

A CHARGE.

THE IRISH EDUCATION QUESTION.

A CHARGE

DELIVERED

TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

UNITED DIOCESES

OF

OSSORY, FERNS, AND LEIGHLIN.

AT HIS

ORDINARY VISITATION, IN SEPTEMBER, 1854.

BY

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MDCCCLV.

L. SEELEY,
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THE introduction of "The National System of Education" into Ireland gave rise to a Controversy there, which has now lasted for above twenty years.

This Controversy at first turned principally on questions concerning the duty of the State and the duty of the Church, in relation to the Education of the People. But, though such questions can never cease to be of the highest interest, their practical importance has for a good while greatly diminished. For both the Church and the State have long since settled down firmly in their different views of duty; and each has been acting steadily on its own view for years. When such is the state of the case, the efforts which were at an earlier period so strenuously made by each side, to reason the other out of its position, seem to have no practical purpose. And accordingly such efforts were long ago relaxed; and they have been for some time altogether abandoned. The Church no longer labours to bring the State back to the principles on which it acted, before the National System was

devised. And the State seems to have given up the hope of bringing the Church down to the wider level, to which it then itself descended. The question, once so earnestly debated, which of the opposite views of duty that the two parties take is right, is waived for the present. And it is asked instead, Whether there is any way in which, leaving each party to act upon its view of its own duty, the Church may co-operate with the State, and the State aid the Church, in the work of educating the Poor?

Upon the solution of this problem, the settlement of the Irish Education Question plainly depends. And one of the main objects of the following Charge is to propose and defend a solution of it. I have purposely abstained from discussing any controverted points, however interesting and important, which do not bear upon the stage of the Education Question at which we have arrived. My object has been, to attempt to show, that there is an easy way in which a satisfactory adjustment of it may be brought about, and to meet the various objections, which are most generally employed against the proposed plan, and with most success.

The Clergy who heard the Charge thought it calculated to be of use for its limited purpose; and they expressed an earnest wish that an opportunity should be given to others to become acquainted with

it. I consented to publish it at their recommendation and desire. But it seemed vain to attempt to draw attention to such subjects, while the War and all its stirring interests engrossed the public mind. I therefore kept my Charge back for a more favourable season. And I should not have thought that the time for printing it had even yet arrived, but that I hope that the debate upon our Question, which is to come on immediately in the House of Commons, may excite such a measure of public interest about it, as I should not have had any hope of being able to raise, without some such assistance. And if there be enough interest about the Question, to procure a fair consideration of what I have written, I trust it will satisfy many who now despair of seeing it settled in their day, that a satisfactory settlement of it is as easy and safe, as it is desirable.

I believe that the plan which I suggest for this purpose, has laboured under a disadvantage from being confounded in England, with what is there known as "The Secular System" of Education. How little the two schemes are likely to correspond, might be conjectured from the fact, that the latter has been advocated by those, who wish to separate general and religious teaching altogether; whereas the other plan was put forward on the part of men who had, for twenty years, foregone all aid from the State in the work of Education, and encoun-

tered many difficulties, discouragements, and positive disadvantages, rather than consent to such a separation.

As I understand it, "The Secular System" would confine the teaching in Schools aided by the State, to secular matters; leaving it to the ministers of religion to supply in another place, or at least at a time beyond school-hours, and by a course altogether distinct from the regular daily course of school-education, whatever amount of religious instruction they might think necessary. We hold, on the contrary, that, whatever be the amount of supplemental instruction in religion, which the children may receive out of school, they are all, daily, in school, as a part of their school-course, to be instructed in the Word of God. This principle is embodied in the fundamental rule of the Church Education Society. It is only by our determination to abide by this Rule that we are excluded from a participation in the grants which are made for the education of the poor in Ireland, as administered by the National Board. But it is plain, that if the "Secular System" were substituted for the National System, we should be no less shut out from all benefit from the public funds than we are at present. For we could then only obtain a share in them, on the condition of giving merely Secular Education in our Schools. But if we could comply

with this condition, we might now receive aid from the State. Indeed, the National System offers aid to us upon less unfavourable terms. For while the "Secular System" would exclude religious instruction from the School altogether, the National System only forbids it, where the parents of the scholars, or any of them, object to it. Even to this more lenient condition, we have felt ourselves absolutely unable to submit. It ought scarcely to have been supposed, therefore, that we were endeavouring to free ourselves from it, by substituting for the existing system, one which would lay still harder conditions upon us !

It will be seen by every one who reads the following pages, that the plan which I have suggested would leave Patrons at liberty to give religious instruction to the full extent to which it is now given in the Church Education Schools ; and to maintain and act upon the Rule for which we have been contending. And nothing more can be needed to show that this plan is, in the most important point, essentially distinguished from the "Secular System."

But independently of the opposition which it has encountered from having been confounded with a scheme from which it differs so widely, it will be felt by many who commit no such mistake, that it is open to a very serious objection. The objection

to which I refer is one which I was led to consider, when I first suggested the plan. And I will give here the reply which I then made to it.

“It will be felt, no doubt, to be a very grave objection to the plan, that under it the office of the State, as to Education, would be limited to securing *secular* education to the poor, whereas it is bound both by its duty to God and to the people to make provision also for *religious* education. And, my Lord, I hope I am not disposed to deny that this duty really rests upon the State, and that it is a very grave objection to this plan that it supposes the State to be content with discharging but a part of its duty. But, then, in considering the practical force of this objection, we must remember, I think it necessary to repeat, that this plan is a substitute for an existing System. And though this is a very strong objection to the plan, if it be regarded as a substantive plan, yet it is really no objection to it considered as a substitute for an existing System, if the same objection lies against that System, and also against every attainable substitute for it.

“Now, I suppose, my Lord, that it is hardly necessary to say anything to prove that this is the case, so far as the National System for Ireland is concerned. Every one must know, that under it the State makes no attempt to discharge this part of

its duty. I should not regard the State as really discharging this duty, unless it provided for the carrying out of Scriptural Education to the extent to which our Rule requires it to be carried out. But there is no one, I suppose, who would regard it as making any attempt to perform the duty at all, unless it prescribed some course of religious instruction as a part of the business of the schools which it aided, and enforced the carrying out of this course, by making it essential to the maintenance of the connexion of those Schools with the State ; or at least, by making the aid given to any School in some measure depend upon the way in which this part of its business was actually carried out in it. Now, there is nothing of this kind in the National System. The National Board has, as is well known, a Rule to regulate the mode of giving religious instruction, if it be given, but none to determine the nature of the instruction to be given, or to secure that any *religious* instruction of any kind shall be given in its schools.

“ No objection, therefore, can be made to this plan by Government, or by any party, on behalf of the State, upon the ground, that, according to it, the State would not discharge the weighty duty which rests upon it of giving religious instruction to the people : because, in the actual System which

the State has been carrying on in this country for so many years, no attempt is made to discharge this duty.

“I shall rejoice to see any attainable plan in which the defect is remedied. But I must remark, as I believe it is not unlikely to be overlooked if attention be not drawn to it, that there is no attempt to provide a remedy for it in the other plan which we have been discussing. Were that plan adopted, and a grant made to the Church Education Society, the State would no more be providing *religious* education for the people than under the plan which we are now considering. In both it would support, or aid in supporting, Church Education Schools and National Schools, and in neither would it prescribe or enforce any course of *religious* education. If it could be said to perform its duty in this respect,—which I am very far from thinking is the case,—on account of the religious education actually given in those Schools, this would apply to the one plan as well as to the other.

“And this is, in fact, the only way in which it attempts to discharge this part of its duty in England. There the State devolves the *religious* education of the poor upon the educational organs of the different religious denominations. They have their respective systems of religious educa-

tion, each under its own rules. Their connexion with the State makes no alteration in their courses or their rules,—in the nature or the amount of the religious instruction which they give. One instructs all the scholars in the Church Formularies. Another, only in the Bible. Another will render no account to Government of the nature of the *religious* instruction which it gives. But this diversity of systems raises no scruples in the State as to connecting itself with these different bodies ; nor does it throw any difficulty in the way of the connexion. The State seems to have satisfied itself that it must leave the *religious* education of the different denominations to themselves.” *

I hope that this is enough to make it very clear, that no one who supports the existing system, either in England or Ireland, can object to the proposed plan, on the ground that, under it, the State would not be performing the weighty duty of giving religious instruction to the people. And, indeed, I trust that it shows further, that no one, whether he supports or opposes the existing system in either country, can reasonably object to the plan on that ground, regarding it, as it ought to be regarded, as

* Speech delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Church Education Society for Ireland, held in Dublin, Thursday, April 15, 1852 ; pp. 43—45.

a substitute for a System which is open, in the same degree, to the same objection.

June 12, 1855.

A CHARGE,

&c.

Houses of the Oireachtas

A CHARGE.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

IN my former Charges, I have engaged you in the consideration of some of the controversies of the day, religious and political, in the right settlement of which the well being of the Church seemed to be most deeply concerned. None of these questions could be usefully discussed, without expending upon it a very considerable portion of the whole time that can be allotted to an address of this kind. But however large may have been the space that I have been obliged on occasions like the present to devote to controversy, I have been always anxious to reserve some, for subjects more directly connected with the ordinary duties of the Christian Ministry.

In speaking to you upon such subjects, I have been naturally led to say something of the religious and benevolent Societies, which are the chief agents in carrying out, at home and abroad, those projects for the good of mankind, both temporal

and spiritual, in which you ought yourselves to be most deeply interested, and in which it ought to be your aim to interest those who are committed to your care and guidance. And among these Societies I have always given a prominent place to **THE CHURCH EDUCATION SOCIETY**. It could hardly be doubted,—I had no apprehension at least that you would be disposed to doubt,—that it was fairly entitled to such a place. It was founded for the maintenance of the great principle of **SCRIPTURAL EDUCATION**, as it is held by you (with very few exceptions) and by the great majority of the members of our Church, both lay and clerical. It has steadily upheld that great principle, under many disadvantages, and difficulties, and discouragements. It is the only Institution which renders any aid to you and to your brethren throughout the land, in the discharge of the weighty duty of educating the poor in accordance with your principles. And on all these grounds I could have no doubt that you would take a lively interest in all that I had at any time to say of this Society,—of its operations, condition, and prospects.

It was impossible to speak of the Society,—at least in its relation to your duties,—without advert-
ing to what is called **THE IRISH EDUCATION QUESTION**. And, accordingly, in my former Charges and in the Notes appended to them, as

they were published, I have touched upon the main points of that protracted question. But its present position seems to require a fuller consideration of it than I have hitherto thought it necessary to engage in. For the Inquiry into the working of the National System of Education in Ireland, which occupied a Select Committee of the House of Lords for almost the entire of last Session, though it failed actually to lead to a settlement of the Education Question, seemed to bring it very near to one; and certainly has left it at a stage at which it appears more likely to be settled than at any former period since it first arose.

Upon this point, however,—that is, upon the extent to which the cause of the Church Education Society has been advanced by the late Inquiry,—great misapprehension seems very generally to prevail. It is very possible that many who hear me share in such misapprehensions. And as, wherever they exist, the present position of the question must be much misunderstood, I think it desirable, before we go farther, to say something to correct them.

As soon as it became known that, at the end of its prolonged labours, the Committee had resolved not to make any Report, but simply to present the Evidence, to be printed for the information of Parliament and the public, it was natural that much

disappointment should have been felt by all who were much interested in the question. When the investigation of any important question is intrusted by either House of Parliament to a Select Committee, all who care about the question hope to receive information upon it, and not a few to obtain help and guidance. It is generally expected, not only that the Committee will collect full evidence upon the main subject of the Inquiry, and upon all collateral questions which are fairly connected with it, but that it will also by a Report assist those for whom this evidence is provided in making a right use of it, and coming to a right judgment upon it. And when a Committee fails to meet this reasonable expectation, disappointment will naturally be felt, just in the degree in which an interest in the subject of the inquiry is felt.

I do not believe that in England there was any such general interest in the late Inquiry, that any general disappointment was felt at the issue. But in Ireland, which had been so long disturbed and divided by the question, the case was very different. Here the appointment of the Committee was generally hailed with lively satisfaction, under the hope that it would lead to a settlement of this harassing question. The proceedings were followed all along with earnest interest, chiefly under this hope. And when it was found that they ended without

the recommendation or suggestion of any specific plan for the settlement of the question, or even the expression of an opinion as to the feasibility or desirableness of effecting a settlement of it, the disappointment at the result was naturally,—necessarily, indeed,—general and keen. I believe, indeed, that, under the influence of such feelings, many were hurried into the conclusion that nothing of any value had been done by the Committee, because they had been unable to agree upon a Report. But this was a very great mistake. Of the two functions of such a Committee the collection and publication of evidence upon the subject which it is appointed to investigate, is far the more important. I suppose that when any one sets about studying a public question, which has been investigated by a Parliamentary Committee or a Royal Commission, he generally turns to the Blue Books which contain the fruit of their labours, with a confident expectation of finding in them very important assistance in his own investigations. And this expectation is seldom disappointed. I have no disposition to undervalue the assistance to be derived from fair and able Reports. But I am sure that every one who has resorted to such sources for help will testify that he has, in every case, derived far more from the Evidence, than from the accompanying Report, however fair and able.

Now in the discharge of this part of their duties, the late Committee were certainly very diligent. And I think it will be found that their labour has not been thrown away.

The Evidence, with an Appendix, containing some useful documents, has been published. The publication is as yet, of course, but little known. And when it comes to be read by those who desire to inform themselves on the question, many imperfections and defects will no doubt be discovered in it. Some of the points on which evidence was taken will be found to be imperfectly followed up, and upon some others, on which information would naturally be expected, none will be found. But, whatever be its deficiencies, I am quite sure that the body of Evidence collected by the Committee will be found to furnish very valuable information upon most of the points which fell fairly within the range of the proposed Inquiry. And I have little doubt that as the extent and nature of this information comes to be better known, the dissatisfaction felt at the result of the labours of the Committee will very sensibly abate.

Meanwhile, I am sure at least that whoever may be dissatisfied with the result of the Inquiry, the friends of the Church Education Society ought not to be found among the number. The Committee

was not asked for by them, nor was it granted with any view of investigating their case. It was not instructed to inquire into the grounds of the representations which they had so often made to Parliament, and to report whether the grievance of which they complained was real, and, if so, whether it admitted of a remedy. This was not the object, or any part of the object, for which the Committee was asked and granted. The reasons which led to its appointment had all reference to the National System, and the Board by which it is administered. The Archbishop of Dublin, the oldest and most eminent member of the Board, had lately retired from it ; and had been accompanied, or very speedily followed, by two out of the three lay Commissioners who were members of the Church. The Archbishop had been so steady and zealous a supporter of the system, that the bare fact of his retirement, if no reason for it had been given, would have naturally awakened suspicions that something in the highest degree objectionable must have been done or threatened at the Board, or that he would not have relinquished his place at it. However, all speculation upon the event was cut short, if not absolutely precluded, by an immediate publication of the reasons for his retirement ; by which it appeared that a majority of the Board had passed a resolution which he regarded as intro-

ducing a fundamental change in the System which they had been appointed to administer: that he held that in this proceeding they had not merely gone beyond the legitimate exercise of their powers, but had actually broken faith with Parliament and with the public; and that he felt that he could not acquiesce in such a proceeding and continue a member of the Board, without forfeiting his character as a man of honour or honesty.

It was plainly impossible for Government, under such circumstances, to refuse an inquiry. But as I before said, it was granted, and indeed asked for, without any reference to the Church Education Society. The Committee was appointed expressly to inquire into the working of the National system of Education in Ireland. But it must have been abundantly plain to any one who considered the subject, that, though not expressly included in the object of the proposed Inquiry, yet, in its progress, our Society must unavoidably fall within its range. For the Committee could not but feel it to be their duty to endeavour to ascertain to what extent the National System had failed to accomplish the purposes of its institution; what were the causes of the failure, and how far it admitted of a remedy. And in looking after such points, they would naturally, almost necessarily, come upon the various means by which its deficiencies had been

in any measure supplied. Of these the most important is certainly the Church Education Society. And, as a matter of course, they could not avoid inquiring to some extent into the principles, constitution, and operations of the body, which performs so much of the work that ought to be done by the National Board.

It was not to be doubted, therefore, that the Church Education Society would be among the objects which the proposed Inquiry would embrace. But there seemed to be but little reason to hope for any advantage to the Society from the investigation. For of the one-and-twenty Members of which the Committee consisted, there were but three who were supporters of the Church Education Society. Any one, therefore, who looked at the constitution of the Committee, would have anticipated confidently a Report decidedly unfavourable to the claims of the Society. Nor can it be doubted that, if, antecedently to the examination of the evidence produced, the Committee had proceeded to frame a Report upon the knowledge of the case which they possessed, and their impressions of its merits, a clear majority would have concurred in passing a very unfavourable sentence upon the Society. And considering how very difficult it is to change long-fixed views, and, when men are strongly prejudiced, how slow they are to yield to the force of

facts or of reasoning, and how tenaciously they hold their opinions still in spite of both, there seemed but little ground for hope that any amount of evidence which could be produced would materially abate the strong prejudices against the Society which a large majority of the Committee were known to entertain. The friends of the Society, however confident they might be in the strength of its case, could hardly have promised themselves that the inquiry would have ended without putting on record something condemnatory of the principles of the Society, or unfavourable to its claims.

The bare fact, if there were no more, that no such hostile Report was carried, would have been in itself a very strong proof that the testimony which was brought forward on behalf of the Society, or drawn from the witnesses who appeared on the side of the National Board, must have made a very strong impression in favour of the former,—stronger than any of its friends would have ventured beforehand to expect. But there was a good deal more than this negative proof of the effects which the evidence had produced on the views and feelings of the opponents of the Society who heard it. For a movement was actually made to settle the Education question by concessions, greater or less, to the claims of our Society. On the question, whether such an attempt ought to be made or not,

there was no difference among the Members of the Committee who represented the two great parties of the State, though they were not agreed as to the mode of making it. The noble Lord who was the organ of the Government, suggested that the Commissioners of National Education in this country should be empowered to grant to Church Education Schools all the advantages at present enjoyed by Schools conducted upon the National System, with the exception of money grants for any purpose,—whether for building or for Teachers' salaries. On the other hand, the noble Lord who is at the head of the Opposition proposed, that the Commissioners should be allowed to extend all the advantages now enjoyed by non-vested National Schools to any School which complied with the National System so far as Secular Education was concerned, even though it did not carry out the rules of the Board as to Religious Education.*

I need not at present canvass either of these plans; or enter into any explanation of the causes which prevented either from being carried out. I only advert to them, that you may understand the present position of the question, and also that you may understand how greatly the Inquiry has advanced the cause of the Church Education Society. For that it is to the impression made by the evi-

* Note A. Appendix.

dence given before the Committee that we are to ascribe the attempts made to settle the question, and especially the attempt made on the part of the Government, cannot be doubted. There was in fact no other account to be rendered of it. It is very well known that for many years we had been seeking, Session after Session, to obtain some consideration of our claims, in vain. They not only received none, but they seemed to have no prospect of obtaining any. Something like an admission of their justice indeed was at times extorted from those who opposed them; but no hope was ever held out that the policy which withheld Government from making any concession to them could be changed.

When you consider this, you will better understand what we owe to the late Inquiry. If our case had been brought forward in Parliament last Session, before the Committee had sat, it can hardly be doubted that it would have been dealt with just as it had been on all former occasions. No one can doubt that if, before the Inquiry, we had applied for the very advantages which, after it had taken place, Government proposed to grant to us, they would have been peremptorily refused. No reason for the difference can be assigned but one, viz. that the merits of the case were better understood after the evidence had been gone through,

than before. It would appear that, when the whole case was known, it was felt that the course which had been pursued so long towards the Church Education Society could no longer be persevered in. I will not positively assert that, when it was distinctly exhibited, it was seen by all to be too much at variance with every principle of policy and equity, to be allowed to stand. But I may say that the result of a full investigation of the case, was to convince all parties that the course adopted by successive governments and parliaments ought to be abandoned. By proposing, through their representatives in the Committee, the plans to which I have referred, both the Ministry and the Opposition have borne concurrent testimony, in the most unequivocal form, to the expediency of attempting to settle the question, in the only way in which it can be settled, viz. by conceding to the claims which have been so long put forward by the Church Education Society. And even as to the nature of the concessions to be made to effect the object, there is no great difference between them,—no difference in principle, and no very important difference as to details.

It can hardly be thought that when both the great parties of the State have gone so far towards a settlement of the question, the attempt will not be renewed by either of them. It may be hoped

indeed that they will both unite in bringing about a satisfactory adjustment of it. This is of course the best result that could follow from the investigation. But it is at all events a great advantage, of which it does not seem that we can be defrauded, that, whichever may make the attempt, the other can offer no opposition on the ground of principle, and no very strong opposition as to details.

The consideration of the question is likely to be brought before the House of Commons early next Session; and it is earnestly to be desired that the evidence given before the Committee should be so studied in the interval, that the discussion to which the motion will lead, may be full and satisfactory. It is, of course, of most importance that this preparation should be made by those who are to speak or vote on the occasion. But the amount of information which the public possess upon any question, and the state of public feeling with reference to it, exercise, as is well known, a most important influence upon the deliberations and decisions of Parliament. And it would, therefore, be very desirable indeed, that all thinking persons, all who, by position, or office, or personal character, exert any influence over the opinions of others, whether in a wider or narrower sphere, should employ a part of the intervening time in reading and considering the evidence.

The two volumes in which it is contained are certainly of formidable bulk. But I hope that a Digest of their contents will soon appear, which will so greatly facilitate the use of them that we may not unreasonably hope that very many, both in and out of Parliament,—all indeed who take a real interest in the question, whatever be their view of it,—will so study the case as thoroughly to understand it.

Such a review of the whole evidence will enable the advocates of our Society to maintain its cause with fuller and more exact information than heretofore, and therefore with greater effect. And, moreover, now that the means of acquainting themselves better with the chief facts of the case are placed within every one's reach, I have little doubt that we shall soon find on our side some at least of the many who have hitherto opposed the Society in entire ignorance of the merits of the question. I do not expect that this will be the result as regards all our opponents. There are some whose opinions, whether founded on better information or not, are so fixed, that I cannot hope that the evidence will lead them to regard the views of duty upon which we have been acting, as sound or reasonable. But I do confidently hope that upon very many even of *them*, it will produce the effect which, as you will collect from what I have said, it very manifestly produced

upon several of those who heard it : that is, that it will satisfy them that, whether we are right or wrong, wise or unwise, in refusing to adopt the National System, the refusal ought no longer to exclude us from all aid from the State in carrying on the work of education.

In expecting this effect from the Evidence, I by no means intend to have it understood that it contains anything which will be new to those who have studied the question carefully from the first, and have availed themselves diligently of the means of information upon it which existed before the late Inquiry. I am very sure that such persons will find very little, if anything, in the volumes which can be new to them. But they form a very decided minority on either side of the question. And for others, I have no doubt that there is much in the Evidence which will be both new and strange to them. And I am sure that it will correct some current delusions, which have been made great use of in the controversy that has been so long carried on upon this question, the correction of which, if it fail to lead to a settlement of the question in theory, ought, and with most, I will not say candid, but prudent persons, may be expected to lead to the practical solution of it, to which, as I said, it has already brought some of our opponents.

For the Evidence will show how very far short

of its two great objects the National System has fallen, and will throw not a little light upon the causes of the failure. The system of National Education for Ireland was intended, as its name imports, to educate the Nation,—that is, of course, the very large part of the population whose circumstances made them proper objects of the care and bounty of the State in this matter. It was moreover intended that it should unite in the same schools, children of the different denominations which prevail in the country. And from this effect of the Institution, which was itself very confidently anticipated, the most important benefits were expected to flow. It was hoped that by associating together in early life, the offspring of those who are themselves so widely separated, much would be done to imbue the rising generation with such kindly feelings towards each other, that it might be expected that hereafter society in this country would wear an altered face, and the animosities which have so long disturbed and divided the land, would be gradually softened, and at last disappear. And it was boasted for a good while that it had succeeded in this important object,—that while it was giving a very improved moral and literary education to the poor of the country, it was training them in habits of peace and harmony, which, it was to be hoped, would be strong enough to resist

the dissociating influences to which they were to be exposed in after years. Indeed the success of the experiment in this respect has been again and again made the decisive reason, in the last resort, against consenting to any modification of the System, or even to an inquiry, with a view to determining whether it ought to be modified, so as to allow the Church Education Schools to be connected with it. It was urged most earnestly and successfully upon Parliament, that it ought to do nothing by which any risk would be incurred of interfering with the working of a System, which was not only diffusing through the land the great benefit of sound education, but was uniting, it might be hoped, in lasting bonds, the discordant elements of Irish society.

The friends of the Church Education Society always denied the truth of such representations, whether assertions or assumptions, of the success of the System in this respect. They maintained, on what they regarded as sufficient grounds, that the Schools of the National Board exhibited no such proofs of the harmonizing powers of the System; that in fact, United Education existed in them to a very inconsiderable extent,—to a very much less extent than it was to be found in the Schools of the Church Education Society.

For a good while, however, it was impossible to

bring the statements in favour of the working of the System to a test, so as to force a conviction of their falsehoods upon those who were inclined to believe them to be true. An attempt, indeed, was made very earnestly to obtain official information which would have presented the real state of the case, as it stood at the time. An order was made by the House of Lords in the year 1835,* for a return of the number of Roman Catholics and of Protestants in attendance upon the several National Schools through the Country. But the Commissioners refused to furnish the return, alleged that *it was contrary to the spirit of their instructions to institute such an inquiry* ! Whatever the House may have thought of this singular reply, they did not deem it advisable to enforce their order. And so the public remained without any authentic information on this important point, and the advocates of the National system, both in and out of Parliament, were able to boast of its success in its healing mission, and of the triumphs which it was gaining over the prejudices of religion and race.

This went on until Lord Eglinton became Lord Lieutenant. But during his short Vice-royalty, he called for such Returns, with the additional particulars, of the religion of the Patron or Cor-

* REPORT, Lords' Committee, 1837, PART I. pp. 3, 5. Mr. Carlile's Evidence.

respondent of the School, and whether the School was vested or non-vested. And whether it was that the Commissioners had altered their view of the *spirit of their instructions* since 1835, or that they did not expect that the excuse which the House of Lords acquiesced in, would satisfy the Lord Lieutenant, or that they ascertained by actual experiment, that it would not,—cannot be known. But the more important fact is certain, viz. that the Returns called for, were actually furnished. And though the publication was unaccountably delayed, yet they finally appeared in time to form a part of the Documentary Evidence which was before the Committee.*

They are not so drawn up as to make it easy to obtain from them, and still less to test, all the information which they contain. But there is no difficulty in finding in them a good deal that is important, and in particular they fully vindicate the confident assertions of the supporters of the Church Education Society as to the very limited amount of united education which was to be found in

* These Returns exhibited the state of the National Schools for the half-year ending March 31, 1852. Similar returns, with the addition of the religion of the Master in each School, and of some other particulars, for the half-year ending 31st of March, 1853, were obtained afterwards on the Motion of Lord Clancarty. But as the first are more accessible and better known, they are referred to in the Charge, unless when it is stated that others are used.

the schools of the National Board. Indeed it may be hoped that they will bring to an end, the boastful representations of the success of the system in this respect, in which its advocates so long indulged.

There is scarcely the appearance of United Education in three of the Provinces, and but little even in the remaining one.

In Connaught, the Roman Catholics are to the Protestants in National Schools, in the ratio of about 31 to 1. In Leinster, the ratio is about 37 to 1. And in Munster about 97 to 1.* In the three Provinces about 49 to 1.†

In Ulster, there appears to be something more effected in the way of United Education. The Roman Catholics in the National Schools in that Province are to the members of the Established Church as nearly 5 to 1 ; and to the Presbyterians as 2 to 1. These numbers are far from a fair representation of the actual proportions of the different denominations in the Province. But they are

* In Kilkenny the ratio is about 41 to 1 ; in Carlow, 63 to 1 ; in the Queen's County, 24 to 1 ; in Wexford 63 to 1 ; and in the great county of Cork, above 114 to 1 !

† In the whole kingdom the Roman Catholics in National Schools are to the Protestants (both Established Church and Presbyterians) as above 6.35 to 1. Mr. Carlile, in 1837, calculated the ratio to be 5 to 2. If this were the case, the ratio would have become more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as great as it was 15 years before.

also far from being so extravagantly wide of it, as the numbers which, as we saw, the Returns in the other Provinces exhibit. But, whatever may be the amount of success which these numbers may seem to show the System to have had in securing United Education in that part of Ireland, it is greatly diminished by an inspection of the Returns in detail. It appears that the Protestants, both of the Established Church and Presbyterians, are not distributed through the Schools of the Province in the proportions of 1 to 5 and 1 to 2, respectively, of the Roman Catholics, but that they are chiefly to be found in schools under the management of Protestants, with some preference for those of their own denomination, but with a very decided preference for either, over schools under Roman Catholic management. There is no objection, speaking generally, on the part of the poorer Roman Catholics, when left to themselves, to allow their children to attend schools under Protestant management. But, as is well known, they are not left to themselves in such matters, and in practice they too choose Schools under the direction of members of their own communion. So that when the details are looked into, it is found that a large deduction is to be made from the amount of United Education in Ulster which the general statement of the proportions of the different denominations in

the Returns would seem to show. And when this deduction is fairly made, there will remain to the credit of the System a very small measure of success as regards this object in this Province, to set against its utter failure in this respect in the three other Provinces.

It is so hard indeed now to gainsay the true state of the case, that, as you go through the evidence, you will perceive that the advocates of the National System, for the most part, rather labour to account for the failure than absolutely to deny it. They attempt to show that various causes have been in action to interfere with the fair and natural tendencies of the System, so that it has in fact failed only because it has not had a fair trial!

There is a sense, certainly, in which the National System may be truly said not to have had a *fair trial*. It has for twenty years been abundantly provided with all the means to render it effective that the public purse could supply, while every other system has been left to the limited and precarious support which is to be drawn from voluntary contributions. And while it has been vigorously supported by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy and Priesthood, who exercise such unbounded influence over the great mass of the Roman Catholic population, the whole influence of Government has been exerted to commend it to, if not to force it upon, the Protestants

of the kingdom. Under such circumstances, if it had succeeded, an opponent might seem to have good grounds for refusing to receive its success as a proof of its merits, on the plea that it had not been fairly tried. But it is not easy to see with what show of reason such a plea can be urged by its advocates, to extenuate its failure.

But it would be a mistake to engage in a dispute upon that point. It is entirely beside the question. If the failure of the System in that respect had been pressed as a proof of its unfitness to accomplish United Education, and therefore its unfitness to be a National System of Education, then, perhaps, it might have been pertinently replied that its failure was due to external causes entirely independent of it, and that so it was no proof that it would not have succeeded, if circumstances had been less unfavourable; or that it was less fitted than any other system to attain the objects for which it had been instituted. And in that case we should be called upon to examine the alleged causes, with a view to ascertaining whether they really existed; and whether, if they did, they were sufficient to render an account of what they were put forward to account for. But as the case stands, there is no reason why we should enter into any such discussion. The failure of the system in accomplishing United Education, was not brought forward by its opponents as

an argument against it. Its success in that respect was relied upon by its advocates, as a reason against modifying its rules in any respect. And then it was denied that it had succeeded. The point at issue therefore is the fact of its success. It is not whether and how far its failure is evidence of any defect in the System, either in theory or in practice.- It is, whether it has failed or not. We are therefore not concerned to dispute with those who give reasons for its failure, because in accounting for it they admit the fact, which is all that we want to prove. For if it be true that it has failed in effecting united Education, whatever may have been the cause of the failure, its success in achieving it cannot fairly be made a reason for refusing to modify the System, or to extend aid to Schools carried on upon a different System.

To see its bearing fully, however, upon the Education Question, the fact of the failure of the National System to effect United Education, must be taken in connexion with another fact, viz : the success of the Church Education Society in securing that object. The attendance of children of the Church, upon Church Education Society Schools, is a natural result of the constitution and circumstances of the Society. When their parents can exercise a judgment upon principles, the Society must approve itself to their judgment, as in accordance with the

principles of the Church. And to all, even when they can exercise no such judgment for themselves, the Society is commended by being supported by those in whose principles and judgment they have most confidence. While the Schools have in every locality the same recommendation, being under the patronage and superintendence of the Clergy, and the principal laity of their own creed, those who exercise the greatest and most legitimate influence over them. Nor is it extraordinary that the children of Protestant Dissenters should attend these schools in considerable numbers. They are not required to learn the Formularies of the Church. And their parents, generally speaking, desire that they should read the Bible ; nor have they often any objection that they should receive instruction in the Bible from members or ministers of the Church,—as, at the Church Education Schools, all children in attendance are obliged to do. So far therefore, there is nothing in the attendance on those schools for which every one was not prepared. But it would have been confidently anticipated by those who framed the rule of the National System, and by those who supported it as essential to secure United Education, that few or no Roman Catholic children would be found in such schools. The fact, however, is, as you are aware, that the number of Roman Catholic children, who receive education in

our Schools, is not far short of one half the number of children of the Established Church in attendance upon them. And when this takes place, notwithstanding the most active and indeed violent efforts of the Roman Catholic Clergy to prevent it, we may conjecture, how very large the numbers would be, if the people were left to themselves.

But taking the facts as they stand, without any speculation as to what might have been the state of the case under different circumstances, we see how little grounds they leave for upholding the distinctive Rule of the National System, as securing United Education, and essential to secure it. For while we see, on the one hand, that that Rule does not effect the object, we see, on the other, that United Education exists to a very considerable extent, not only without the Rule, but under a directly opposite Rule.

The amount of United Education which is to be found in the schools of the Church Education Society is so contrary to the theory on which the National System was framed, and on which it is upheld by its advocates, that it is not surprising that they take no small pains to get rid of it, or explain it away. It is not directly stated, that the returns of the Society which exhibits such results are false, but, with whatever courtesy, some suspicion of their accuracy is at times intimated. And

some who do not question their correctness, suggest various modes of accounting for the fact established by them, which, as they think, go a good way to deprive it of all value in the argument,—as, that it is due to the active exertion of landlord influence ; or to doles of food and clothes given at the schools ; or to the youth of the children in attendance, which induces the Priests to wink at their attendance, as thinking that what they hear and see at that period of life will make no permanent impression on them.

How satisfactorily these attempts to detract from the success of the Church Education Society are met, you will see by referring to the Evidence.* But, even if they were well-founded, they would leave untouched the amount of the Education of the country, which is carried on by our Society. And this fact, even were we unable to show that it has effected, to a great extent, really united Education, would be of very great importance with reference to the question—How far the System, which is called National, is really entitled to the name ?

There is not much doubt in Ireland as to the true answer to this question. But it has been put upon record very distinctly, in the evidence taken in the

* For particular places, see EVIDENCE Part I. p. 650., Venerable Archdeacon of Waterford, 4907—4915. p. 721, Rev. J. Booker. 5489, 5491, and for the whole Country, Dr. Trench, 10059, 10060.

course of the late Inquiry. It appeared that, after more than twenty years' trial of the system, considerably less than one hundred clergymen of the established Church had connected their schools with the National Board ! * that is, less than one twentieth part of the clergy had availed themselves of the great advantages which the Board holds out to all who feel able to connect themselves with it ! How is this strange fact to be accounted for ?

Three-fourths of the entire body are known to be prevented from connecting themselves with the System by conscientious objections to its fundamental rule. But then, a fourth of the whole number remains. They have no such objections. Why is it that not more than a fifth of this residue are found connected with the Board ? Are the rest withheld from forming this connexion by lingering or recurring scruples as to the principles of the System ? or by the determined repugnance of their people to it ? Or are there difficulties in the way of Clergymen of the Church, when they attempt to form such a connexion, which the Roman Catholic Priests have not to encounter ? Whatever be the mode of accounting for it, the fact is certain, that, at the end of twenty years, nineteen twentieths of the Clergy of the Established Church

* The number was 81 ! The whole number of the Clergy is 2020.

find themselves unable to make any use of this Institution, to aid them in carrying on the Education of the Poor! Surely, however it is to be accounted for, this is not merely to be regarded as an extraordinary fact, but as having a very important bearing upon the question, what are the claims of the National System to the name by which it is distinguished, and, what is more important, to the exclusive patronage of the State, which, under the character of THE NATIONAL SYSTEM, it enjoys?

But this question is illustrated further, by the evidence which was given of the extent to which the work of the Education of the Poor is carried on, independently of this great National Institution. It appeared incidentally, that besides the National Schools, there are schools for the education of the poor, in connexion with all the leading denominations into which the country is divided. Some of the Roman Catholics,—some of the Presbyterians,—and all the Wesleyan Methodists, as well as the great body of the Church in Ireland, refuse to connect their schools with the National Board. But there was no evidence given of the statistics of any of these voluntary agencies, by which a portion of the education of the country is carried on, except that which is connected with the Church. And it appeared that in the year to which we have

confined ourselves, the schools of the Church Education Society were, in number, more than one-third of the National Schools; and that the number educated in the former was more than one fifth of the number educated in the latter.

Here is, certainly, a very important integral portion of the Education of the country carried on in entire independence of the great Institution which monopolizes the support of the State.

And this state of things is not merely to be regarded as an inconvenient anomaly. It is the source of wide-spreading and various evils. It makes a substantive addition to the dissensions (already far too numerous) of our portion of the empire, and embitters some of those which were before in existence. It has introduced into the Church itself a most unseemly and injurious division, affecting all its orders, Prelates, Clergy, and Laity. And it deteriorates the Education of the Country, and impedes its progress, because while it deprives the State of the co-operation of those who would confessedly have been the most zealous, able, and efficient agents in carrying out a system of National Education, it leaves them to carry on the part of the work which falls to them, with insufficient means, and, of course, less effectively than if they were connected with the State system, and enjoyed the benefits of such a connexion. And, moreover,

it has placed the Church and the State in an unnatural and most disadvantageous relation to each other,—in a position not merely of separation, but of antagonism ;—for, while the State is offended at what it regards as the opposition of the Church ; the Church is aggrieved at what it feels to be the injustice of the State, by which it is left without any aid from the public funds, to discharge a duty, in the right discharge of which the State is deeply interested. And these feelings on both sides are not merely kept up, but further liable to be continually exasperated, because the Church is obliged to bring its grievances year after year before the public in England and Ireland, not only to justify itself for the position which it maintains, but to procure funds to enable it to discharge the duty which rests upon it of giving Education to the children of the Poor.

This is a process which is evidently calculated to widen still further the separation which so unhappily exists between the Government and the Church. But however much this effect is to be lamented, so long as a great majority of the Church are cut off from all aid from the State in carrying out the work of Education, it seems unavoidable that the process should go on.

No one can contemplate such evils, without feeling a desire to ask, How may they be remedied ?

How may the Church and State, which are so unhappily divided upon this great subject, be brought back to the more natural and wholesome relation to each other in which they before stood ?

This is an important practical question. But it is plain that it cannot be answered satisfactorily, without looking back for a little upon the origin of the division, and considering how the Church and State became separated, and in a degree opposed, upon a question on which they were so long in harmony, and upon which the best interests of both require that they should always be perfectly united?

Many will be impatient of such a review, however brief, because they believe themselves to be thoroughly acquainted with all that it can bring before them. It happens generally, when a controversy has been kept up for a long time, that very many imagine that they must understand what they have so often heard discussed and settled by persons who appeared to have no misgivings as to their perfect understanding of all that they were talking about. The protracted controversy on the Education Question supplies no exception to this general rule. And one continually hears the most decided judgments pronounced upon it, in the most manifest ignorance of its real merits, and even of the actual facts of the case. However, even if such a review

could teach us nothing, it is necessary, in order to present distinctly, and to vindicate, the answer we have to give to the important practical question just proposed, viz., How may this unhappy division between the Church and the State be healed?

When the State first acknowledged the obligation of making provision for the Education of the children of the Poor in Ireland, it understood the obligation to extend to their *religious*, no less than to their *secular* Education. And while such were its views of its duty, it naturally felt bound, in providing for the education of the young, to employ the agency of the Church, which it had chosen as the exponent of its own religious principles, and had made, as far as it could, the religious instructor of the Nation. And, accordingly, the first attempt made by the State to discharge the important duty of educating its Poor was by founding and aiding Schools, in which the religious education was absolutely under the direction of the Clergy of the Established Church, and in which all the children were instructed, not only in the Holy Scriptures, but also in the Catechism and Formularies of the Church.

This state of things lasted for a good while; but it was not suffered to exist long without oppo-

sition. It was arraigned as limiting, unwisely as well as unfairly, the connexion of the State with the education of the people. It was argued, chiefly on behalf of the Protestant Dissenters, that there were many who desired education for their children, but were unable to procure it for them, and who were prevented from availing themselves of that which the State aided in giving, because, though very willing that their children should be instructed in the Bible, they were unwilling that they should learn the formularies of the Church. And that thus, by confining its aid to Church-schools, the State cut off altogether from the benefit of education many who were the proper objects of its bounty and care; or left them to the kind of education that the poor can procure for themselves: and, in either case, cut itself off from all direction or control over their education.

These were felt to be evils. And to obviate them, it was resolved, that the principle by which the connexion of the State with the Education of the Poor had been regulated, should be enlarged: that while Church-schools should be aided as before, aid should thenceforth be given also to Scriptural Schools,—Schools not connected with the Church,—in which Church-formularies were not taught, but in which the Holy Scriptures were

read daily by all the children in attendance who were capable of reading.

This settlement of the question seemed to be perfectly satisfactory. But, after another interval, this enlarged basis of State Education was complained of, as still too narrow; and a further extension of it was demanded.

It was urged, on behalf of the Roman Catholics, that still many poor children were left altogether without education,—or were constrained to obtain education of a very inferior character to that given in Schools aided by the State,—because their parents would not permit them to attend Schools where they were required to read the Bible. It was acknowledged that this requirement stood upon a very different footing from the one by which State-assistance to education was at first limited; and that, in reason, objections against reading the Holy Scriptures had much less claim to consideration, than objections against learning any human deductions from them. But still, it was argued, that it was the duty of the State to consider the question as a practical one; and that, as, in practice, the same evil results were found to follow from enforcing the Scriptures, which had before accrued from the enforcement of Church-formularies, there were the same grounds, in public policy, for relaxing the later condition, which had

before been regarded as sufficient to warrant the relaxation of the earlier one.

This reasoning, seconded by political influences, to which it is unnecessary here to advert more particularly, prevailed after a time; and it was resolved that the principle on which aid was given by the State to the Education of the Poor in Ireland should be again altered.

Whether this concession to the clamours against the System by which public aid was limited to Church-schools and Scriptural Schools was, or was not, a departure from the duty of the State, is a very important question. But it is one which has been often discussed, and in which we have now no practical concern. Waiving that question, however, altogether, and supposing the Government to have been perfectly right in the resolution to which they came, there can be no reasonable doubt, I think, that in the mode in which the resolution was carried out, a very grievous error was committed.

The grievance of Roman Catholics was, not that Church-Schools and Scriptural Schools received aid from the State, but that this aid was confined to such Schools : and that so, as Roman Catholics in great numbers refused to go to either, they were to a great extent excluded from all benefit from the public funds appropriated to the Education of the Poor. How far what was complained of was a

grievance, and whether, if it were, it was one which the State could redress consistently with its duty to God, were questions upon which one easily understands that opposite answers should have been returned by thinking persons. But it does not seem easy to understand, when once it was settled that the grievance complained of was to be redressed, how there should be any doubt or difference as to the proper mode of redressing it. That those who were aggrieved by having State-aid confined within too narrow limits to comprehend them, were to be relieved, as those who had before suffered in the same way had been, viz. by enlarging the limits,—by relaxing or taking away the condition which excluded them,—was too obvious, one would have thought, to be overlooked or questioned. And if that plain and easy course had been taken, the grievance complained of by the Roman Catholics would have been removed, without inflicting a similar grievance upon Protestants.

I do not mean that such a settlement of the question would have caused no dissatisfaction to Protestants, or even that it would have given rise to no opposition on their part. Very many,—a large majority of the Church,—would have felt that the State was departing from its duty to God, in granting aid to schools from which the Bible was excluded. Very many, therefore, would have felt that it was their

duty to endeavour to prevent the State from taking such a course ; and that, if they failed in this altogether, they ought to endeavour to persuade it to retrace its steps ; and that, failing in this too, they were bound to bear their testimony by a public protest against the course adopted by the State. Very many would have felt bound to go so far. But very few would have felt that they ought to go farther, and to withdraw their Schools from connexion with the State, because other Schools were aided, to which they thought the State ought not to give assistance. That some would have done so, I doubt not. But the great majority would have felt that the duty of the Church was to advise the State in matters of duty, to use its best exertions to keep the State in the right path, and when it turned aside, to endeavour to bring it back again ; and, in the last resort, honestly to testify against its errors, if it obstinately persevered in them. But they would have also felt that the Church was not bound to separate from the State in this matter of Education, because the State disregarded its advice and its protests, and that it was not warranted in doing so : that nothing could warrant such a separation but the imposition by the State of some unlawful condition of connexion.

This has been always the view of duty which the Church in Ireland has put forward : that we

are not to sever from the State because it goes wrong, unless it requires us to go wrong with it. But this unhappily, and most unnecessarily for its object, was just what the State did. It was not content with widening, as it had before done, the conditions on which aid was to be given to Schools, so as to admit those to which it desired to extend assistance. It altered them altogether. A general system of Education was to be introduced for the whole Country, under the name of the National System of Education for Ireland; and a Body of Commissioners appointed to carry out the System, under the name of the National Board; and through this body alone, all the aid in future to be given to the education of the Poor in Ireland was to be dispensed.

Sweeping as these changes were, they would, soon at least, have been submitted to. But the authors of the New System did not stop here. Having resolved that the principle on which State-aid had been given to Education should be changed,—that it should not be *Religious Truth*, as drawn from Scripture by the National Church, nor the HOLY SCRIPTURES themselves, as the source of all religious truth, but that it should be “Religious Liberty,” they devised a Rule, which in their judgment was eminently fitted to carry out the new principle: and the adoption of this Rule was

made the necessary condition of obtaining any share in the funds appropriated by Parliament to the Education of the Poor in Ireland. And so the Church Schools and the Scriptural Schools, which had been before assisted by the State, were thenceforth to be excluded from all aid, unless they abandoned their own Rules with regard to Religious Education, and adopted the Rule of the National Board.

This Rule became soon the most important feature of the New System. It was the only part of it that was absolutely enforced. The course of Education, given in the Model Schools of the Board, might or might not be adopted in the Schools in connexion with it. The Books published or sanctioned by the Board might or might not be used in them. Any religious Education (of course in accordance with the Rule) or none, might be given in the Schools. But in all of them the Rule must be adopted.

By this Rule, all children in attendance upon the National Schools were to receive all the benefits of the Secular Education given in them, but none were to be required to receive, or to be present at, any religious instruction, (and it was carefully noted that this prohibition extended to the reading of the Holy Scriptures) to which their Parents objected : and every Patron who connected his School with

the National Board was required to enter into an engagement to observe this Rule.

Into this engagement, the great majority of the Church in Ireland, both lay and clerical, from the first absolutely refused, and still stedfastly refuse, to enter. And they have distinctly declared the ground of their refusal. They regard an engagement to withhold religious instruction from any who fall within our reach as an unlawful one,—as binding us to abstain from doing that which every Christian is bound to do. And the Clergy, in addition, hold that *they* are restrained from entering into such an engagement by special obligations imposed upon them both at Ordination and at Institution.* They claim for themselves the right, because they feel it to be their duty, to give religious instruction to all to whom they give secular instruction. And upon this point they declare that they can make no compromise,—that they will submit to no restrictions as to the religious teaching which they are to give in their Schools. They have felt able to concede so much to the religious differences of our country, as not to require children of dissenters, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics, in attendance upon their Schools, to learn the Church Catechism and Church Formularies; in both of which children of the

* Appendix. Note B.

Church are instructed. But they feel bound to require all children in attendance, who are capable of reading intelligently, to receive daily instruction in the Holy Scriptures. They do not mean or wish to judge their brethren who take a different view of their duty, but for themselves they feel that they cannot waive or relax this requirement, without violating their duty both to God and man. They feel that they are bound to do homage to the Word of God, not in words only, but in all their acts,—not only to claim reverence for it from others, but to render reverence to it themselves. Being thoroughly convinced that the Holy Scriptures ought to be the basis of the education of the people, they feel that they are bound to publish and to maintain this great principle. And they feel that they cannot consistently or effectually maintain it, if they suffer the Scriptures to be thrust out of their proper place in the education which they themselves give to the people. And moreover, they feel that upon the Reformed Church in these realms, God has laid, in an especial manner, the office of upholding the Protestant principle of the right and duty of all men to read the Bible ; and the office of protesting against and opposing the Roman Catholic principle which invests some men with the power of preventing others from exercising this right, and discharging this duty. And they feel that if they

adopted the Rule of the National Board, they would be giving currency to this false and destructive principle (in accommodation to which the Rule was framed) and that, whatever they might say against it, they would be practically aiding those who were enforcing it. And they feel further, that in so far recognizing this false principle of Rome, they would be running a fearful risk of impairing the reverence with which the children of their own communion are taught to regard the Word of God, and of confusing and weakening their sense of the obligation of reading it.

These were from the first, as they now are, the feelings and convictions of the greater part of the Church in Ireland, both Clergy and Laity. Into the engagements required by the National Board, they absolutely refused, as they still stedfastly refuse, to enter. And when it became plain that the Government and the Legislature were resolved not to alter this Rule, they formed a Society, to aid in carrying on the Education of the Poor, on the principles by which they felt obliged to abide,—laying down as its Fundamental Rule, that while its schools were to be open to children of all religious denominations, and none but the children of the Church were to be required to learn its Catechism and Formularies, *all children in attendance were to be daily instructed in the Holy Scriptures.*

The views of duty on which the founders of this Society have acted, have been assailed as utterly unreasonable; and the Rule which is grounded upon them, as a gross violation of the rights of conscience. It is said, that they fell into the grievous mistake of inferring, that because it was the right and duty of every one to read the Bible, it was *their* right and duty to compel every one to read the Bible, without regard to what might be his own wishes or the wishes of his parents: and that, such being their views of rights and duties—their own and others'—it is not surprising that the Rule, which was grounded upon them, should be, as it is, unjust, and uncharitable, and unchristian in its character.

To this it may be replied, that, whether this description of the Rule in question be fair or unfair, the assumption that it is grounded upon any such notions of rights and duties as are ascribed to the founders and supporters of the Church Education Society, is utterly without foundation. They assume no right to force others to do their duty. They merely assert their own right to refuse to submit to any Rule which would oblige them to violate their own duty. They do not claim, or desire to possess, the power of forcing religious instruction upon any one. They do not attempt or wish to give religious instruction to any but those who

receive it voluntarily. They throw open their Schools, as they do their Churches, to all who please to enter them. But they employ neither fraud nor force,—physical or moral force,—to allure or to drive any into either. But in their Schools as in their Churches, they claim the right to give to every one who enters them, not the religious instruction which he may wish to receive, but that which they feel it to be their duty to give.

As to what that is, they have left no room for mistake or uncertainty. Their fundamental rules are very distinctly expressed, and they have been fully published, so as to inform every one beforehand of the nature and extent of the religious education which is to be given to all who attend their schools. And it is to be presumed that every one who, after this warning, enters a Church Education School, does so, because he is willing to receive, or those who have the control over him are willing that he should receive, the religious instruction that is given in it. And there is no reason whatever to doubt that such is actually the case, and that all who are unwilling to be instructed in the Holy Scriptures remain away from such Schools, and seek instruction elsewhere. None therefore of those who are receiving religious instruction in Church Education Schools are to be regarded as receiving it by compulsion. The Fundamental Rule of the Society

was not designed to exercise, nor does it exercise compulsion upon any. It was intended to protect the founders of the Society, and those patrons and superintendents who felt with them, from being compelled to give education in a form, which was contrary to their conscientious views of their duty. This was its design, and this is its effect.

Indeed those who assail this Rule most violently, and arraign its framers and upholders of arrogance, intolerance, tyranny, and so forth, are very often, it is to be presumed, but little aware how far their denunciations reach. For the principle of the Rule in question is the very one upon which all the Societies for carrying out the Education of the Poor in England whose schools receive aid from the State—the Societies which represent the Church, the Protestant Dissenters, and the Roman Catholics, in England,—have framed their rules. They differ from each other as to the religious education which they give. But they agree with each other, and with the Church Education Society, in this: that, the religious instruction which they give is not that which the State prescribes, or that which parents demand for their children, or that which children ask for themselves, but that which they think they ought to give. And in their case, the claim to regulate the religious education given in their Schools by their own principles is acquiesced

in by the State, and aid is given to Schools in connexion with all of them, without requiring them to abandon their respective Rules, and to adopt one common Rule prescribed by the State, as a condition for receiving its aid.

This is a measure of inequality which it seems hard to justify, and of which we seem to have good cause to complain. But I do not refer to the fact here, to show how hardly we are treated by the State, but to abate the severity of the harsh judgments which are so freely passed upon the Fundamental Rule of our Society, by many who are wholly unconscious that, in condemning us, they are censuring others, to whom they have no thought of ascribing any thing wrong. The fact, however, is, that the Rule of our Society which is so vehemently assailed, is really, in principle, the Rule of all the Societies which represent the various religious denominations in England, all of which receive aid from the State,—and that therefore we cannot be accused of intolerance, arrogance, and injustice, without accusing at the same time of the same offences, the Church, and the great body of Protestant Dissenters, and the Roman Catholics, in England, and moreover bringing in the State as their abettors. And this fact supplies an argument *ad verecundiam*, which, it may be hoped, will not be lost upon such of our assailants as have any por-

tion of the quality to which such arguments address themselves.

And the last Session furnished us with a very strong additional argument of the same class. A remarkable Petition, on behalf of our Society, was presented by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the House of Lords, and referred by the House to the Education Committee. It was from "the Clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland residing in England," and was signed by 5414 ministers of all ranks in the Church,—Deans, Archdeacons, Canons, Prebendaries, and Parochial Clergymen. And,—what was even more important than the intermixture of ranks in the Church which the signatures exhibited,—they comprehended all the shades of opinion which the Church contains within its pale. So that I believe that if 5000 names had been selected from the CLERGY LIST with a view to the object, they could not have formed a better representation of the whole body of the Clergy in England, than the Petitioners actually did. And this large portion of the English Branch of the Church, not only express their cordial sympathy with their brethren in Ireland, who have had to carry on the work of Education under great difficulties and discouragements, but also their entire concurrence in the views of their duty upon which the Irish clergy have acted, who have

encountered all those difficulties and hardships rather than connect their schools with the National Board. They testify concerning that portion of the Church in Ireland, that "in their stedfast refusal to connect themselves with the National Board, under conditions which would prevent them *from instructing in the Holy Scriptures, every child in attendance*, they have only acted in accordance with the principles of the Church, and in strict fulfilment of their Ordination Vows."

If therefore the Church in Ireland has taken an erroneous view of its duty in this matter, it is not singular in its error. All religious denominations in England which have organized Societies for the Education of the Poor act upon the same principle. And more than one third of the whole body of the English Clergy, as has just been stated, who have reconsidered the question, with special reference to Ireland, have deliberately given the stamp of their approbation to the course which their Irish brethren have taken, and to the principles on which they have vindicated it.

This is testimony on behalf of the great majority of the Church in Ireland, which will make most modest men hesitate a little before they condemn the principles on which we have been acting. But, whether our view of duty be right or wrong, Government and Parliament ought to consider that

they have to deal with the fact, that it is conscientiously held by the great majority of the Irish Church ; that it has hitherto prevented them from adopting the National System of Education for Ireland ; and that they are as unshaken in their view of their duty, and as steadfast in their resolution to act upon it, as they have ever been at any former period. Upon these points, the evidence leaves no doubt. It seems clear, therefore, that if the Rule of the National System of Education be retained, there is no reasonable ground to hope that the great body of the Irish Church will recede from the position which they have so long held in relation to it. And their maintenance of this position is so fraught with evils,—so injurious to the cause of Education, and to the peace, and with the peace, to all the best interests of the Church, and we may add, of the country too,—that no wise Government will acquiesce in the continuance of such a state of things, without considering whether there is not some mode of putting an end to it. And it seems impossible that any one can engage honestly in this inquiry, without being soon satisfied that it is not merely practicable, but easy, to bring these evils to an end. For I feel assured that such an inquiry would soon show that there is no good reason why the Rule, which first drove the supporters of the Church Education Society into their

present position, in relation to the National System, and which, as long as it exists, will keep them there, should not be rescinded.

The Rule in question seems to have been devised by the Founders of the System of National Education, under a partial and imperfect view of the circumstances for which they had to provide. Their sole object appears to have been that the New System should afford to all the benefits of general Education, in such a way that no parent should be prevented from availing himself of them for his children by any apprehension that they would, at the same time, receive any religious Education of which he disapproved. And the means by which this object was to be secured was by making the Rule obligatory on all National Schools. It was confidently expected that the effect of this Rule, thus enforced, would have been, that any parent, whatever were his religious persuasion, would, without fear or scruple, send his child to any National School, whatever were the religious persuasion of the Patron or the Schoolmaster.

That it has not had this effect has been most clearly proved. That, even when parents have no objection *on principle* to the System, they are reluctant to send their children to Schools under the management of persons of a different creed from their own, and more particularly under a

teacher of a different creed, has been very distinctly proved. And that hence the System is tending more and more to become denominational, is an ascertained fact.

But upon that point I need not insist. What I wish here to note is, that if the Rule had been perfectly successful for the object for which it was framed, the object itself was too limited. The problem is a more complex one than the framers of the Rule proposed to themselves. It is not enough that the Rule protects the conscience of the parent, or of the child who is to be educated. It must offer no violence to the conscience of the Patron who is to direct and superintend the education to be given, or the system cannot be a National one. Whether this ought to have been foreseen or not, is a question of no great importance. That it is really the case, experience has most conclusively shown.

Whether statesmen ought to have known beforehand or not, that they had to provide for both objects, they can hardly now be ignorant that such is the case. Whether the object for which they attempted to provide is or is not the more important of the two, it is out of place here to inquire. If it appear clearly that we must make a choice between them, it will be very useful and very necessary to determine which of them is the

more important. But it is premature to discuss that question until we have first inquired whether we may not secure both : because the answer to this latter question may plainly render the consideration of the other altogether unnecessary.

This is the form in which the question ought, at least first, to be proposed. And in this form we can answer the question in the affirmative, on the sure ground of actual experience. In England as well as in Ireland, the State had to solve the problem, How may the Education of the Poor be aided by the public funds, so as to carry out fully the principle of " Religious Liberty ? " and not theory but the force of circumstances brought about a solution of it in England in which both the objects referred to in the question are actually attained.

In England as in Ireland, the aid given by the State to Education had been confined to Church Schools and to Scriptural Schools. And in the former country as in the latter, though at a later date, it was resolved to enlarge the conditions on which State-assistance was given to Education, so as to extend the benefits of such assistance to the Roman Catholics, many of whom objected to having their children instructed in the Bible. So far the case was like our own. But happily for England, the correspondence goes no farther. That the System in operation in Ireland was not also introduced into Eng-

land did not arise from any doubts on the part of our Statesmen that the Irish system was the best. They make no secret of their preference for it. But happily in England they could not act upon their own views. The Church, and the Protestant Dissenters, who prize and reverence the Word of God, were so strong in England, that the attempt to introduce such a system there was plainly hopeless. And, accordingly, it was not made. The object proposed in both countries was the same. And I purposely abstain from saying any thing about its merits or demerits. But the mode of effecting it in Ireland was rash and violent, while that in England might be called wise and temperate, if it had been the fruit of choice and not of necessity. No change was made there beyond what the object required. The conditions on which aid was given by the State were not wholly altered, they were only enlarged. So that the actual relations of the State to the Education of the Country were extended, not dissolved. Aid was to be given to existing Church Schools, and to Scriptural Schools, as before. Nor was it to be denied to Schools thereafter to be established upon Church principles or Scriptural principles. The only alteration was, that it was to be given to Schools conducted upon different principles, and especially to Roman Catholic Schools, not only without re-

quiring them to conform to any prescribed rules with respect to religious Education, but without requiring them to render any account whatever of the amount or nature of the religious Education which they gave.

This is the plan which was adopted in England, and which actually obtains there now. It is thus that the principle of "Religious Liberty" is carried out there.

No attempt is made there to force all Patrons to adopt the same Rule for Religious Education in their Schools, in order that every School may be one to which every Parent may send his children, without any fears that they will be subject to any religious teaching of which he disapproves. The same end is accomplished in another way. To Schools under Patrons of different religious principles, in which the religious instruction differs in kind and measure, according to the principles and views of the Patrons, aid is given by the State without any attempt to interfere with their rules in that matter. And thus Schools differing in this respect are multiplied, so that every Parent, whatever may be his religious views, is able to choose a School in which the religious teaching is such as he has no objection that his child should receive.

This mode of protecting the rights of conscience

is inferior to the mode adopted in Ireland, in directness and uniformity and simplicity; and it therefore—as is to be expected—stands much lower in the estimation of theorists in Education. But it has great advantages of a kind which ought to commend it to all sober-minded and practical men.

In the first place, it not only protects the consciences of those who seek Education, but it respects the consciences of those who give it. And so England has been preserved from the Education War which has so long disturbed Ireland. And the English branch of the Church has escaped the unseemly divisions under which ours has suffered so severely and so long. And it has been spared other evils, incident to the position into which the greater part of the Church here has been driven by the Irish System, and which at least as large a proportion of the Church in England would have assumed, if a similar System had been introduced there.

All these advantages, both to the Church and to society at large,—for such, immunity from the evils under which we have been suffering, may be fairly regarded,—England owes to its resolution not to allow itself to be made the theatre of the great Educational Experiment to which Ireland has been subjected. And the cause of Education in England has reaped no less important benefits

from maintaining there the separate Societies by which Education had been carried on, with their different rules and systems, instead of suffering them to be broken up, in order to supply their place by a single body administering a single System, to which all candidates for State assistance are required to conform. Under the relation to the State, which they have happily preserved, Patrons are allowed to carry on Schools upon different rules as to religious education: and the result is, that each is carrying out education on the principles which he approves, and therefore is carrying it out cordially and energetically. But when the adoption of a particular Rule as to religious education is enforced, as a condition for receiving State assistance, not only will many be obliged to forego all such aid from being unable to adopt the Rule, but of those who do conform to the condition, there may be, and probably will be, many who are carrying out education on principles which they neither like nor approve, but who submit to the condition, as the only way of obtaining the means of carrying on education at all. In such cases the superintendence cannot be expected to be other than languid and inefficient.

And here again we may appeal to experience. The contrast between Patrons who work a system of which they cordially approve, and Patrons who are

working one which they only tolerate, is most strikingly exhibited in Ireland. We have evidence on the one hand of the very great advantages which, in the midst of so much that is very unfavourable in their circumstances, the Church Education Schools derive from the active and zealous superintendence of the local Patrons throughout the kingdom, and especially the Parochial Clergy, upon whom, of course, a large share of the duties of superintendence rests. Upon this point, you will find the evidence to fall in with and confirm what you all know to be the truth.* While you will also find that there is distinct and multiplied testimony to the extent to which the great and varied advantages which the National Schools possess are qualified by the nature of the superintendence which is exercised over them. How careless and inefficient it is, speaking generally of course, there is abundant evidence, both documentary and oral.† And, what is well worthy of remark is, that there is direct testimony to the fact that this character applies not only to the Roman Catholic, but (again, of course speaking generally,) even to Protestant superintendence also‡, which has earned so differ-

* EVIDENCE, 1854. *Right Hon. Alexander MacDonnell*, 1960. *Rev. T. Campbell*, 8260,—8265. *Rev. Dr. Trench*, 10,049,—10,058.

† EVIDENCE, *R. Sullivan, Esq.*, 2921. *Ven. E. A. Stopford*, 4130—4132. *Rev. Dr. Trench*, as before. *Dr. Newell*, 10,225.

‡ EVIDENCE, 1854. *Dr. Newell*, 10,226.

ent a character in connexion with Church Education Schools.

How can this be accounted for, except in the way before suggested, viz. that the System is neither valued nor approved by the Patrons who adopt it in their Schools, but that it is taken up from necessity or for convenience, and therefore worked without spirit or zeal.*

This seems the necessary result of an attempt to force one united System upon the country, in the place of the different Systems which those who are zealous in the cause of education in different communions, have devised and carried out for themselves. In such a System, religion must, for the sake of union, be excluded altogether from the regular business of the school, or can only enter it in a diluted shape, in which no objection can be made to it by any of the various religious denominations into which the country is divided. Every thing that might be felt to bear hard upon any of these various sects,—every thing that has been used in controversy against any of them—must gradually be dropped out of the religious teaching in such a System, when there is any religious teaching as a part of the general education of the schools: and this is

* See on this point the part of Dr. Newell's Evidence last referred to.

a process which must end in divesting the Religious teaching of all that is distinctive in Christianity.

Such a system, one would say, can hardly satisfy serious-minded men. Religion ought not only to form the basis of Education, and to be a substantive part of it, but it ought to pervade the whole instruction given in the schools. It ought to be open to those who direct the education of the young to introduce religious lessons, religious sentiments, religious principles as they see occasion ;—whether they command or forbid, commend or reprove, they ought to be able to refer freely to the Scriptures for unerring and authoritative rules of life and principles of action.* And unless

* The following seems a very striking illustration of the disadvantages of the restraints imposed in such cases by the Rule of the National System.

“In what respect, supposing you were the patron of a National School, would you be debarred from giving to the Protestant children in the school any religious instruction you might desire ?

“I make a great distinction between the school-house and the school. I believe that in a National School no religious instruction can be given. It is permitted to be given in the school-house after the National School has been dismissed ; the school consisting of the children, and the school-house being the place where the school is held. I believe that the National System does not permit any religious instruction to be given in the National School.

“Is that an answer to my question, as showing in what manner you are debarred from giving any amount of religious instruction you think necessary to the children of your own flock ?

“I am debarred during those four hours from giving the instruction which circumstances might call upon me to give. For

when their minds are warped by theories, or so dazzled by the prospects of beneficial results, as to lose sight of the cost at which they are purchased, serious-minded men will have too deep a sense of the infinite importance of possessing and exercising this liberty ever to consent to surrender it.

And accordingly two members of the present government have publicly declared that the earnest religious feeling of England would be an insurmountable barrier to the introduction of a united system of Education there.* A united system must either refuse any place to religious instruction, in the general business of its schools, or only admit it in the clipped and mutilated form that we have described. And such a system, these high

example ; on one occasion, on entering my school, the mistress complained to me of two children who had been three or four times guilty of stealing the school-requisites. It being notorious to the school, I felt it my duty publicly to take notice of it, and I trust as a Christian minister I rebuked those children, and administered Christian instruction to them. Had my school been under the National Board, I could not have given that instruction then, it not being the hour for religious instruction ; and had those children been the children of parents who prohibited them from receiving instruction from me, I could not have given it to them at all. I object to being bound by the law to keep my mouth, as a minister of Christ, closed for any portion of the day, and not to give that peculiar religious instruction which my duty as a minister of Christ calls upon me to give, under all circumstances, in obedience to the command : ‘ Be instant in season and out of season.’ ”—EVIDENCE, 1854, *Rev. T. Campbell*, 8409, 8410.

* Lord John Russell, and Sir George Grey.

authorities declare, and no doubt truly declare, that, "the earnest religious feeling of England" would repudiate.

But the eminent persons who state this fact, and apparently with a full measure of sympathy in the religious feeling they ascribe to their countrymen, are amazed that Ireland does not unanimously and thankfully accept what England would indignantly reject. They perhaps thought, that whatever religious feeling of the same kind may exist among us is combined with so little political power, that it need not be regarded in devising a scheme of Education for our country. But we have reason to be very thankful that the trial has proved that there is enough "earnest religious feeling" in our branch of the Church, to ensure the rejection of a scheme which does violence to our conscientious convictions of our duty. We cannot, like our brethren in England, prevent the introduction of such a scheme into the country. But we can, no less than they, keep ourselves pure from all participation in it. And this, the great majority of the Irish portion of the Church resolved from the first to do. In acting upon this resolution, they have had various trials to encounter, and have had various and strong temptations to abandon it. But, with a few defections from time to time, they have hitherto stedfastly adhered to it. And I am con-

fidant, that as long as the System patronized by the State retains the restrictions on religious instruction to which they from the first refused to submit, so long the great body of our Clergy and Laity will go on to sacrifice all the advantages of a connexion with the State, rather than purchase them, by entering into an engagement to comply with the Rule which imposes those restrictions.

But it is to be hoped, that when the question comes to be calmly considered, it will be seen, that, while there are the most urgent reasons for rescinding the Rule, there is really no good reason for retaining it. It has failed to make the State System even to this hour, a United System, and it has at the same time prevented it from being a National System. It has given rise to an Educational struggle by which the peace and harmony of the Church and of the community have grievously suffered, and the progress of Education in the country has been greatly impeded. Under such circumstances it seems hard to discover any sufficient excuse for persevering in maintaining this Rule, which, while it has caused so much evil, has effected so very little of the good expected from it.

Some however who cannot but admit that the Rule has not accomplished the end for which it was devised, and who are constrained to admit that

that end has been attained to a greater extent under a different,—it may be said an opposite rule,—who yet cling to the Rule, under the notion, as it seems, that it is necessary in order to carry out the principle of “ Religious Liberty ” in the Education of the Poor.

Now if this impression were well-founded, I acknowledge that, whether rightly or wrongly, there would be, in point of fact, an insurmountable objection to the rescinding of the Rule. We are satisfied that, whatever be our views of the principle, it is now fixed as the basis of the connexion of the State with the Education of the Poor ; and that we cannot expect any change in the existing System by which the maintenance of that principle would be in any respect endangered. Nor do we look for any such change. We held, and hold, that the State was wrong in extending public aid to any Schools in which instruction in the Holy Scriptures was not given to all the children in attendance. And for a time we laboured to alter the resolution to which the State had come, and to bring it back to what we believe to be its duty. But having failed in this, and the State being manifestly determined to persevere in the course on which it had entered, we changed the object of our exertions. We no longer aimed at what was clearly impracticable. We ceased to call upon the State

to do what we believed it ought to do. We only demanded that it should aid us in the work of Education, without requiring us to do what we were sure we ought not to do. We thenceforth gave up the attempt to disturb the determination of Government and Parliament to make "Religious Liberty" the principle of the Education of the country, so far as the State is connected with it. But we demanded that the principle should be carried out fully and fairly, so that we ourselves might have the benefit of it as well as others.

This ought to be made as clear as it can be. For it is a point which is often perhaps misunderstood, certainly very often misrepresented. The question between Government and the Church in Ireland is not now, nor has it for a good while been, whether the principle of "Religious Liberty" shall be carried out, in extending the aid of the State to the Education of the Poor? but, How shall it be carried out? It is not about the object to be effected, but about different modes of effecting it.

That they who think that the only mode of effecting this object is that which the founders of the National System of Education for Ireland devised, are in very great error, has, I hope, already clearly appeared. I trust that I have shown, that it is neither the only mode nor the best mode:

that in fact the Rule of the National System not only does not carry out the principle of Religious Liberty fairly and fully, but that it does not attempt to do so: and that the principle is carried out much more consistently and completely in England, where no such Rule exists, and where aid is given to Schools connected with the Educational Organs of the leading denominations in the country without requiring them to alter the Rules for Religious Education which they have devised for themselves and acted upon.

We do not however require or wish that the English System should be substituted for that existing in this country. Such a change would be needlessly violent. It would sweep away the machinery by which the Education of the Poor in Ireland has been for several years carried on. This could not be done without causing some real alarm; and giving an opportunity to those who would gladly take advantage of it, of infusing doubts and fears into multitudes, in whose minds they would never have arisen spontaneously. And it would be exposed to other objections also. And there is no need of encountering any such difficulties, because the end may be effected without materially disturbing any part of the agency by which the public funds for the Education of the Poor in Ireland have been so long administered.

The Board, at least with no change beyond such as may be needed to secure a fairer representation of the different denominations which it comprehends; the scheme of secular Education which it recommends; the books by which that scheme is to be carried out; the organization for training Teachers, and for inspecting Schools,—all might remain unaltered. No change need be made, but this: That the Rule of the System should be rescinded; that no rules with regard to religious Education should be imposed upon Patrons as a condition of receiving aid for their Schools; and that no rules which they may have adopted, with regard to religious Education, shall exclude them from aid: that, instead of the engagement to observe the Fundamental Rule, which is now the condition of connexion with the Board, an engagement to carry out the system of secular Education approved and recommended by the Board should be substituted: that no other condition should be imposed as a preliminary to taking a school into connexion; and that the faithful fulfilment of this engagement, to be ascertained by the Inspectors of the Board, should be enough for the maintenance of this connexion.

This modification of the existing System would agree in principle and in its mode of operation, with the plan upon which aid is given to Educa-

tion by the State in England. But it is in some respects better suited to the circumstances of Ireland, and especially as keeping the whole secular Education of the country more under the direction and controul of the State. And, if it were adopted, not only would the consciences of Patrons be left free, but the consciences of the children who were to receive Education, or of their Parents, would be protected. This latter point is the one which is to be explained, as it is continually misunderstood, and the nature and effect of the plan, in this respect, misrepresented. It is often, in fact, spoken of as if it were at least as one-sided as the existing System; that, as the latter only aims at protecting the consciences of Scholars, that which is proposed as a substitute for it contents itself with caring for the consciences of Patrons. But this, as I said, is a very great mistake. And it is one so calculated to create a prejudice against the proposed plan, that I must endeavour to correct it, even at the risk of repeating what I have before said in explaining the operation of the plan which is adopted in England.

The Rule to which reference has been so often made was almost avowedly intended to protect Roman Catholics from being placed in the position of having to choose between two evils,—the loss of the benefit of secular Education on the one hand,

or, on the other, being obliged to receive, together with it, religious Education to which they were unwilling to submit. They were placed in this disadvantageous position, it was alleged, by the state of Education in Ireland, until the National System was introduced, but that thenceforth the Fundamental Rule of the System afforded full protection to them from having such an alternative forced upon them. And those who resist any change in the Rule in question, ask, whether this protection is to be now withdrawn?—implying, if they do not expressly assert, that, if the Rule were now rescinded, Roman Catholics would be again subject to the hardships from which it was framed to deliver them.

I allow the advocates of the Rule to describe the past, without any attempt to revise their representation of it, and only inquire into the grounds of their apprehensions for the future. Supposing that the former System of Education in this country inflicted hardships upon the Roman Catholics from which they ought to have been relieved, and that the Fundamental Rule of the National System was necessary in order to effect their relief, the important practical question still remains: Is the maintenance of this Rule *now* necessary, to prevent the recurrence of the state of

things against which it was intended to be a safeguard?

To answer this, we must consider what is the distribution of the patronage of the National Schools in this country. By a Return furnished to the Committee by one of the Secretaries of the National Board, it appeared, that of 4602 National Schools there were 3077—rather above two-thirds of the entire number—under Roman Catholic patronage; no less than 2800,—more than one-half, more nearly, indeed, two-thirds of the whole—having Roman Catholic Priests for their Patrons.* Now, this being the actual state of the Patronage, can there be any reasonable ground to apprehend that Roman Catholics will any where be subject to have the alternative forced upon them from which the Rule was intended to protect them? But if there were any danger of such a result, there seems to be the amplest security against its occurrence, in the number of additional Schools that are annually taken into connexion, and the principles on which they are admitted. We find that the number of new Schools taken into connexion in 1852 was 264. And it appeared in the Evidence that the Commissioners would take a new School into connexion wherever one appeared to be wanted;

* EVIDENCE, 1854. *M. Cross, Esq.*, 119, p. 22.

and that, generally speaking, they were disposed to receive the want as sufficiently proved by the existence of a School, so circumstanced as to allow an application to be taken into connexion to be made on its behalf. Of course, this presumption might be removed by other facts. But the Commissioners do not consider the existence of a Church Education School in the district capable of supplying its wants, as furnishing "the slightest reason for not giving a grant to an applicant for a National School," because *it is not enough that the people have Education, they ought to have it free from the suspicion of Proselytism; and the Commissioners are not only warranted, but bound to establish a National School where it is required to effect this, which was the first and great object of the National System.** And their practice shows that they are prepared to make such grants even when a National School, or other National Schools exist already in the neighbourhood.†

Now, when so large a number of Schools are already under Roman Catholic patronage, and especially under the patronage of Roman Catholic Priests, and when the Commissioners have the power of adding to the number at such a rate, as they

* EVIDENCE, 1854. *Rt. Hon. Alex. Macdonnell*, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1983. See also 2055—2059.

† EVIDENCE, 1854. *Rev. C. K. Irwin*, 3958—3963.

actually have added to it ; and feel it to be not merely warrantable but a matter of duty to make all such additions as are needed in order to give Education free from the danger or the suspicion of proselytism, it can hardly be alleged that there is any reasonable ground to apprehend that if the Rule were rescinded, Roman Catholic children would be liable, any where throughout the country, to be forced to choose between the loss of secular Education, and the receiving religious Education which they or their parents disapproved.

And in fact this plea for the maintenance of the Rule seems in a good measure abandoned. And it seems to be admitted that practically the Roman Catholics would not now be subject to any such disadvantages, as they formerly suffered, if this Rule were rescinded.* But then it is apprehended that it would be a real and serious disadvantage to those Protestants who are scattered in small numbers in the midst of a great majority of Roman Catholics. It could not be expected that a separate School should be established for the security of each little knot of Protestants. They must take their place in the National Schools of the majority. When they do so now, they have the protection of the Rule of the Board. They cannot be compelled to

* EVIDENCE, 1854. *Archbishop of Dublin*, 2600. *W. McCreedy*, Esq. 3388.

receive any religious Education against the will of their Parents. But when that protection was withdrawn, as it would be, if the proposed change were effected, what would be their condition? They might be subject to be daily instructed in all Roman Catholic doctrine, or left altogether without Education.

To this apprehension, which has been lately very urgently put forward, it might be answered, that those who are best acquainted with the working of the System are little inclined to set much value upon the kind of protection that our children receive from the Rule, when they are placed under the circumstances supposed.* And if it were practicable, it would be in the highest degree desirable that the protection of a Church Education School should be now given in all such cases to our children. This cannot however be done. But we should be enabled to supply this needful safe-guard to a much greater extent, if the proposed changes were effected. For considerable portions of the funds of the Society, which we are now obliged to expend upon more important and urgent cases, would be then set free, and might be employed in protecting our scattered Protestants, by setting up Schools in places to which our means do not at present reach. So that in fact the condition of those

* EVIDENCE, 1854. *Ven. E. A. Stopford*, 4263—4276.

small groups, who, it is supposed, would be so greatly injured by the arrangement, would be really greatly improved by it. For it is doubtful that their danger would be materially increased, and their chances of protection would undoubtedly be very materially bettered.

I do not think that when this objection is fairly considered, it will appear a very formidable one. But there is still another in reserve. It is said that the protection now afforded to Roman Catholics against their own Priests would be taken away! If a Priest wishes now to give religious instruction of which a Parent disapproves, the Parent can, by virtue of this Rule, forbid his child to receive it, without incurring thereby the loss of secular Education for him. Whereas, if this Rule were rescinded in the way proposed, the Roman Catholics would be left without any means of escape from whatever Education a Priest who was the Patron of the School might be disposed to give. He could enforce it under the penalty of the loss of all Education.*

You will hardly believe that this could have been seriously put forward as a ground of objection to the proposed change by persons who are or ought to be as well acquainted with Ireland as

* EVIDENCE, 1854. *Rt. Hon. Alex. McDonnell*, 2033, 2034. *W. McCreedy, Esq.*, 3389—3401.

you yourselves are. And I am sure, when you know that such is actually the case, you will feel that it is a proof that the opponents of a settlement of the Question are in a great strait for reasons against it.

It is certainly a very novel use of the Rule. It was originally intended to disarm the Roman Catholic Priests who had succeeded in raising a successful opposition against the Kildare Place Society, on the ground that in its Schools, Roman Catholic children were obliged to read the Scriptures. Here is a Rule, it was said, which will effectually prevent any such compulsion in Schools under the National System. So that the professed object for which it was devised was to protect Roman Catholic children from being obliged to read the Bible in Protestant Schools. No doubt, even then, if the System had been arraigned as one-sided, it would have been pointed out that the Rule would equally protect Protestant children in Schools under Roman Catholic management. But we can be very sure that this further use of it as a protection to Roman Catholics against their Priests, was never thought of until the exigencies of the case required that some new use should be found for it.

When it was shown that it was no longer required for the protection of Roman Catholics, from having violence done to their consciences by Pro-

testant Patrons, and that it might be dispensed with as a safeguard to Protestants, against any similar attempts on the part of Roman Catholic Patrons, this further use of it was excogitated, by which it becomes a restraint upon Roman Catholic Priests from giving to the children of their own communion any religious instruction which the Parents are unwilling that they should receive!

Of one thing we may be very sure,—that is, that the Roman Catholic Priests themselves, after twenty years' acquaintance with the Rule, have not yet found out this use of it. If they do at last find it out, they will certainly not keep the discovery to themselves. And when we have any evidence that they really regard this Rule as enabling the members of their communion to restrain them from giving such religious Education as they think fit to the children, we may bestow more consideration on this objection than it now appears to deserve. But meanwhile it cannot but confirm the expectations of a settlement of the Question, which so many circumstances combine to raise, to find the maintainers of the System as it is, driven into such arguments to maintain their position.

I trust that the review which I have taken of the case—particularly of the facts and arguments

which bear upon the settlement of the Question—brief and very imperfect as it has been,—has done something to vindicate the opinion which I expressed at the outset, that a settlement will not be delayed much longer. At the same time,—it is hardly necessary to say,—while there seems so much to justify this expectation, there is a good deal also to create apprehensions that we may still have a good while longer to wait for the fulfilment of it. When it is seen that the arguments in favour of a settlement are so cogent, and the objections and difficulties by which they are met are either so groundless or so trifling, it is impossible not to feel confident that the cause which is so supported and so opposed must succeed. And no doubt such confidence is well grounded, as regards ultimate success. Every cause which has reason and justice clearly on its side must succeed in the long run. But such forces cannot command immediate success. If they could, indeed, this question would not be still to settle. Prejudice,—especially when it is sustained by self-interest, timidity, and false policy,—holds its ground for a long time against reason and equity, and though these must in the end prevail, it can do a good deal to defer their triumph. We have had happy evidence that there is in some quarters a considerable abatement of the prejudice against our cause

which so long prevailed to such an extent and in such strength. But we are not without sufficient proof that it still survives in many quarters and in unabated force.

Its continuance ought not to surprise or discourage us. It ought only to stimulate us to employ more diligently the means which we have already found so efficacious in softening and removing very strong prejudices. I have never omitted an opportunity of earnestly pressing upon the friends of our Society the importance of bringing their case temperately, patiently, and perseveringly before the public. And I have always expressed my firm conviction that, when it was once thoroughly understood in England, there would be such a deep and general sense of the justice of our claims, that they could not be very long resisted.

I hold this view as strongly as ever I did. And indeed I could hardly desire more conclusive proof of its soundness than was furnished by the result of the late Inquiry, to which I referred at the outset. Full sixteen years had elapsed since the question arose, and during all that time there was no indicative of any serious disposition to settle it, on the part of either the Government or the Opposition. But at the close of the Inquiry, not only was such a desire exhibited by both, but by both a serious attempt to effect a settlement of the question was

actually made. And that we owe this altogether to the impression which the evidence made upon those who were previously but imperfectly acquainted with our case, and therefore strongly prejudiced against it, as I before said, cannot be questioned.

But when I formerly, from time to time, urged upon the supporters of the Society to bring its case by all means within their power, before the English public, it appeared very unlikely that we should have the means of having it investigated and put upon record by means of a Parliamentary Inquiry. Nor did I contemplate that mode of making it known. The ways which I had in view were Sermons, Speeches, Pamphlets, and such-like means of informing the public mind. Up to the Inquiry, we were confined to such means of bringing our case forward; and now that it is over, we are thrown back on them again. But we have now the advantage, that not a few of the most important points of our case are recorded as part of the Evidence, and so are less open to dispute than when they rested upon any authority which we could before adduce in support of them. We have indeed in the published Evidence very full as well as very authentic materials for a statement of the case of the Society. But those materials, to be of any avail in influencing the public

generally, must be brought within their reach and pressed upon them through the various channels through which we before made our case known,—the Pulpit, the Platform, and the Press. And the effects of what may be done through such means to abate prejudice and disarm opposition, or even more, we had a most conclusive proof in the course of last Session, in the Church Petition to which I before referred. I have already spoken of that important Document under a different aspect, but I am now anxious to say that the number and quality of those whose names were attached to it were hardly more remarkable, than the deliberation, not to say tardiness, with which they came forward in behalf of our Society. For years, its case had been brought before Parliament, Session after Session, by Petitions from this country,—Lay and Clerical,—Aggregate, Diocesan, and Parochial,—and all that time there was no interposition of the English Clergy on behalf of their Irish brethren. No petition from the English Clergy in support of those from Ireland was presented. And not only was there no such public declaration in favour of our Society actually made, but until very lately no attempt to procure such a declaration could have succeeded.

In fact, though throughout the long and arduous struggle for Scriptural Education which has been

carried on in this country, those who were engaged in it were never left without proofs that they enjoyed the sympathy and approbation of a considerable number of their brethren in England, neither were they for a good while allowed to believe that such feelings were entertained by all. There were many,—who, while they regretted the difficulties and hardships which the Church in Ireland had to encounter in carrying on the work of Education, could hardly be said to sympathize with it under them, because they thought it had brought them on itself. They did not look with unkindly feelings upon the sufferers : but they regarded them as impracticable men, who were not satisfied with what ought to have satisfied them.

While this state of feeling existed to a considerable extent in the English portion of the Church, a Petition in favour of the Irish Church Education Society could scarcely have been signed by any large number of the Clergy, without giving rise to dissatisfaction on the part of many others, if not to some counter-movement. Those, however, who not only felt for us but with us in this struggle gave the Members of the Society who were sent over to plead its cause, all facilities and aids to make its claims known. They not only made collections for the Society in their Parishes, but opened their pulpits to its representatives,

generally, must be brought within their reach and pressed upon them through the various channels through which we before made our case known,—the Pulpit, the Platform, and the Press. And the effects of what may be done through such means to abate prejudice and disarm opposition, or even more, we had a most conclusive proof in the course of last Session, in the Church Petition to which I before referred. I have already spoken of that important Document under a different aspect, but I am now anxious to say that the number and quality of those whose names were attached to it were hardly more remarkable, than the deliberation, not to say tardiness, with which they came forward in behalf of our Society. For years, its case had been brought before Parliament, Session after Session, by Petitions from this country,—Lay and Clerical,—Aggregate, Diocesan, and Parochial,—and all that time there was no interposition of the English Clergy on behalf of their Irish brethren. No petition from the English Clergy in support of those from Ireland was presented. And not only was there no such public declaration in favour of our Society actually made, but until very lately no attempt to procure such a declaration could have succeeded.

In fact, though throughout the long and arduous struggle for Scriptural Education which has been

Question before the English Public. And with this advice, thus confirmed, I will end—adding but one word in the way of caution.

I have felt warranted by the present state of the Question in encouraging some hopes that the Education War which has so long disturbed and divided our land, may be speedily brought to an end. But I have been very anxious, at the same time, to guard against any such sanguine expectations of a near termination of it as would leave you unprepared for a different result. And I have said enough, I trust, to secure you from feeling surprised or disappointed, if, as may well happen, instead of being allowed to end the struggle which you have so long carried on, you find yourselves called on to carry it on still longer. If it be still to go on, as it may be, I hope I need not add a word to restrain you from impatience or repining. If it should be so, we must know that it is only so, because He who is wiser than we are, sees that it is better,—more for His glory and the good of His Church,—that the contest should still go on, than that it should come to a termination. And when we feel assured, as we must, that this is the reason why it is prolonged, shall we murmur or be cast down? Shall we not rather rejoice and give thanks, that we are permitted to promote such ends, by

whatever exertions and whatever sacrifices it may be found needful to demand of us?

May we be enabled to do our duty, to hold fast our integrity, and to commit the case altogether to Him, in whose hands are all hearts, and who turneth them as He will; and who *doth all things well*. And may our prayer to Him now, and under all circumstances in which we may be placed, be, that He will do, not what we in our impatience desire most, or in our blindness, think best, but what He in His infinite wisdom sees to be best,—best for the accomplishment of His own great purposes, for the advancement of Christ's cause, and the good of His people.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—*Referred to page 11.*

I cannot confirm this statement by a reference to the Minutes of the Proceedings in Committee, for unfortunately they have not been published. I should suppose that, when the Evidence appeared without them, most of the Members of the Committee were as much surprised as I myself was. For I am tolerably sure that it was understood by most, if not all of them, as it certainly was by me, that the Minutes were to be prefixed to the Evidence whenever it was printed.

It is much to be regretted on various grounds, that this understanding was not acted upon. But I do not think it expedient to attempt to supply the omission here, any further than by publishing the papers which were printed and circulated among the Members of the Committee, between the 7th and the 16th of July. These were the two last days on which the Committee sat. On the former day they had met for the purpose of talking over the Evidence (which had been brought to a close on the 6th) with a view to collecting the impressions of the different Members as to what ought to form the leading topics of the Report. The suggestions which had been put forward in the course of that

day's Meeting, with any others which any might wish to offer, were directed to be printed, and put into the hands of the Members, in order that they might be considered before the next day of Meeting, which was fixed for the 16th. On that day they were to come to some definite understanding as to the Report,—to agree upon the most important points which it was to embrace, and to give directions for the preparation of it.

It is known that the meeting ended in a Resolution, carried by a small majority, to publish the Evidence without a Report. But it is not my purpose, as I before said, to give any account of the proceedings in Committee. And I should reprint the papers referred to without any remarks, but that, as the Plan for the settlement of the Question which, as I have stated in my Charge, was put forward on the part of Government does not appear in them, a few words of explanation are necessary, to account for its absence, and to justify my statement concerning it.

When the Committee met on the 7th of July, the Chairman (Lord Granville) began by running through the Evidence, chiefly as it showed, in his judgment, the success of the System, or suggested such changes as might render it more efficient. He then turned to the objections which had been made against it, at its first introduction, by a large portion of the Church in Ireland; and to the result in which they eventually issued, in the formation of the Church Education Society. He, of course, did not acknowledge the reasonableness of these objections, and he greatly regretted the result, as impairing the full efficiency of the National System, and depriving the Clergy of the Established Church of their proper place in the Education of the Country. And he moreover regretted it, because it exhibited his own

Church in an unfavourable light, as less liberal than the Presbyterian or Roman Catholic bodies. But still, as it was plain from the Evidence that, whether well or ill grounded, these objections were conscientiously entertained and steadily acted upon by a great number of respectable persons, it had become desirable to consider whether any thing could be done to satisfy them, without interfering with the successful working of the System. And he suggested, as what appeared to be the best plan for securing both objects, that Church Education Schools should receive grants of School Books and School Requisites from the National Board; and that the benefit of Inspection by the officers of the Board, and of access to the Training School should also be extended to them. He added however that Government would only be prepared to act on these suggestions, if they were recommended by a clear majority of the Committee, and also accompanied by a recommendation that under no circumstances should a grant in money be made to any School, either for building or for the Teacher's Salary, unless it were conducted strictly in accordance with the Rules of the National System.

Early in the following week the resolutions and suggestions which had been talked over on the 6th were printed and circulated, as had been agreed upon. But Lord Granville's paper,—though it contained, in substance at least, if not in words, all that he had suggested with respect to the changes to be made in the Rules of the System in order to render it more efficient,—was altogether silent upon his Plan for the Settlement of the Question. And on the 16th, he formally withdrew both the Plan which had been proposed verbally on the 7th, and the suggestions in his printed paper, declining, for reasons which he gave, to take any part in proposing or preparing a Re-

port. Thus there was no record of the Government plan. But, as it was stated very distinctly by Lord Granville, and was afterwards, on the day on which it was proposed, discussed at some length and compared in detail with Lord Derby's; and as the same process was gone through again on the 16th, there is no room for any mistake with respect to it.

It will be seen that I was warranted in stating that the two schemes were *in principle* perfectly alike. They were both projects to settle the Irish Education Question, by conceding to the supporters of the Church Education Society the right for which they had contended of conducting the religious Education in their Schools according to their own principles, without thereby forfeiting the aid of the State. The whole difference between them was, that Lord Derby would grant salaries to the Masters, or rather, as he explained himself, an allowance for the actual progress of the scholars, founded upon the Report of the Inspector. He agreed with Lord Granville in refusing building-grants to such Schools, and Lord Granville agreed with him in giving them Books, School-requisites, Inspections, and the use of a Training School. The only advantage that Lord Derby proposed to give, which Lord Granville refused was, as I said, the money-grants for Teachers' Salaries. But it is not my intention to compare the plans with regard to their merits, but merely so far as to show that I was warranted in stating, as I do in the Charge, that they do not differ at all in principle, and not to any important extent in details.

Select Committee on National Education (Ireland).

RESOLUTIONS

PROPOSED BY THE LORD ARDROSSAN (*Earl of Eglinton*).

1. THAT the Board shall consist of three paid Commissioners, who shall be laymen ; that their duties shall be purely administrative ; and that they shall be responsible to the Lord Lieutenant.

2. That there shall be a revision of the Rules, for the purpose of removing all future doubts as to their real bearing, but that the essential meaning of them shall not be altered, except in so far as may be recommended by this Committee ; and that it shall not be competent to the Commissioners to place their own construction on the Rules, when so revised, in answer to any queries which may be addressed to them.

3. That no new Rule or Book shall be introduced till it has received the sanction of the Lord Lieutenant ; and that no Book, when once introduced, shall be withdrawn or essentially altered, without his approval.

4. That the Salaries generally of the Schoolmasters are inadequate, and should be raised ; but that it should be an instruction to the Commissioners to adhere more strictly than has been done of late years to the conditions laid down in Mr. Stanley's Letter to the Duke of Leinster, with regard to Local funds being provided.

Select Committee on National Education (Ireland).

RESOLUTIONS

PROPOSED BY THE EARL OF DERBY.

Proposed to *Resolve*,—

1. THAT in the case of Model Schools, Workhouse Schools, and all vested Schools already erected, or after to be taken into connexion with the Board, the present system in all its main principles be adhered to.

2. That no Grant for building be made to any but vested Schools.

3. That the adoption of the Rules as to Religious Instruction in force in vested schools, be earnestly recommended to Patrons of non-vested schools receiving aid from the Board; but,

4. That the Board be authorised, if they shall think fit, to grant similar advantages to those enjoyed by the non-vested schools to any Schools now existing, or hereafter to be built, whatever their regulations as to Religious Instruction, the Patrons of which shall be willing to place them in connexion with the Board; and to receive officially the visits of the Government Inspectors.

Select Committee on National Education (Ireland).

SUGGESTIONS

For the Consideration of the SELECT COMMITTEE of The
HOUSE OF LORDS on the Working of the NATIONAL
SYSTEM of NATIONAL EDUCATION in IRELAND.

PROPOSED BY THE EARL GRANVILLE.

1. THAT the Rules of the Board shall be revised, with a view of rendering them perfectly clear, full, and explicit, on the fundamental principles of the system; and the Commissioners should submit to the Lord Lieutenant, for his sanction, the alterations, omissions, or additions, which may appear to be necessary.

Revision of
the Rules of
the Board.

2. That all Religious Instruction, whether *denominational* or *general*, given in the National School Books, must be given at a *separate* hour, and publicly notified in the Time Table, under the head of Religious Instruction.

As to Religious
Instruction.

3. That whenever Religious *Instruction*, or Religious *Exercises*, including *Prayer*, take place at an intermediate time during school-hours, they must take place at the most only ONCE, and must be so arranged as not to impede the Secular Instruction.

4. That the Patron or Manager is not bound by the Rules to *exclude* from the Religious Instruction given in the school any child whose parent does not take the necessary steps to prevent his child from attending such Religious Instruction.

Patrons not
required to
exclude any
child from
Religious
Instruction.

Religious
rites.

5. That religious rites must not be performed in the school-rooms.

Emblems of
a denomina-
tional cha-
racter.

6. That no emblems of a denominational character shall be exhibited in the school-rooms during the hours set apart for united instruction.

7. That the Commissioners permit the Patrons of *non-vested schools* to employ them for the purpose of Sunday Schools, upon the understanding that nothing shall take place in them leading to contention, and that they shall not be converted into places of *Public Worship*.

No religious
Book to be
withdrawn
without the
sanction of
the Lord
Lieutenant.

8. That any Book of a religious character having been once *unanimously* adopted by the Commissioners, shall not be *withdrawn* from the schools, or essentially altered, without the sanction of the Lord Lieutenant; nor shall any change be made in any *fundamental* Rule of the Board without his approval; and that a statement of the grounds upon which the Commissioners may deem any alterations or additions necessary shall be embodied in their Minutes.

Lease to be
made in con-
formity with
the Rules.

9. That the Clauses in the Lease and other Deeds of vested schools shall be in strict conformity with the present Rules of Religious Instruction.

Ten Com-
mandments.

10. That objections having been made by many Protestants to the Form of the Ten Commandments used in the National Schools, it should be distinctly stated in the Rules, that it is not obligatory upon Patrons to employ them in their schools if they conscientiously object thereto.

Modification
of Rule as to
the vesting
of schools.

11. That the Rule of the Commissioners requiring all schools which they contribute to build to be vested in *them* in their *corporate capacity* shall be modified, so that the Patrons shall have the option of vesting them in Trustees, or in the Board, whichever they prefer;

the *latter* class *only* to be kept in repair at the public expense ; and with respect to the former, that a stringent Covenant shall be inserted in the Lease to *Trustees*, binding them to defray the cost of repairs under particular conditions ; and that the Commissioners be instructed to see that such Covenant be *strictly fulfilled*.

12. That the Commissioners shall have authority to make small Grants towards the repairing of non-vested schools, not exceeding £5 in any one year, on condition that the Patrons pay one-third or one-half that sum ; and that this rule be applicable to such schools *vested* in *Trustees*, as the Commissioners see fit.

Repairs of
non-vested
schools.

13. That the Commissioners be empowered to build a limited number of *ordinary National Schools* in the poorest localities in Ireland, in which *local* subscriptions cannot be raised, at the entire expense of the State, not to exceed £400 each ; these schools to exhibit the best specimens of what good ordinary National Schools should be. They are to be under the exclusive control of the Commissioners, who shall have power to appoint the Teachers, &c. ; and, in cases wherever it is practicable, to appoint Committees composed of Protestants and Roman Catholics to visit and superintend them, under the direction of the Board.

Schools to be
built at the
sole expense
of the State.

14. That the Ladies or others who have the management of Convent Schools shall be required to enforce *strictly all* the Rules of the Board ; and that the Inspectors shall be required, in their Reports upon *Convent* Schools, to make minute inquiries on such points as the Commissioners may deem necessary.

Convent
Schools.

15. That the Commissioners should withdraw their grants of Salary and Books, after *due* notice, from such of their *non-vested* schools as are not attended by a sufficient number of children—as are not adequately sup-

Grants to be
withdrawn
from non-
vested
schools.

plied with furniture, apparatus, and books ; and that all needless multiplication of schools shall be avoided.

Premiums to Teachers for good attendance of Pupils.

16. That Premiums should be given to Teachers who succeed in keeping up a numerous and regular attendance in their schools ; and some inducement should be given to the pupils to remain in the schools a *sufficient time* to obtain a tolerable amount of good secular education.

Local Contributions to be enforced to a limited amount.

17. The Commissioners should be instructed to be more strict than they have heretofore been, in enforcing a small amount of local contributions in *addition* to the children's weekly fees. The amount should probably be made to vary in different districts, according to the condition of the population. Before a school is received into connexion, a moderate sum should be required by the Commissioners, to be laid out by the Manager in books, maps, black boards, &c., the amount to be regulated by the average daily attendance of Pupils ; and in addition to this, a small sum to be paid quarterly towards the payment of the Teachers' Salaries.

Increase of District Inspectors, and division into three classes.

18. That a sufficient increase should be made to the District Inspectors to enable them to make at least *three or four* inspections of the schools under their care ; that they should be divided into three classes, and be paid according to a graduated scale ; that before this increase is made, the Commissioners should carefully consider the qualifications of all *existing Inspectors*, with a view of removing such of them as are incompetent for the discharge of the very important duties necessarily confided to them.

Gratuities to old and infirm Teachers.

19. That the Commissioners should be permitted to expend a certain sum annually in *gratuities* to old and infirm Teachers who shall be required to vacate their situations, and that young and efficient Teachers shall

be appointed in their places ; and that some scheme for the *superannuation of Trained Teachers* shall be considered by the Board.

20. With regard to the control exercised by the Commissioners over the use of the school-rooms on Sundays, or before and after school-hours on other days of the week, the Commissioners should lay down one fixed rule ; viz. that no Religious Instruction shall be given in any National School, except on SUNDAYS, to others than the CHILDREN attending the schools.

Use of
school-
houses.

21. That a definite Code of Instructions should be prepared and supplied to each Inspector, explaining in detail the specific duties allotted to him.

Definite
Code of In-
struction to
Inspectors.

22. That an inquiry be instituted by the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, and some person authorized to visit the several Departments in Dublin, to inspect the various forms and books used in conducting the business ; to examine such individuals in the Office as may be necessary ; to ascertain the nature and extent of their duties ; to see if the various processes of business can be simplified or abridged, and to report whether any or what alteration are to be made in the existing Rates of Salaries.

Inquiry into
the Official
Department
by an Officer
from the
Treasury.

23. That the Salaries of the Teachers belonging to each Class and to each Division of a Class should be further augmented ; and the scale of local contributions towards the payment of those Salaries should rise gradually in proportion to the amount of Salary paid by the State.

Higher scale
of Salaries to
Teachers.

24. That the number of Pupil Teachers and paid Monitors is inadequate, and ought to be largely increased.

25. That the Training Establishments should be forthwith largely increased ; and that the Commissioners should have authority to extend the period of Training

to Twelve Months ; but that they shall have permission to give only a half-yearly Training to such *Married Teachers* and *others*, as cannot be absent a year from their Schools.

26. That the Commissioners shall appoint two additional *Agricultural* Sub-Inspectors.

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Select Committee on National Education (Ireland).

SUGGESTIONS

Drawn from the Evidence before the Committee, for that part of the Report which is to treat of a Settlement of the EDUCATION Question.

PROPOSED BY THE BISHOP OF OSSORY.

1. THAT the National System of Education in Ireland was intended, 1. To give Education to the poor of the country ; and 2. To unite together in the same Schools the children of the different religious denominations into which the country is divided.

2. That it has to a great extent failed in both the objects for which it was instituted ; and the means taken to secure the one, have (without securing *it*), proved the cause of its failure in attaining the other. The attempt to make it *united* has prevented it from becoming *national*.

3. That the Rule with respect to Religious Education, which is well known, was intended not only to

protect the religious faith of children of all religious denominations attending upon National Schools, but to give assurance to parents that it should be protected ; and, by taking away all grounds of apprehension on that head, it was thought that the chief hindrances to united education would be taken away. The evidence, however, shows that some serious hindrances must have been overlooked ; for, notwithstanding this Rule, there is little that deserves the name of united education in the National Schools, almost nothing in three of the Provinces, and but little in the remaining one.

4. That this Rule has had the effect of limiting the extent to which the education of the poor has been connected with the State. There are, besides the National Board, other educational agencies in operation in the country in connexion with the chief religious denominations, the Roman Catholics, the Protestant Dissenters, and the Established Church ; and there seems reason to believe that they all have been kept from connecting themselves with the National Board by this Rule.

5. That this has been proved to be the case with respect to the most important of these Societies, that which is connected with the Established Church. It is the only one of these voluntary Societies of which the Committee has had detailed information. With regard, however, to its origin, principles, constitution, and operations, information has been fully given in evidence. The Report ought to embody so much of the information thus obtained as would give a fair representation of a Society which has been so important an agent in carrying on the education of the poor in Ireland. But there are but few of the many points that

have been thus brought before the Committee, which it is necessary to notice in these Suggestions.

6. That this Society has been in operation about 16 years, under the name of "The Church Education Society for Ireland." That it comprises a large majority (not less than three-fourths) of the Clergy, and about the same proportion of the Laity of the Church. That it is wholly dependent upon voluntary contributions; and that it has had other difficulties to contend with. But that, notwithstanding, its schools appear to be efficient—in general not less efficient than those of the National Board, which possess such great advantages over them in every respect, except that of local superintendence. That this one point of superiority is often found to outweigh all the rest, so as to make the Church Education Schools successful rivals of neighbouring National Schools. And that there were connected with it in the year 1853 above 1,800 Schools, giving education to more than 100,000 Children; that is, that the number of its schools is more than one-third of the number connected with the National Board, and the number of children in its schools more than one-fifth of the number in the National Schools.

7. That it is through the Rule of the Board referred to, that the co-operation of the great body of the most efficient and zealous agents in the work of Education is thus lost to the system supported by the State; and that this large portion of the education of the poor in Ireland is taken from the control and superintendence of the State: for it appears that a great majority of the Bishops, Clergy and Laity of the Established Church at the first declared against the system, and declined to connect their schools with the Board, expressly on account of the restrictions imposed by this Rule upon

their liberty in carrying on the religious education in their schools according to the dictates of their own consciences, and that this is the main ground upon which they have since held aloof from the system.

8. That, besides the loss thus sustained by the cause of Education, a serious injury is inflicted on the Church by the unseemly division which is thus kept up among all ranks and orders in it, Prelates, Clergy and Laity, and by the anomalous and disadvantageous position in which it is placed in relation to the State; and that these evils are continually augmented by the necessity which is laid upon the Society of bringing its case before the public both in England and Ireland, both to justify its members for the position which it maintains, and to obtain funds to carry on its schools.

9. That the Clergy appear to be as determined as at any former period to refuse to submit to this Rule of the Board, and to abide by their own Rule, which is, that, while the children of the Church in attendance upon their schools are to be taught Church principles by means of the Catechism and formularies of the Church, no child of dissenting parents, Roman Catholic or Protestant, shall be required to receive such instruction; but that *all children in attendance shall be daily instructed in the Holy Scriptures in the authorised Version.*

10. That, waiving all discussion of the merits of those opposite Rules, of which there is a good deal in the evidence, and of which there ought to be something in the Report, it appears that, in regulating the religious instruction which they give in their schools, not by the requirements of the children in attendance upon them, or of their parents, or of the State, but by the dictates of their own judgment and conscience, Irish Churchmen

are acting upon the same principle on which all religious denominations in England with which organized educational societies are connected, act; and that in England the State acquiesces in the principle by giving aid to schools in connexion with all those societies, without requiring them to abandon the principle, or to rescind the Rules which are founded upon it; and that in a Petition on behalf of the Church Education Society, presented this Session by his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, and referred by The House to the Committee, 5,414 of the English Clergy have testified concerning their brethren in Ireland, that, "in their steadfast refusal to connect themselves with the National Board, under conditions which would prevent them from instructing in the Holy Scriptures *every child* in attendance, they have only acted in accordance with the principles of the Church, and in strict fulfilment of their ordination vows."

11. That, however that be settled, the most important fact with which the Committee have to deal admits of no doubt, that is, that whether this view of the duty of the Clergy be right or wrong, it is conscientiously held by the great majority of the Irish Church; that it has hitherto prevented them from adopting the National system, and that they are as resolute in their adherence to it now as they have been at any former period; that all this has appeared clearly in evidence, and that it therefore appears certain that if this Rule be maintained, there can be no settlement of the Education Question in Ireland.

12. That, on the other hand, it has appeared that whatever other objections the Clergy may entertain, whether to the system or to the body by which it is administered, they feel able, and are disposed to waive

them all, provided they are left unrestricted as to the religious education which they are to give in their schools, and that so, by rescinding this Rule, the only insuperable hindrance to a settlement of the question will be removed.

13. That it appears that there is no good reason why the State should refuse to purchase this great benefit by rescinding the Rule in question. That it not only has not effected united education, but it seems less likely to succeed in the object for the time to come. That the causes which in spite of it, have for 20 years prevented united education still survive, and seem yearly acquiring additional strength. That it has been proved that Protestant Clergymen are no less unwilling that the children of their flocks should attend National Schools under the Patronage of Roman Catholic Priests than they have ever been; and that the lower orders of Protestants are not less unwilling now than at any former period to attend such schools. And though there is not the same repugnance on the part of the poorer Roman Catholics to sending their children to schools under Protestant management, yet their Priests are more than ever opposed to their doing so; and the decrees of the Synod of Thurles must add strength to their opposition, and make it more universal than it has ever been. That the maintenance of this Rule is not essential to the protection of children from being compelled to receive religious instruction, of which their parents disapprove: for that there is another mode of effecting this object, which is not exposed to the same objection, that is by leaving to the patrons to determine the nature of the religious instruction to be given, but providing such a choice of Schools as may enable parents of each religious denomination to find a School

in which the Religious Instruction is such as he has no conscientious objection to his child's receiving.

14. That, therefore, it be recommended, that the Rule with regard to Religious Instruction be rescinded; that it be left to Patrons to determine the Religious Education to be given in their schools; and that all schools which adopt the National system of Secular Education, be entitled to grants of books and school requisites, and to the advantages of inspection, and access to the Training School, and moreover to aid in money in proportion to the numbers and the proficiency of the children in attendance upon them; the proficiency to be ascertained by the Inspectors of the Board.

NOTE B.—*Referred to page 42.*

This is a point of considerable importance, and one which, even still, I should apprehend, is but little understood. I have more than once had occasion to endeavour to explain the true state of the case to those who, I had reason to believe, were unacquainted with it. And instead of now writing anything new upon it, I will quote a passage from a Speech which I delivered in 1851, at a meeting held in London for the London Hibernian Society as an Auxiliary to the Church Education Society for Ireland,—only premising that the “recommendation” referred to is, *that the Church in Ireland should no longer extend its care beyond its own members; that it should abandon the invidious and difficult task of educating the children of other communions, and confine itself to that which all would ac-*

knowledge to be its proper office, that is, the Education of the children of its own poorer members.

“ There can be no doubt whatever that the course which is thus recommended to the Church would be a much easier one than that which she has felt it her duty to pursue. Nor am I disposed to question or to undervalue the other advantages which, it is said, would arise from this easier and more limited course. But before the Church adopted such a course there was a preliminary question to be settled; that is to say, whether it could take this course consistently with duty and principle? This was a question which presented itself to the Church at the outset. It was considered carefully, as it deserved to be, by the Bishops: and by them, in connection with a great majority of the Clergy, and a most important portion of the Laity, this question was decided in the negative. They decided that the Clergy were not at liberty to deal with the old and the young of other communions, as if they had no connexion with them; that, on the contrary, in the position they held, they were bound to extend their care to both, so far as they were permitted to do so; and that so, not only their Churches were to be open to all who chose to enter them, and free access to their public ministrations to be given to all, but that the benefit of their pastoral care was also to be extended to all, to whatever degree they might invite or accept it; that the entire work of their ministry—the work of counselling, exhorting, warning, and instructing, publicly and privately, in sickness and in health,—was to be performed for *all* who would receive them, at least to the extent which was compatible with their duties to the members of their own Church, who have the first claim upon their services. And that, for the same reasons, the same course was to

be pursued with respect to their Schools—that they were not only to be open to all who chose to enter them, but that religious instruction was to be given to all those who chose to resort to them.

“It is upon this view of their duty that the Clergy have acted, in the face of grievous difficulties and discouragements. The obligation to impart to all around us the benefit of the light and knowledge which God has given to ourselves, seems to be a plain deduction from the fundamental principles of Christianity, and to be binding upon all Christians. But it was felt by the Clergy of Ireland that the obligation rested in a more solemn and special manner on *them*, as the Clergy of the National Church. And they could not take the easier and more limited course which was recommended to them, without falling in with, and confirming that misrepresentation concerning the relation of the Church to the people, which is very industriously circulated, and, it is to be feared, very generally received.

“The ordinary misrepresentation respecting the Church in Ireland is this—that the Reformation was forced on the country by the power of England; that the Ancient Church of the country, the Roman Catholic Church, was then stripped of her temporalities, and the Reformed Church was invested with them; that the one Church was put in possession of these temporalities as a reward for its adoption of the Reformation, and the other despoiled of them, as the penalty of its fidelity to its religion and the Pope. So that, wherever this representation is received, the Reformed Church is regarded as an intrusive Church, forced upon the country by the power of England. Whereas, as all informed persons are aware, the Reformed Church is the true successor and representative of the Ancient Church of the country; and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland is really an intrusive

Church, brought in by the arts of the Roman Pontiff, aided by the well-intended, but most unhappy policy of England at the time of the Reformation.

“The facts of the case are these :—The Reformation, having been established by public authority in England, in the first year of Elizabeth, was introduced by similar measures into Ireland, in the second year of her reign. So far as it could be done by legal enactment, the Reformation was, that year, established in Ireland by two Acts of Parliament. One of these was commonly called the Act of Supremacy, by which the Supremacy of the Pope was abolished, and the Supremacy of the Crown established, and the Oath of Supremacy imposed. The other was the Act of Uniformity, by which the Latin service was put away, and the English Liturgy, as contained in the Book of Common Prayer, introduced into its place. When these two Acts of Parliament were brought into the Upper House in Ireland, there were present twenty-three temporal and twenty spiritual peers ; and, of the latter, two only dissented from these measures : and at no subsequent period was the number of dissentients increased. So that the whole mass of the Hierarchy of the Country united with the government in carrying out the Reformation. The Priests, in their respective parishes, for the most part, consented to receive and use the Liturgy, and their congregations attended at their parish churches as before. This was the actual state of the case at the time of the Reformation. The whole Church at once settled down tranquilly under its Bishops in the Reformation, without any resistance, and without any opposition to it ; and the disturbance of this happy settlement, which afterwards took place, arose entirely from the intrusive Prelates who were sent over by the Pope of Rome for the purpose of disturbing it. But no one

could maintain that these new Prelates were the *successors* of the Ancient Bishops, or that the Church over which they presided was a *continuation* of the Ancient Church of the country. Those prelates were consecrated abroad to the existing Sees. But the work of filling the sees in this way went on so slowly that fifty years from the time of the Reformation elapsed before there was a Titular Archbishop of Dublin nominated ! We happen to have an account of the state of the Romish Church in Ireland a little later, in 1660,—just sixty-one years after the settlement of the Reformation—an account which cannot be disputed, as it has come to us on contemporary Roman Catholic authority. It appears that at that time there were but four Titular Prelates in Ireland. These four had been consecrated at Rome for the four provinces, but two only of those who were nominated were actually residing in Ireland. So that two of the Provinces, and all the Suffragan Bishoprics were governed by Vicars-general.

“ But, in point of fact, even if all the Sees had been filled up at once by Rome in this way, this could hardly, even in the judgment of those who hold the highest views of Papal Supremacy, make the new Prelates the *successors* of the ancient Bishops of the country, or the new Church the successor and representative of the Ancient Church of Ireland. The Legislature, which regulates the succession of property, and the Crown, which is the fountain of honour in this country, may give to any man now the property, the title, rank, and the name of a person who died a long time since. But unless he were actually descended from the other, neither Parliament nor the Crown could make him his *descendant*. It is just the same with regard to the Supremacy of the Pope. There are very many, no doubt, who hold that, in the plenitude of his authority, he

might abolish a National Church and put another in its place. But none even of these could hold that he could make the new Church the *successor* of the old one. When the Pope recently sent in some of his emissaries to do the same work here, he derived their titles from new sees which he founded for the purpose. No one, of course, imagines that these Prelates are the successors of the Ancient Prelates of the country. But it would be just the same if, instead of creating an Archbishop of Westminster, he had appointed an Archbishop of Canterbury. Those who hold the doctrine of the Pope's Supremacy would hold that the appointment was valid, and that his nominee was the true Archbishop of Canterbury. But none of them could maintain that he was the *successor* of the Ancient Archbishops of that venerable see.

"I cannot stop to give an account of the way in which these new Prelates succeed in carrying off from the Reformed Church so great a proportion of the whole Population. Many causes contributed to this unhappy result. But I am anxious that it should be noted that the fact that they did so, whatever may have been its causes, cannot convert the new Bishops into the successors of the Ancient Bishops, or the Roman Catholic Church into the successor or representative of the Ancient Church of the country. The Church of one period is not said to be the successor of the Church of another period, because it is found in the same place, and because a majority, or the entire, of the natural descendants of the members of the earlier Church are members of the later. If this were sufficient to constitute one Church the successor of another, in parts of the East, the Mahometan Church might claim to be the successor of the Christian Church, while the Ancient Christian Church, in the place, would have been itself the successor of a Pagan establishment. But

this is not what is meant by *succession* in such bodies. It is not that the members of the later body are the natural descendants of the earlier body, and that both bodies fill the same place, but that at each successive stage of the existence of the Church, the hierarchy were derived from their predecessors by the process by which such offices are continued. Now, tried by this test, which is the only proper test, the Church of Ireland must be taken as the true and undoubted successor and representative of the Ancient Church of Ireland. Its Bishops are the successors, and the only successors, of the Bishops who governed the Church of Ireland before it was corrupted and oppressed by Romish Rule. And, therefore, not only by the law of the land, but by all Ecclesiastical law and principle, the Reformed Church in Ireland is the Ancient National Church; while the Roman Catholic Church is a foreign and intrusive Church, dating its origin from a time subsequent to the Reformation, and then owing its existence to an exercise of Papal supremacy.

“I am not to be understood as insisting upon this point, as though I held that any Ecclesiastical descent, or any amount of the external constituents of Ecclesiastical authority which a Church can possess, would invest it with a rightful claim to submission and obedience, unless it held the truth and taught the truth. Such is not my opinion. I hold that any power which the Church of Rome exercises over men, any where, is a usurped power, which, whenever God gives them light to see its manifold errors and corruptions, they are not warranted only, but bound to cast off; even though in the particular place it should be able to trace its descent up to the first preachers of Christianity in the country, and through them, to the Apostles. But still I think that we have some, and no small help, in deliver-

ing my Countrymen from the thralldom in which they are held by the Church of Rome in Ireland, when, in addition to all her errors and superstitions and corruptions, we are able to show that she has no such external claim to reverence and submission, as a real descent from the Ancient Church of the country would bestow upon her. And on the other hand, I think that the claims of the Reformed Church in Ireland on the allegiance of the people are legitimately enforced, when, in addition to all its credentials, as primitive in constitution, pure in ritual, and sound in doctrine, it is shown that it is regularly descended from the first Christian Church of the country; and that its Bishops are the regular successors of the Bishops of the Ancient Church of the country.

“ Whatever rights belonged to the Ancient Church of Ireland undoubtedly belong to the Established Church, as its true and only representative. But what those rights are I have no intention of attempting to determine. My object in referring to the facts of the case is not to establish or assert any *rights* on the part of the Clergy, but to ascertain their *duties*. The Clergy do not claim to have either the old or the young brought by constraint under their ministrations—to have either their Churches or their Schools filled by compulsion. But they do hold that they are to be ready, as the Clergy of the National Church, to give to ALL, free admission and free instruction, both in their Churches and their Schools.

“ This is the view of their duty which, with the concurrence and co-operation of the laity of the Church, the Clergy has taken and acted on. And how entirely this view agrees with that which both the State and the Church take of the position and duties of the Clergy, however well known, seems worth distinctly noting here.

The State acknowledges no Parochial Minister except the Incumbent, who has been placed in the Parish by Episcopal Institution. And it not only gives to him the privileges of that office, but imposes upon him duties with reference to all the parishioners, without distinction of creed. And in the proceeding by which he is instituted, the Bishop solemnly commits to him, *in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, the care and government of all the souls* in the parish to which he is appointed. I do not say that this solemn consignment of the souls of the parishioners to the minister gives him any right to force his ministrations on them, if they choose to withdraw from his teaching. But assuredly it does bind upon his conscience, as an obligation from which nothing can set him free, the duty of caring for all in his parish, old and young, who will allow him to care for them. And as long as they retain a remembrance of the solemn ceremony which made them Parish Ministers, the Clergy cannot be satisfied with caring, as they are recommended, only for the children of their own communion. All the Children of their Parishes, so far as it is permitted them, must be objects of their care."

What follows in the Speech, though not bearing upon this immediate point, is connected with so important a part of the Controversy, that I am tempted to add it.

" 'But even if this be so,' it is said. 'why cannot they discharge their duty in connection with the Educational Institution which enjoins the countenance and support of the State? The National Board does nothing to hinder the clergy from carrying out this view of their duty. None of its rules forbid the attendance of Roman Ca-

tholic children, on the Schools of the Clergy connected with it. No disadvantages are incurred by such Schools from the fact of their being so attended, to whatever extent. The Clergy may, without impediment or discouragement from the Board, educate in Schools connected with the National Board all the Roman Catholic Children in Ireland, if they can get their Parents to send them to their Schools. Why, then, do they not adopt the National System, and connect their schools with the National Board? This question had been answered long ago. The reason why the Clergy of the National Church were unable to do this was, that the National Board had put restrictions on the use of the Bible in the education of the people, to which restrictions the Clergy will not submit, because they cannot do so with a clear conscience. The Rule of the National Board is this, as regards Scriptural education—that notice shall be given of the time when portions of the Bible are to be read in the National Schools, and that these notices shall be repeated as often as the periods for reading portions of the Word of God come round; and this, not for securing regularity and order in the School, but to secure this—that the Children whose Parents have intimated that they did not wish them to be present when the Scriptures were read, may have the opportunity of withdrawing. Of course, if the Clergy of the Established Church made such a compact with the parents of any children attending their schools, they would have no objection to any rules which had it for their object to secure that the agreement should be faithfully carried out. But they had not felt that they could make such a compact. And after having in vain attempted to procure such a modification of the Rules of the National System as would enable them to adopt

it, they felt it necessary to establish a Society on what they regarded sounder principles.

“ The rule of this Society is, that while the Children of the Church alone shall be required to learn the Formularies of the Church, and to receive instruction in them, all the Children attending the Schools, who can join intelligently in the exercise, shall receive daily instruction in the Word of God. To this Rule they still hold fast. And for this on all proper occasions they are accused of violating the liberty of conscience, and disregarding parental rights, while the credit of asserting and enforcing those great principles is loudly claimed for the National Board.

“ How far this claim on its behalf is well grounded ought to be understood by this time. But the confidence with which it is still put forward makes it necessary again and again to return to the task of showing how utterly unfounded it is. It has been often shown that whilst the advocates of the National System claim credit on the ground that they are maintaining the sanctity of Parental authority, they are in fact, upholding Priestly domination. The facts of the case furnish a conclusive proof of this. At the first introduction of the National System, it was represented as a radical vice in the Kildare-place System, to which Government support had before been given, that its Rule with respect to the reading of the Holy Scriptures was inconsistent with the regulations of the Church of Rome on the same subject,—the Kildare-place Society requiring all the Scholars in its Schools, who could read, to read the Bible, while the Church of Rome did not allow such unrestricted reading of Scripture even to adults. This *error* was to be corrected, therefore, not to uphold Parental authority, but the authority of the Church of Rome. And, accordingly, the first Rules of the Board,

founded upon this declaration, made no mention of Parents, or of their rights. They spoke only of Ecclesiastical authority. They required that the Schools should be kept open for a certain number of hours, on four or five days in the week, *for moral and literary education only*. Particular religious instruction, in which it was expressly and carefully noted that *the reading of the Bible was included*, was forbidden during those hours. The remaining one or two days were to be set apart for giving to the scholars *such religious instruction as was approved of by the Clergy of their respective persuasions*. With the clergy, therefore, it rested whether, even upon the days set apart for religious instruction, the Bible should be read or not. So that, as regarded the Roman Catholic children, the Rule in effect was, that they should not read the Bible unless their Priests approved.

But the Board seem soon to have felt that this was putting the System and themselves in a diadvantageous and discreditable point of view. And accordingly, in the very first year, they abandoned the office of upholders of Priestly authority, and assumed the more popular and reputable one of assertors of Parental rights. Their new rule made the religious education depend upon *the parents and guardians of the children*. No mention was made of either, as I have said, in the first Rules. *The Clergy of their respective persuasions* alone were spoken of. But now the Clergy were put out of sight, and have never since been suffered to appear, while the parents and guardians have been kept continually before the public eye. But every one acquainted with the state of the country perfectly understood, that in the new arrangement there was only a decent change of persons; and in the second rule, as in the first, the authority upheld was the authority of the

Priests. And if any confirmation of this was needed—in Ireland none was needed—it would have been conclusively confirmed by the fact, that this change of persons was allowed to be made in silence. Not a word of opposition, or remonstrance, or dissatisfaction was heard on the occasion from any Priest from one end of Ireland to the other. While every one who knows anything of the Roman Catholic Priests in Ireland, or, I believe, any where else, knows, that if any real and substantial alteration had been effected—if they had been deprived of a particle of the absolute power which the first Rule had bestowed upon them—they would have promptly and effectively resisted the change.

The change was made for the credit of the System—and it has answered its purpose with many, looking at it ignorantly and from a distance. But with right-minded persons on the spot, who understood the true state of things, the change has only stamped a more revolting character upon the System. In the original arrangement, the Priest was seen at his proper work of openly and actively withholding the Bible from the children. The parent was out of sight and quiescent. Now, when the work is to be done, he must himself come forward to do it. And every well-constituted mind must feel that there is something awfully revolting in thus forcing forward the parent to wrest the Word of God from the hands of his child.

“And is it to be thought that the Clergy of our Church are to consent to be the instruments in upholding Priestly domination, whether open or covert? Could they become agents in enforcing the Rule of the Church of Rome with respect to the reading of the Holy Scriptures—the Rule which they denounce and protest against, and by which, more than any of her Rules, all her errors are upheld? If they could do so without offending God

and dishonouring His Word, could they do so without appearing to abandon the maintenance of the great principle which they are bound by every obligation to maintain—the principle of the right and the duty of all to read the Word of God. Could they do so, at least, without impairing in the eyes of the old and the young, of their own communion and of the Roman Catholics, the effect of their maintenance of that great principle?

“But to avoid misconception, it is right to add, that supposing the System what its friends represent it to be, and supposing, moreover, that the Parents in forbidding their children to read or hear the Word of God were acting spontaneously, and not under the dictation of their Priests, the Clergy feel that they could not carry out such a prohibition. They would not encourage a child in disobeying even such an unlawful command, nor would they countenance his disobedience to it, unless there seemed to be good reason to believe that he was acting under a real sense of the paramount authority of God. But while they would neither incite, nor encourage, nor countenance resistance to parental authority, even where it went beyond its lawful limits, they would resolutely refuse to be instruments in carrying the unlawful commands of a Parent into effect. They would not be *partakers of other men's sins*. And, therefore, if the National System were what it professes to be, instead of what it really is—if it were really an instrument to maintain the right of Parents to withhold the Word of God from their children, instead of being an instrument for maintaining the absolute authority of Priests over both Parents and Children, and that in one of the worst cases of its exercise—the Clergy could not join in carrying it out.

“How little the System really deserves the credit which was claimed for it in this matter, as upholding

the liberty of conscience and parental rights, may appear sufficiently from what has been said ; but it is further illustrated by two facts, to which I will briefly advert. First, that, while it takes such pains to protect Parents in the exercise of a right, which was most injurious to the best interests of their children, but which was exercised in accordance with the principles and policy of the Church of Rome, it has done absolutely nothing to secure to them rights which would be, in the highest degree, beneficial to their children, but which would be discountenanced and resisted by the same Church. Thus, if a Parent desires to prevent his child from reading or hearing the Bible in a National School, he can accomplish the object, whatever be the principles or the wishes of the Patron, or the wishes of the Child himself. But if he desires to obtain for his Child, and the Child desires to obtain for himself, the benefit of daily instruction in the Bible,—and if the Patron is not willing to afford it to him, neither Parent nor Child can procure it. Must not this force upon every one the conviction, that the object is not to uphold Parental rights, or to guard liberty of conscience, or to benefit the rising generation, but to conciliate the Roman Catholic Priesthood, by upholding their usurped authority ?

“ Again, in Ireland, this rule of the National Board concerning religious education is treated as of vital importance. Unless the Church Education Society abandons its own rule, and adopts the rule of the National system, it can obtain no aid. Government are immovable on this point. It is a sacred principle on which they must insist. But how is it that this principle is so quietly passed over in England ? No such condition is enforced, or attempted to be enforced, here upon the applicants for assistance from the State. There are three societies receiving assistance from the public funds

in England. One the Educational Organ of the Church ; another, of the Protestant Dissenters ; and a third, of the Roman Catholics. Upon none of these is this condition enforced. Each of them has its own rules with respect to religious education, which are, so far similar to that of the Church Education Society, that they regulate the instruction which they give, not by the wishes or the opinions of the Parents, but by their own principles and judgment. And yet to each of these, assistance is given by the State, without requiring them to abandon or to modify their Rules ! What account can be given of this flagrant inequality, but one ? that is, that the religious bodies with which these Societies are connected, have all, in different measures, a formidable amount of political strength, and that Government are afraid to impose upon the Societies any conditions which those bodies would resist and resent. But as regards the Church Education Society, they have no such fear. The Church in Ireland has little political power, and its adversaries have a great deal. And so far are Government from fearing to provoke the Church, that they, on the contrary, count upon adding to their supporters—either to their number or their zeal—in the Romish party, just in the degree in which they deal heavy blows and great discouragement to that which is the great object of its hostility.

“ How discreditable this is to Government—not to the present Government only, but to their predecessors, who acted, though not so steadily and openly, on the same principle—it is needless to say. But I must be allowed to add that it is not merely to the Government that the state of things to which I have been adverting is discreditable. For why is it that the Roman Catholic minority in England is so strong, that the minister does not venture to impose any rules upon its educational

organ which it would be disposed to resist, while he has no scruple in disregarding all resistance on the part of the Protestant minority in Ireland? The Roman Catholics in England have less political power than the Protestants in Ireland. Why are the former, then, so strong, and the latter so weak? It is just because if any measure were adopted, or threatened, which affected injuriously the Roman Catholics in England, the Irish Roman Catholics—much to their credit—would come promptly to the rescue, and would lend their weaker brethren the full support of all their strength. While, on the other hand—to their grievous discredit—no such promptitude and resolution are shown by the Protestants of England, when their brethren in Ireland are wronged and oppressed. If the Protestants of England felt the same sympathy with their brethren in the faith in Ireland that the Irish Roman Catholics showed in all that affects the Roman Catholics of this country, the grievance under which the Irish branch of the Church has been so long suffering in the matter of education would have long since come to an end. And yet if right feeling and right principle did not secure for her this sympathy, sound policy ought. The battle of Protestantism—the battle of the Church—is to be fought in Ireland. The contest is going on. And, when the weaker branch of the Church, which has to maintain it, is sore pressed, and cries to England, “*Come over and help us,*” her more prosperous sister will at last find, if she turns a deaf ear to the cry, that she has been resisting the call of interest no less than that of duty and of honour.”

THE END.

Houses of the Oireachtas