension prevents the adoption of any more precise scheme, even for training teachers and supplying a model for the details of educational machinery, the *temporary* measure adopted is entirely conformable to this

\* Minutes, Sept. 23rd and Dec. 4th, 1839.

† Regulation A.



principle. It steadily upholds the free support of education among all sects alike, always based on religion. This great end is not indeed attained by means so comprehensive or so efficient as might be desired ; still it is secured to the full extent which the intolerance of a dominant party for the present renders practicable.

Under the regulations just referred to, the government grants are exclusively limited either to the schools of the National Society, or of the British and Foreign School Society: except in some extraordinary cases, where, from pressing circumstances, it may seem desirable to include schools not belonging to either of the above classes. But these special cases are positively limited by the restriction that the Scriptures are daily read in such schools ; and, though contemplating the *possible* occurrence of special cases in which the rule may be waived, yet they will give a *preference* to schools assimilated to those of the above-named societies, and to those in which, while the daily reading of the Scriptures is provided for, yet no compulsion is used with regard to catechisms or forms of worship\*.

Now in all this, viewed as the *best compromise which can be made under present circumstances* with the opponents of better and more comprehensive schemes, there is certainly every requisite secured for upholding the broad principles of state education. The right of inspection on the part of the state

\* Minute of Committee of Privy Council, 3rd Dec., 1839.

is in all cases absolutely enforced when the state funds are to be appropriated.

The pre-eminence of the Established Church is abundantly recognised, since grants are offered to *her* schools, however exclusive, without the slightest *interference*, but of course subject to due *inspection*.

The *comprehensive schools of the British and Foreign School Society* are, in general, exclusively to be assisted, instead of those of *particular sects of dissenters*; on the very reasonable grounds that their principle *is comprehensive*, and that to these schools very few, if any, denominations object,—that in them common religious instruction to a very considerable extent is given, while the means of separate teaching are afforded, or at least an admirable *preparation* for such teaching supplied.

Further, for the *few* who may object even to these schools, or who in some *very special* cases may present claims which appear irresistible, aid is granted, yet still with a regard to due religious instruction and the rights of conscience.

But all this, it must be repeated, is but *temporary*: that it may continue for some time to be the only scheme capable of adoption is probable, unless the enlightenment of the public mind should be more rapid than we can, under all circumstances, venture to hope.



*Future Prospects.*

THOUGH, as a temporary expedient, this plan may be safely pronounced the best which circumstances allow, yet it must not be overlooked that, at the utmost, its results can be but limited. It can hardly be questioned by any one who reflects on the subject, that no measure of this kind can be looked to as really capable of meeting the emergency,—no mere regulations for grants to existing schools, or aid to individuals or private parties in erecting others, can really accomplish anything commensurate with the complete scheme of a great national measure. To fulfil in any adequate degree the objects which must ever be in the view of an enlightened legislature, it is evident far wider exertions are necessary, and far higher powers and means must be conferred.

In the preceding pages I have dwelt much on principles which it may be said are of too abstract a nature, and have no reference to plans actually practised, or perhaps, at present, practicable. But those principles are precisely what I believe must eventually be brought into play, when greater and more comprehensive schemes shall be brought forward. More especially the grand step towards such measures, must be the formation of a normal school and training college. This is for the present delayed, *on the very ground of the difference of opinion which exists with regard to first principles.*

All, then, which may tend to promote the discussion and facilitate the settlement of those first principles, must surely become of importance, in proportion as the primary necessity of that great step shall be more and more generally perceived and allowed.

At the present moment, then, under these circumstances of delay and temporary difficulty, it becomes at once more important and more seasonable, as well as less hazardous and invidious, to take the opportunity of calmly discussing the great principles of the question, and especially with reference to the grounds of legislative interference in education; and to expose some of the extraordinary theories and preposterous fallacies by which the legitimate province of the state has been misinterpreted, and the claims of intolerance invested with so plausible an exterior, as to delude a large portion of the public: while in many instances, so barefaced have been the falsehoods put forth, that the mere statement of the facts without comment will, I trust, be a sufficient reply to the mass of obloquy and misrepresentation with which the intentions of the government have been assailed.

### *Position of the Established Church.*

IN the claims put forth on behalf of the Established Church, we cannot but notice how successfully a *dominant section* of the clergy have assumed the position, and affected to utter the voice, of *the*



*Church at large.* And it is deeply to be regretted that there exists so total a want of union and correspondence among the liberal portion of the clerical body, that their real force is never felt on these questions, nor any co-operation with their lay brethren secured\*.

It is not to be denied that the dominant party have shown themselves abundantly active in promoting education, when conducted exclusively in their own sense of the term. They have been most zealous in diffusing knowledge—within the bounds of safety to their cause—and in dispelling ignorance, as far as consistent with keeping up their own pretensions. They have been most active, especially when roused by the spirit of rivalry, in instilling hostility to heterodoxy, and an orthodox familiarity with the most sacred names and terms, mistaken for an acquaintance with Christianity.

I expressly speak only of *a numerous and influential party*, and not of *the clergy* of the Established Church *as a body*, nor even of that party, without allowing numerous *individual* exceptions. Among

\* I am happy to take this opportunity of noticing two late publications by clergymen of the Established Church, in favour of the government plans: one entitled *Are the People to be Educated, or not?* by the Rev. G. G. Lynn, M.A., Minister of St. John's Chapel, Hamptonwick; the other, *Reasons why the Clergy should adopt the Government Plan of National Education*, by a Presbyterian of the Church of England; (both published by Ridgway, London.) Each of these authors puts many parts of the argument in striking points of view.



those who adopt principles and modes of religious teaching which I cannot but think erroneous, I am most ready and glad to avow a belief that there are many whose personal exertions are most conscientious, disinterested, and unwearied. Still, with respect to the great body, or those who put themselves forward as its representatives, the truth of the above description must be recognised. Such are their views of popular education ; and when wider schemes are proposed, we find them kindling into violent opposition, or what, under the plea of self-defence, bears the strongest appearance of it,—an eager resort to stronger associations and closer combinations to keep up and extend the schools of exclusiveness.

Instead of all such short-sighted machinations and narrow devices, how desirable would it be to see the Church, as a body, animated by the spirit of the age, acting upon wider principles, and bringing into play the powers and influence it possesses as a great engine of national improvement ;—how much more worthy of its character as a state establishment to be co-operating in the work of state education ; to assume the dignified attitude which becomes a pure and reformed Church, by putting itself at the head of the advance, taking the lead, and giving the right hand of fellowship to its dissenting brethren in beneficent projects for the common good\*. How

\* On this point it will, I hope, be almost superfluous to refer, at least my clerical readers, to the truly liberal and enlightened, yet judicious and temperate, exhortation of the Bishop of Norwich, in his *Primary Charge*, p. 20.



essential, even to the stability of the establishment, thus to fill its proper position in the country, and to secure the national esteem by aiding the progress of national enlightenment. And for this great and important work there are not wanting a few among the clergy, eminently qualified and disposed by every requisite of truly Christian zeal, united with genuine liberality, —by ability, joined to practical experience and indefatigable ardour in the cause, long evinced, though but in limited spheres,—to co-operate with the enlightened and beneficent schemes of the legislature.

If the Church establishment is in any degree to be placed in the position it ought to occupy in a great national undertaking, in which it should be so intimately concerned,—if its aid is in any effectual way to be recognised by the state,—it will be by no coalition insidiously proposed to obtain exclusive pre-eminence: but such alliance will be worthily promoted by an active junction with that portion of the clerical body who have practically shown themselves the true friends to the great work, and eminently qualified to assist in promoting it.

*Conclusion.*

THROUGHOUT the preceding pages my remarks are offered (as I said at first), merely upon an abstract consideration of the subject in its broad principles, without any pretensions to speak of its details from practical experience. On a matter, however, of such vital importance it is impossible for even those most removed from all immediate connexion with the duties of popular instruction, and merely on the most general consideration of the subject, not to feel the importance of discussing, as fully as possible, both the grounds on which state education should be upheld, and the objections with which it is assailed. And in a cause which, under existing circumstances, evidently needs all the aid which can be given, especially to rescue it from misconception, it is incumbent on all to come forward who may desire or hope to promote so great an object ; and feeling this more powerfully imperative on *the few friends to liberal views connected with the Church and universities*, I have been impelled to offer my assistance, imperfect as it is, in the only way in which I am able to contribute it.

We see around us a fearful display of the evils of popular ignorance ; throughout considerable districts of England, at this moment, the preservation of peace, property, and life, is secured solely by the overawing presence of bayonets and cannon :



force is the only present remedy for the mischiefs into which a miserably uninstructed and misguided population alone could be deluded.

To prevent the future recurrence and extension of such evils, the only permanent and sure resource is to be found in extensive measures of national instruction, effectually brought home to the masses of the population most in want of it. No existing means will meet the deficiency; it is a matter of state concern. The government comes forward with wise and enlightened measures; such, however, is the state of public misconception that it is found impracticable to press them except to a very limited and inadequate extent.

National improvement must be supported by national funds; but on the question of appropriation of those funds, the great work is opposed on all sides. It is impeded by those who ought to be foremost in it from narrow jealousies and religious misapprehensions; a substantial good is set aside for abstract principles of exclusiveness. Each party, admitting the pressing evil, would refuse all remedy except such as themselves dictate; acknowledging a common danger, they will not co-operate to repel it; with the frightful crimes of ignorance at their door, they are contending for safeguards to knowledge.

I have referred to the various pleas under which the spirit of opposition to liberal instruction seeks to shelter itself. I have allowed to those represen-



tations all the credit which could be fairly conceded to an exterior of plausibility which they no doubt in some instances possess. When, however, we subject these alleged principles to a dispassionate examination, so intrinsically futile are they found, that *if such are honestly the grounds of objection* to a comprehensive state education, no rational advocate of the cause will see much ground to fear its ultimate triumph over such unhappy misapprehensions. But for the effectual removal of these objections we must scrutinize *first principles*. We must resolutely go to the root of the matter ; we must analyze the origin of our religious differences, and survey carefully, and examine deeply, the ground, to lay securely the foundations of Christian liberality and religious unity, which will be found identified with the basis of Christian truth.

In proportion as more rational *religious* principles shall prevail, will the advance of the cause, though slow, be sure. If among the best friends and most enlightened advocates of Christianity there is a growing recognition of the great principle that *individual conviction is the only worthy basis of true faith*,—the impression of the individual conscience the only sure ground of religious obligation,—then, on the most precise Christian grounds, must the very essence of real religion be more and more seen to involve and include *real liberality*. And the exercise of such liberality is not (as it is too often represented) of the nature of a *lenient*



*indulgence*, or a *benevolent concession*. It stands forth not on the ground of concession but of principle,—not of indulgence but of right,—not of favour but of justice,—not of compromise but of steadfast maintenance of the truth ;—each upholding what he believes right, without denouncing the other as wrong ; all uniting for objects in which they agree, without compromising one point in which they differ.

Good education is a common object, desired by thinking men of all sects alike, and a legitimate and proper aim of an enlightened government for the good of the state. A scheme of education based on such principles of liberality is based on the most truly Christian principles ; it unites all in common instruction as far as practicable ; it separates them when separation is necessary, for the express purpose of the distinct inculcation of all distinct tenets. To teach a vague sentiment of religion for the gospel, is to mistake a part for the whole. But if it be impossible in a *comprehensive* form to teach *Christianity*, it is practicable thus to teach much which is highly valuable as *preparatory* to it. If human means are to be employed at all, the real nature of Christianity is not to be taught by mere empty forms but by rational and well adjusted instruction. The more definite the view taken of religion, the more essential will *gradual* teaching appear,—advancing from the simpler precepts to the higher doctrines. The *first stages* of the path

are those which *all* might traverse in company ; and if so, must do it with mutual advantage : from avowedly partial common rudiments they will proceed to more complete instruction, better prepared to profit by it, whatever form it may take. And such a system, while it thus *practises* liberality, by no very indirect process tends to *teach* it. By its system of union it inculcates union. It removes at once ignorance and prejudice ; in giving common instruction it cements common interests. Those whom it unites in the public school, will not feel themselves placed in hostility in separate religious classes ; while in these they learn the inviolable sacredness of faith, in the other they will feel the ties of charity.

If good instruction make good subjects, and a right sense of civil privileges and obligations be essential to the well being of a free state, so union and concord are no less essential to its strength and security. A comprehensive system of state education fulfils *both* objects together : it enlightens and it unites ; it gives national intelligence and national strength ; it attaches men to the state as enlightened subjects, and binds them together as Christian brethren.

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## APPENDIX.

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I AM enabled, through the kindness of one or two friends, here to supply one great deficiency of the preceding pages; viz., details of facts in support of some of the principles there discussed. The following articles will, I conceive, speak for themselves, without further comment on my part. I am anxious merely to take this opportunity of publicly acknowledging the kind and most valuable assistance I have thus received.

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### No. I.

*On the State of Popular Education in several Districts of England:—by the Rev. H. BISHOP, M.A., of Oriel College, Oxford, late one of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Operation of the Poor Laws.*

THERE are circumstances connected with the present condition of several districts of England, which afford topics for consideration of peculiar value in reference to the state of general education. These will be best set forth by a statement of facts.

We will first refer to the scene of the late chartist outbreak, Monmouthshire, and the adjoining part of South Wales.

The coal trade, and that in iron, dependant on the former, has been established and most extensively carried on in some parts of South Wales. A very large population has grown up, even spreading over mountains and into retired valleys where, till lately, scarce any



sound but that of the sheepbell had been heard. The towns contain a dense population, while over the neighbouring country not fewer than 40,000 souls are said to be spread. Wages are high, at least good; but, unhappily, are subject to considerable fluctuations: the necessities of life are, however, cheap. Fuel, it is superfluous to say, costs almost nothing. While for labourers, the demand is increasing rather than stationary. Monmouthshire then might seem to be a terrestrial paradise for the labourer. How then can we account for the astonishing fact, that at the bidding of half-a-dozen demagogues, thousands have poured out to levy war on their neighbours, without any one clear or intelligible grievance to goad them forward.

Weekly has the overwhelming population of Monmouthshire been extending itself, forcing its way into wilds hitherto uninhabited, I might almost say unvisited by the foot of man: dependant on itself for daily support, and abandoned to itself: no public opinion existed to check and regulate these semi-savages: no police-force restrained them: and neither religion nor education taught them self-control. Is it surprising that results which have given so lamentable, but it is to be hoped, not too late, a warning to us should have taken place? The very prosperity of trade in Monmouthshire seduced the labouring population of the county into riot and insubordination; and the inevitable fluctuations of the iron trade exposed them to temporary difficulties, which their expensive habits rendered them unprepared to meet. Irritation, estrangement from their employers, resentment against social restraints of every kind, habitually cherished in their bosoms, found them ready to listen to every promise, however extravagant, and every suggestion either of revenge or profit, however wild and impracticable. Can we, then, be otherwise than surprised that the multitudes who moved against Newport were not far



more numerous than they actually proved to be? Can the madness of the attempt astonish us? Ignorance and reckless desperation will defy all prudent calculation, and perhaps it would be more reasonable to wonder why outbreaks of this kind are not of periodical recurrence rather than that on *one occasion only* they have occurred.

Let us now turn our eyes to another, and not distant, part of the country. To those acquainted with the neighbourhood of Bath and Bristol, it is well known that there is a tract of land lying between those two cities, in the county of Gloucester, and running up into the very city of Bristol. This tract of land, called the Forest of Kingswood, and portions of it known by the name of Cock Road, has for years been worked as collieries; the extent to which this burrowing system has been carried, the intricacy of the workings, and the various openings for ingress and egress, make these subterranean labyrinths peculiarly suitable for criminal concealment. The whole population was corrupted and, in fact, became banditti. Property was not respected, and such were the numbers, and such the desperation and daring of these brigands, that at last it was necessary for those who lived within reach of these people to combine for mutual defence. An association was formed in 1812; but such was the terror that these desperadoes had infused, that many respectable persons were, for a time, deterred from uniting with the associators; and others, though contributing to the funds of the society, left their houses from a fear of the consequences: but happily the association was accomplished. Those who took an active part in these benevolent schemes, wisely refused to limit their exertions to the mere punishment of crime. They determined to attempt to cut off the source of crime; in other words, to attempt the reformation of the criminals, of such at least as they could act upon,—the young.



Schools were established,—missionaries were sent amongst them. Instruction was given; the seeds of religion were sown; and though the benevolent projectors of the scheme had probably long to wait, and many failures and disappointments to contend against, most of them lived to witness the happy results of their labours. This district, with a population of many more than four or five thousand, (such was the amount of their numbers several years ago,) is now as peaceable, as virtuous, as religious, as any district in the whole of the United Kingdom. Living in a poor and barren country, without manufactures to raise the value of their labours, by increasing the price of coal, the labouring population is poor, but industrious and contented.

Subjoined is a handbill \* which was circulated to call the inhabitants together; but justice requires me to state that the scheme for the reformation of Kingswood was, in great measure at least, if not wholly, the work of dissenters, chiefly of the Wesleyan Methodists, aided, however, by members of the Society of Friends, and some Moravians, and more especially of Mr. Henry Hill Budget, if I mistake not, a Wesleyan Methodist, and who I believe a few years back (so late as 1832 or 1833) still lived, probably still lives, to superintend the work he had so nobly undertaken, and so successfully carried through.

In 1823, the state of Kingswood attracted the attention of the Honourable and Right Reverend Henry Ryder, then Bishop of Gloucester. One or more churches were, I believe, built, and districts were assigned to them; but not only had the good work been commenced but successfully carried on, for years before the Church of England entered on this field of usefulness. I doubt not the advantage which may have been derived from the labours of those appointed to these districts; but it is as impossible as it would be unjust, to withhold the praise which is the meed of the

\* See page 92.



earlier labourers in this neglected land. Compare the effects of their exertions, as they are shown in the difference between the present state of Monmouthshire and the peaceable and comparatively happy lot of the colliers and miners of Kingswood and its environs, once a disgrace to a Christian country, and a source of inquietude and alarm to a wealthy, populous, and civilized neighbourhood. Yet this change was brought about by laymen—by dissenters. Are we justified in saying that Kingswood is the head quarters of atheism or infidelity, because the clergy of the National Church did not aid in its conversion? Had the Government of the day thought proper to have given any aid to those excellent persons who undertook the civilization of Kingswood, would the minister who proposed the vote have merited the name of an infidel? Or would the ministry who supported such a disposal of public money have been justly suspected of being hostile to the Church, or opposed to Christianity? Had the then ministers acted in such a manner—had they proposed a vote of 30,000*l.* for the purposes of National Education, and placed it indiscriminately, as far as religious opinions were concerned, in the hands of all who would have heartily united in the good work, and had their industry been enforced or coerced, and their judgment, when it appeared to be erroneous, corrected by inspectors to superintend the disposal of this public money,—how different would now be the situation of the country! how different the circumstances and prospects of the Church itself! Many are the districts still in the situation of Kingswood in 1812; and many are the tracts and towns too like Monmouthshire, where Chartism, Socialism, or anything else flourishes but that knowledge which civilizes and prepares the way, at least, for religious truth, religious consolation, and religious patience and submission under the unavoidable ills and trials of life.



It is impossible to close these remarks without recurring to the outrages in Kent, under Thoms. The villages or hamlets where they occurred were not situated in the remote extremities of the kingdom, but under the very walls of the metropolitan City of Canterbury. The villages were neither destitute of places of worship, nor of schools; yet even here, an impostor, upon showing himself, and mingling temporal promises with threatenings of Divine vengeance, claims supernatural power, and procures himself to be received as the Messiah! If religious instruction, in the restricted sense which some orthodox High Church divines give to that expression, can exhibit no better fruits than these, what is the value of it? The truth is, that failures like these prove only the futility of the Church of England attempts at instruction; the efforts of the National Schools, as they are called, are directed rather to educate theologians than Christians, to make their pupils members of a particular Church, rather than to imbue their minds with the simple truths of Christianity, and then leaving persons so instructed to the force and influence of that truth which is embodied in the formularies of the Church of England. The Thirty-Nine Articles have been thrown into question and answer, for the use of Village Schools; and those who have learnt, like parrots, these pages, are said to have received a religious education. Against delusions like Thoms' what protection can such *theology*—not religious knowledge—furnish? Let any candid inquirer turn to Mr. Liandet's Report of the Riot in Kent, and perhaps his wonder may cease, if he has hitherto been in the habit of feeling surprise at the excitability of the Kentish peasantry when called into action by Thoms\*.

\* See Report addressed to the Central Society of Education, on the State of the Peasantry at Boughton, Herne-Hill, and the Ville



A National School exists, would there was but one such, where the question being passed down from boy to boy, as to whether individually any one of them had been *baptized*, they all asserted they had not; but when the question was changed, and it was inquired whether they had been *christened*, they unanimously declared they had been christened! Yet in the formularies of the Church, in the Catechism for the instruction of the young members of the Church of England, *baptism*, not *christening*, is the word employed. With such a sample, then, of religious instruction, within the very bosom of the Church, what can be the value of the instruction provided for the young? We ridicule the Papist practice of employing in its public prayers a language unknown to the bulk of Roman Catholic worshippers; yet we carry on the religious instruction of the poorer members of the Church in a language not understood by the children who are professed to be taught.

The clergy are not perhaps necessarily to blame for anything but grasping after more than they have physical powers for effecting, and rejecting aid that would render a more effective discharge of their duty in this particular comparatively easy. Division of labour would lighten their work, and while resources would be placed in their hands for school buildings, various other sources of additional aid would open to them, in imparting such secular knowledge as is indispensably necessary, even as a means of spreading the spiritual instruction it is their peculiar province to extend, not indeed to such as are only *locally* situated, in their parish, but to those who belong to their congregation, and recognise their pastoral office.

of Dunkirk, near Canterbury; by F. LIANDET, Esq. Pages 12, 14, 17, 18, 21, 30, &c. The whole of the Report abounds with the most valuable information.



“KINGSWOOD ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF  
THIEVES, HOUSEBREAKERS, &c\*.

“WHEREAS the alarming depredations continually committed, by a very daring and daily increasing combination of villains, extending their ravages for many miles round the country, and well known to reside chiefly in this neighbourhood, have induced a few persons, desirous of promoting the welfare of the community, to unite their efforts in attempting to form a society for the suppression of such enormous evils: and they did, by advertisement, convene a considerable number of respectable inhabitants, at the the Flower-Pot Inn, at Kingswood, on Monday, the 9th of September last; when certain Resolutions were agreed to, and a Committee chosen, for the purpose of taking into mature consideration the peculiar circumstances of the case, —in order to adopt, and rigorously prosecute, with unwearied diligence, such measures as may tend to produce the desired effect, by striking a decisive blow at the root of such a system of iniquitous practices, as it is supposed never was equalled in any other part of the kingdom.

“The committee, in pursuance of such appointment, have since met at a room engaged for that purpose, at Kingswood Hill, and resolved (IN AN ENTIRELY GRATUITOUS MANNER, AND WITH UNREMITTED ATTENTION) to use every exertion in their power to promote the designs of this Institution; and having acquired a comprehensive view of this singular system, as to the different modes in which their diabolical purposes are accomplished, conceive it not irrelevant to detail a few particulars.

“This scheme of unparalleled enormity, demanding such earnest attention, has been progressively and uninterruptedly maturing for a long series of years; and such is the nature of their establishment that WHOLE FAMILIES ARE

\* Vide page 88.



DEPENDANT ON THIS COMBINATION FOR MAINTENANCE, AND MANY HUNDREDS OF THE YOUNGER BRANCHES ARE WELL KNOWN TO BE NOW IN ACTUAL TRAINING FOR THE LIKE PURPOSES. IT IS ALSO ASCERTAINED, THAT THEY ARE IN THE HABIT OF DECOYING LABOURERS FROM THEIR ACCUSTOMED EMPLOYMENT, AND FORMALLY ADMITTING THEM INTO THEIR SOCIETY.

“GREAT NUMBERS OF HUCKSTERS IN THIS AND THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOOD, ARE IN ALLIANCE WITH THEM; THE VENDORS OF THE GOODS ARE SEEN PASSING WITH CART LOADS, TO AND FROM DIFFERENT PLACES, BY NIGHT, NONE PRESUMING TO INTERRUPT THEM, AND ALTHOUGH IT SELDOM OCCURS, THAT ANY OF THESE PLUNDERERS SUCCEED IN SECURING THEIR BOOTY, WITHOUT BEING RECOGNISED BY COLLIERS PASSING TO AND FROM THEIR MINES, BEFORE THEY ARRIVE AT THEIR SEVERAL PLACES OF RESIDENCE, YET THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES AS INVIOLABLY SECURE: FOR ANY ONE DARING TO IMPEACH THEM, WOULD ENDANGER BOTH PROPERTY AND LIFE; consequently, ordinary means adopted by societies in general, in offering rewards, &c. would be altogether abortive. Should the statement of these circumstances create surprise, or be deemed an exaggeration, suffice it to observe, that the committee (SEVERAL OF WHOM HAVE BEEN LONG RESIDENT IN KINGSWOOD, CLOSE OBSERVERS OF THE TRANSACTIONS ALLUDED TO, AND FOR THESE PECULIAR REASONS SELECTED AS MOST SUITABLY QUALIFIED TO MEET THE EXIGENCIES OF THE SOCIETY) stand pledged to give the most positive proof of their existence, which is sufficiently notorious to the majority of the inhabitants of these parts.

“The great number of persons resident in the neighbourhood of Kingswood, might reasonably have encouraged us to expect extensive assistance. Such, however, is the astonishing terror prevalent in the minds of very many, arising from an apprehension that the incensed miscreants would reward their interference with still greater destruction, so many are prevented from aiding this Association, on



account of relationship to them, that when it is considered, in addition hereto, that thousands are connected, by receiving and vending the goods, it will not appear surprising that very few, comparatively, remain sufficiently virtuous or courageous to unite with us; and it must be needless to hint at the unparalleled enormities we have to expect, unless such prompt and energetic measures be adopted as the nature of the case requires. Under the impression, therefore, of their very urgent necessity, the committee have determined on such cautious and vigorous steps as are very likely to accomplish their designs, and hope, through the united exertions of many of the respectable inhabitants of Bristol, Bath, Kingswood, and their vicinity, to be soon enabled to proceed to successful operations.

*"Bristol, 17th January, 1812."*

The above is a copy of the handbill which, in 1812, was circulated in Bristol, preparatory to the formation of the societies which have done so much for the neglected region of Kingswood. See also Extracts from Evidence laid before the House of Commons by the Poor-Law Commission, and ordered to be printed by the House: 21st February, 1834. Page 887. Appendix to Report (A). Part I.

While these sheets were passing through the press, the following statement appeared in some of the newspapers:—

*"Home Circuit, Maidstone, 10th March, 1840.—*The Commission of Assize for the county of Kent was opened on Monday, at Maidstone, with the usual formalities. The calendar contains the names of 116 prisoners, 100 of whom are males, being only 16 females for trial. It is a melancholy fact, that of this great number of prisoners, not more than five can be said to possess anything like education, and a very great majority can neither read nor write!" Comment on such a statement as the above is superfluous.

## No. II.

THE instances referred to (p. 16) are those of several elementary school books of an eminently "*pious*" description, which have been quoted in some of the discussions of the educational question. It may not however be superfluous here to give one or two specimens, (for which I am indebted to a friend,) for the sake of those readers who may not happen to have seen the publications in question, and who might otherwise think the remarks in the text overcharged.

## ARITHMETIC\*.

## EXAMPLES IN NUMERATION.

"Mesha King of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the King of Israel 100,000 lambs. 2 Kings, ch. 3, v. 4. Write down the number.

"The children of Israel were sadly given to idolatry, notwithstanding all they knew of God. Moses was obliged to have 3000 men put to death for this grievous sin. What digits must you use to express this number, &c.?"

## MULTIPLICATION.

"At the Marriage at Cana in Galilee there were 6 water-pots of stone, holding 2 or 3 firkins a piece. If they held 2 firkins, how much water would it take to fill them? And how much, if they held 3 each?"

## DIVISION.

"Our Lord called to him his 12 Apostles, and sent them out two and two; how many parties were sent?"

"When our Lord fed 5000 men with a few loaves and fishes, he commanded them to sit down in companies on the grass, and if there were 100 in each company, how many companies would there have been?"

\* From *Religious Arithmetic*, by the Rev. C. J. WIGRAM, &c. &c. This work, however, has since been suppressed.



## ENGLISH GRAMMAR\*.

“‘God created man,’ (Gen. i. 17.)

“‘God’ is the subject, set before the verb ‘created.’

“‘Man’ is the object, set after the verb ‘created.’”  
(p. 43.)

“‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.’ (Matt. xxii. 37.)

“‘Love,’ then, is a verb.

“What is love, when it is said, ‘God is love.’ (1 John, iv. 16.)

“‘Love’ is a substantive in apposition to ‘God.’”  
(p. 16)

“For means cause. ‘Christ died for us.’ (Rom. v. 8.)

‘For’ connects ‘us’ with ‘died.’ ‘Us’ bears the relation of ‘cause’ to ‘died.’ ‘We’ are the ‘cause’ of Christ’s dying.”  
(p. 68.)

## No. III.

THE allusions made in the preceding pages to the character and quality of the religious instruction too commonly given in schools immediately connected with the established Church, may be abundantly substantiated, it is to be feared, by instances from various parts of the kingdom. I am enabled by the kindness of a gentleman who has devoted much time and attention to the subject, to subjoin the following memoranda of actual examinations which he personally carried on in several schools, which there was no reason to suppose otherwise than fair average specimens.

## “1. EXAMINATION OF . . . . . SCHOOL.

“WHEN I entered the room, the master was sitting cross-legged on a bench in a corner, while the first-class

\* From *English Grammar*, by the Rev. J. RUSSELL, D.D., &c.; Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. 1833.



were reading to a monitor the fourteenth chapter of St. John. The phrase occurring, 'I will manifest myself to the world,' I asked what 'manifest' meant, when not one of the boys knew. A couple of verses on, there occurred the sentence, 'bring all things to your remembrance.' The meaning of which none could tell me, nor did they know what 'remembrance' meant. I then examined them in their Catechism, in which their ignorance, though they knew it all by heart perfectly, was extraordinary. I first asked the last question but one in the Catechism, in which, as I had not asked the previous question, it was necessary to substitute for the word 'thereby,' the words 'through the Lord's supper,' but I could get no answer to the question; but when I substituted 'thereby' for the four concluding words I had used in putting the question, the whole class instantly shouted out the answer. I then asked what the word 'thereby' in the question alluded to, when none of them seemed to have the slightest conception of its purport. They repeated the second commandment fluently at my request; but could not tell what the words 'graven image' meant, and said they had never been taught. I asked if they knew the meaning of the word 'rehearse,' which none could give me. I then said, 'Rehearse the Articles of thy Belief:' the answer was immediately given, but they could not explain what 'resurrection of the body' meant, and said they had never been taught anything about the resurrection. I then asked, supposing a horse and a man were both buried in one field, whether anything would happen to the body of the man that would not happen to the body of the horse; but they could give no answer. They knew nothing of the meaning of the words 'life everlasting;' but one boy said that God would live for ever, though nobody else would. They understood literally the words, 'the body and blood of Christ which was verily and



indeed taken by the faithful in the Lord's Supper,' and of course believed the doctrine of transubstantiation, a doctrine they must necessarily come to with this passage unexplained.

"2. . . . . ENDOWED SCHOOL FOR BOYS.

"THIS appears to be a very good school; many branches are taught which are unusual in schools of this description. The boys had a very fair knowledge of English history, and etymology being taught, their reading is not so much by rote without understanding, as in the national schools. It is under the management of the corporation, previous to the reform of which, it had only six children. At present, owing to the improvement which has been made in it, it numbers sixty children, and it is considered a favour to get a boy in. In the same building, in a room up stairs, was a national school for girls, which appeared as bad as the other was good. The first-class children were reading 'God is the Creator, Benefactor,' &c.; but not one could explain the meaning of these words, 'Creator, Benefactor.' They could not tell what 'thereby' referred to in the last question but one in the Catechism, and, in fact, seemed perfectly ignorant of the meaning of any passage in it. When I asked, after they had repeated the answer in the Catechism, about repentance, what do you forsake by repentance, the answer was, 'Jesus Christ.' The mistress seemed chiefly solicitous that the children should curtsey before every question they answered.

"3. . . . . NATIONAL SCHOOL.

"IN the boys' school, the master had only just been engaged, as the boys have been hitherto instructed by the schoolmistress. They had read, the morning I entered the school, the third chapter of St. Matthew, and I made them read it over again to me. In the first verse is the passage 'preaching in the wilderness of Judea;' I asked what 'wilderness' meant. The whole class failed in answering. One boy said it meant 'city,' another 'church,' another 'princes.'



In the third verse occurs the words 'spoken by the prophet Esaias.' I asked in what part of the Bible was Esaias, when one said 'Proverbs,' another 'Psalms;' and when I asked whether it was in the Old or the New Testament, they said 'the New.' In the fifth verse is the phrase, 'region round about Jordan:' the only reply I could get to the question what 'region' meant, was 'number of people.' They could not tell why Abraham was called 'the father of the Jews,' in the ninth verse. In the girls' school, the first class were reading the twenty-eighth chapter of St. Matthew. They answered several of my questions tolerably; but they did not know what the words 'tumults,' 'scourged,' 'reviled,' that were in this chapter, meant. 'Tumult' they said, meant 'cross.' In the thirty-fifth verse, the phrase occurring, 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,' the mistress asked them, what prophet uttered so many prophecies concerning Christ, when the reply was, 'St. Peter.'

"4. . . . . NATIONAL SCHOOL.

"THE children read to me the second chapter of St. John, but they were not allowed to read the Old Testament at all, and there were none in the school: consequently, many passages in the New Testament were quite unintelligible to them. In reading this chapter the passage occurred, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,' to which none of the children could attach any meaning, nor did they know to what it alluded. The word 'wilderness' they could not explain. I asked the meaning of the sentence, 'his deeds should be reprov'd,' which occurs in this chapter, but they could not give it, and the same with every other sentence which I asked them to put in different English. They gave some of the explanations that are given in the Glossary to the Broken Catechism, but were quite ignorant of the



meaning of the explanations. Thus they said 'to rehearse' meant 'to repeat or reckon up,' which is the answer in the Glossary; but they did not know the significations of the words 'repeat or reckon up.' They could not explain the meaning of the word 'salvation,' or 'steadfastly purposing,' which are in the Catechism, but one boy knew the meaning of the word 'steadfastly.' The only answer I could get to the question, 'Who ordered the Lord's Supper to be observed?' was 'Mary Magdalen.' They thought that the second commandment forbade the making of graven images and the painting of pictures.

" 5. . . . . NATIONAL SCHOOL.

" WHEN I entered, a monitor was reading from a book entitled *The Truths of the Christian Religion*, and each sentence was repeated after him by the whole class. I stopped him at the passage, 'calculated to advance his own honour, the happiness of mankind, to banish idolatry.' I then successively asked the meaning of the words 'calculated,' 'advance,' 'banish,' 'idolatry;' but I could get no reply to any one of them, and the whole class and the master seemed aghast at my questions. The latter said they had not been accustomed to that sort of questioning. They could not tell me who 'his,' in the phrase 'his own honour,' referred to. I then asked them to repeat the Second Commandment, which they did fluently; but after much questioning, I found they had not the slightest idea of what 'graven image,' or 'likeness of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath,' was intended to convey.

" 6. . . . . NATIONAL SCHOOL.

" THE first class of girls at the Sunday school answered most of my biblical questions very well, but they were rather old for school, being apparently sixteen and eighteen years old. The boys' school appears very bad, as the expla-



natory system is almost unknown. I heard the second class instructed in Ostervald's *Abridgment*, by a monitor of the first class, who could barely read himself. The children, having read a chapter from Ostervald, were questioned by the monitor from printed questions referring to the chapter, but only some of the answers were printed. One question was, 'Who constrained Joseph to go and sojourn in Egypt?' The answer was 'compelled forced,' which I could not comprehend, till I found that the next question in the book was, 'What is the meaning of the word constrained?' 'Answer, compelled, forced.' The children had annexed the wrong answer to the question. Another question was, 'Who lived about this time?' The children answered, 'Jesus Christ;' the time alluded to being that of Joseph. But the monitor did not appear to see the absurdity of the answers, and went to another question.

"Another question was, 'Who was the last of the judges?' Answer, 'Saul,' and this the monitor took. The monitor then asked, 'What do you mean by territories?' He had great difficulty in reading this word 'territories,' and at last got it out, with much mispronunciation and false quantity. The answer in the book was 'land, county.' But the children answered 'landcounty,' obviously thinking this meant some peculiar sort of land.

"The monitor then asked, 'Who pursued them?' a question which was complete nonsense without the previous one, which he had not asked, and which related to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. Of course, by the question being asked by itself, it could not appear who 'them' meant. The above is an instance of the way in which the monitorial system too frequently acts, and of the abuses of which it is capable. The above is a fair sample of what I have continually witnessed in national schools, in which all improvements seem to me impossible, so long as so close and servile an adherence to Bell's system is persisted in.



## “7. . . . . NATIONAL SCHOOL.

“THERE were no Old Testaments used in the school, but there was in use a little book containing portions of about twenty chapters of that part of the Bible. From this publication they read part of the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis, beginning ‘Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age.’ The children were then asked why Israel loved Joseph more than his other children, when all the questioning and cross-questioning of myself and master could elicit no answer. They were then made to read the passage again, after which we were still unable to get an answer to the question. In the next verse are the words, ‘and when his brethren saw that their father loved him,’ &c. None of the children could explain what ‘brethren’ meant, nor who ‘their father’ alluded to, nor whom he loved, though one boy answered ‘Rachel,’ to the last question. I then made them repeat the Second Commandment, which they did with difficulty, but on my asking what ‘graven image’ meant, I could get no answer, and the master said ‘that they had not been accustomed to be questioned that sort of way.’

“On questioning them in arithmetic, they replied, after much difficulty, to how much 6 and 3 and 10 and 4 made; but none could tell what twice 2 amounted to. The majority of national schools have no Bibles in them, but generally Trimmer’s *Abridgment*, and not unfrequently a much smaller abridgment than Trimmer’s, is the only part of the Scriptures contained in national schools. I have frequently in these schools asked the children if they have been baptized, when the usual answer is a flat denial; but every child will allow that it has been christened. The fact is, in common conversation, this rite is invariably alluded to under the term of ‘christening,’ the word ‘baptism’ being



very rarely used. The former term, however, is nowhere used in the Catechism, where this sacrament is always termed 'baptism:' the children, however, according to the almost universal plan in national schools, never having been taught to understand what they read, are unaware that the sacrament of baptism, about which they read almost daily in the schools, most of them probably having repeated the answers in the Catechism above a thousand times, is the identical ceremony which they have all undergone in their infancy."

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#### No. IV.

A FEW particulars may be useful to corroborate what is said in page 77.

It is well known that the National Society has of late been making great exertions to extend its exclusive plans, in opposition to the designs of Government, especially by disseminating circulars as widely as possible for the purpose of obtaining subscriptions and signatures to a declaration, in which the subscribers "disapprove of the constitution of the Privy Council Committee, and deprecate the establishment of any system of national education not founded upon the Church Catechism and authorized version of the Holy Scriptures."

Such is their notion of *national* instruction. And the *animus* in which it is upheld is more fully evinced in the accompanying circular letter: in the course of which they modestly complain that "the proposal made by the authorities of the National Society to promote a general inspection of *all schools* . . . was not acceded to by the Committee of the Privy Council"! And after protesting that their exertions have been "purely religious and independent of political influence," they show that "religious" spirit by a series of



misrepresentations of the Government plans; by which, they state, "*the independence of all Church schools is invaded,*" and further, "a Committee of Council *still exists*, (!) against which the great majority of peers, spiritual and temporal, have protested: through the agency of inspectors and grants of public money, that Committee, of which the members *may hereafter* be Roman Catholics or Socinians, is now *endeavouring to obtain* an influence, directly or indirectly, over all schools."

Such are their notions of truth: in support of which they further argue for upholding "the legitimate influence of the clergy over parochial schools," *because* "all fathers and mothers in the land are anxious that their children should be rescued from Socialism and Chartism." (!) While, to swell the list of their adherents, they ingeniously suggest, that if, to any one who has already given his signature, it should appear "that to do so a *second time* is superfluous, the Committee would request him to remember the important and critical events which have occurred in the interval."

I have no doubt that far more ample and striking exemplifications might have been obtained from the various documents put forth from the same quarter, by any one who should take the trouble to go through them. The above statement was elicited solely from the Society's Circular, which happened to be addressed to me just as this sheet was going through the press.



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In duly estimating the importance of critical and philological research, in clearing away some of the obscurities of the Scriptures, the Editor of the BIBLE CYCLOPÆDIA considers the Bible, in its structure, spirit, and character, to be essentially an Eastern book; and, therefore, the natural phenomena, and moral condition of the East, should be made largely tributary to

its elucidation. In order to appreciate fully the truth of its descriptions, and the accuracy, force and beauty, of its various allusions, it is indispensable that the reader, as far as possible, separate himself from his ordinary associations, and place himself by a kind of mental transmigration in the very circumstances of the writers. He must sit himself down in the midst of Oriental scenery, gaze upon the sun, sky, mountains and rivers of Asia,—go forth with the nomade tribes of the desert,—follow their flocks,—travel with their caravans,—rest in their tents,—lodge in their khans,—load and unloose their camels,—drink at their wells,—repose during the heat of noon under the shade of their palms,—cultivate the fields with their own rude implements,—gather in or glean after their harvests,—beat out and ventilate the grain in their open threshing-floors,—dress in their costume,—note their proverbial or idiomatic forms of speech, and listen to the strains of song or story, with which they beguile the vacant hours. In a word, he must surround himself with, and transfuse himself into, all the forms, habits, and usages, of Oriental life. In this way only can he catch the sources of their imagery, or enter into full communion with the genius of the sacred penmen.

True to the traditions of their ancestors, and impenetrable thus far to the spirit of innovation, their manners and customs, opinions and institutions, retain all the fixedness of their mountains, and flow on as unvarying as the course of their streams.

Sir John Chardin states, "In the East they are constant in all things; the habits are at this day, in the same manner as in the preceding ages; so that we may reasonably believe, that in that part of the world, the exterior form of things (as their manners and customs) are the same now as they were two thousand years since, except in such changes as have been introduced by religion, which are nevertheless very inconsiderable."

Mr. Morier also says, "The manners of the East, amid all the changes of government and religion, are still the same; they are living impressions from an original mould, and at every step some object, some idiom, some dress, or some custom, of common life, reminds the traveller of ancient times, and confirms, above



# THE BIBLE CYCLOPÆDIA.

all, the beauty, the accuracy, and the propriety, of the language, and the history of the BIBLE."

The Editor will therefore draw largely from these rich and abundant stores which the spirit of modern enterprise has recently unfolded for the important purposes of Biblical elucidation.

The tide of travel within a few years has turned remarkably to the East—men of intelligence and observation have made their way into every region on which the light of revelation originally shone; exploring its antiquities, mingling with its inhabitants, detailing its manners and customs, and displaying its physical, moral, and political circumstances. From these expeditions they have returned, richly laden with the results of their industry, and patient research.

Nor has the progress of our knowledge during the present century, with respect to the institutions, manners, and customs, of the ancient Egyptians, been less remarkable. In this department, the labours of Young, Denon, Champollion, Cailliaud, Belzoni, and Wilkinson, have opened up a new and interesting path to the Biblical student, developing a rich mine of information in reference to that extraordinary people, and illustrative of the Mosaic records.

The Editor will aim to avoid that spirit of error which has, unhappily, too much prevailed of late on the Continent, which, by arrogating to itself the claims of superior sagacity and learning, has sought to reduce everything in the Sacred Volume to the level of its own limited views and narrow conceptions, denying or explaining away all the miracles, and seeking thereby to lower our reverence for the word of God, and divine things in general. Such views and principles, usually classed under the term *Neology*, will receive no countenance in the pages of this work.

The BIBLE will everywhere be exhibited as Scripture given by inspiration of God, and not as mere human composition. The work claims not, however, to be faultless; yet no diligence, no research, no comparison of statements, no sifting of authorities, will be spared in the pursuit of truth.

Scripture Biography, which usually occupies a large space in many Bible Dictionaries, will be treated of in a brief and concise manner, giving only the characteristic outlines, except when difficulties occur which require to be cleared up.

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