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D E F E N C E
O F
P U B L I C E D U C A T I O N,
A D D R E S S E D T O
T H E M O S T R E V E R E N D
T H E L O R D B I S H O P O F M E A T H,

B Y
W I L L I A M V I N C E N T, D. D.

In Answer to a Charge annexed to his Lordship's Discourse,
preached at St. Paul's, on the Anniversary Meeting of the
Charity Children, and published by the Society for
promoting Christian Knowledge.

T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N.

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L E T T E R
TO
THE MOST REVEREND
THE LORD BISHOP OF MEATH.

MY LORD,

INDISCRIMINATE charges are as abundant in mischief, as they are generally deficient in proof; and proof, in the business now to be discussed, your Lordship seems to have thought totally superfluous; without any knowledge of your own, without enquiry or examination, you assume the testimony of Dr. Rennell as incontrovertible; not reflecting, that if his evidence cannot be substantiated, your own accusation has nothing for its support. What ground Dr. Rennell had to charge the Masters of Public Schools with neglect of Christian instruction, what right he had to assume the office of Censor, or how he brought himself to think, that he was more invulnerable than others of his profession, I know not?

but, it is with regret, that I find his name introduced upon the present occasion, because I had entered into Articles of Peace with him two years ago, and had hoped that the subject in dispute had been quieted once for all. At that time, upon the interference of some common friends, Dr. Rennell was pleased to make an exception in favour of me, and the school under my superintendance; and though a private acknowledgment was no satisfaction for a public accusation, still I was easily reconciled, and acquiesced, under the opinion of friends, who certainly wished well to us both.

But if the testimony of Dr. Rennell is now to be revived, for the purpose of renewing the attack, it is not my intemperance, but the indiscretion of his admirers, that brings the question before the public in its present form. I hope I shall not transgress the bounds of moderation; but I have a right to be heard in my own defence, a double right on the repetition of the charge, without any new offence on my part; and if I felt this charge as an injury from an equal, I feel it as oppression from a superior.

Perhaps, it will be asked, why I am so ready to stand forth before all other Conductors of Public Education? why my indignation is excited sooner than that of others implicated in the same charge of delinquency? I hope, my Lord, to make it appear, that I am not more irritable, but more injured; because my acquiescence, in the first instance, has only exposed me to a repetition of the affront. If
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any one pleads guilty, he may complain of want of generosity in his accuser, but he has no right to complain of his injustice. For my own part, I deny the fact; and many reasons urge me to stand upon my defence, which may weigh little with others in the same predicament.

The first is, that, like Solon's, my time of life is my security. In the course of nature, the period of my public labours cannot be remote; and the remuneration of my services, with which His Majesty has been pleased to honour me, has made me independent, whenever my own comfort or convenience induce me to fix the moment of my retirement. My mind may suffer, indeed, from injurious and unmerited reproach; but the talents and ingenuity of Dr. Rennell, and the eloquence of your Lordship, will be exerted in vain to prejudice me in my circumstances. You will both disclaim the intention. I speak not of your intention, but the fact; and the fact is, that if the world credits your assertions, in a very few years no man will be enabled to live by the emoluments of a Public School. It is in this point that I am superior to the utmost efforts of my accusers: and were I to retire to-morrow, I should lay down my office with a conscious satisfaction, in having closed the scene with a Defence of Public Education.

A second inducement for undertaking this office, is, that the reproaches of Dr. Rennell still remain unretracted and unexpiated: his private exception
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in my favour is of no value, if his public charge is still to mislead men of your Lordship's rank, consequence, and discernment. It is now revived after two years given to footh it into oblivion, and may be repeated annually by every preacher called to the duty which your Lordship has performed; and if this charge should now be left unanswered, it may be deemed unanswerable.

But the cause, above all others, which compels me to disclaim all farther reserve, is the extensive circulation given to this reiterated attack, by means of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. The sanction of so venerable a body, added to the testimony of your Lordship and Dr. Rennell; the dispersion of the Annual Sermon in the Metropolis, in every county of England and Wales, extended likewise into Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and the East-Indies, gives a celebrity and notoriety to this estimate of education in our great Schools, that all the abilities of Dr. Rennell, and all the address of your Lordship, could not have effected. Dr. Rennell, my Lord, has published many Sermons, and I question if his great name ever sold an edition of five hundred copies; but the Society prints three thousand; and, if we allow ten readers to a copy, here is an evil report propagated to thirty thousand persons, twice in the course of two years; which, if the event should be proportionate to the means, would leave all the Public Schools in the kingdom without a scholar.

Surely

Surely this was not the intention of Dr. Rennell, of your Lordship, or the Society. No.—But you intended our reformation and amendment.—Alas! my Lord, I am too old for reformation:—if I have not already done my duty without this admonition, I cannot now change my method, my habits, or my opinions;—but if the admonition was not wanted, (as I shall prove in the following pages,) the mischief is the same: but where am I to look for remedy or redress? The only hope of redress I had, was the interference of the Society. I applied for permission to circulate with their annual packet, containing your Lordship's Discourse, a Note, requesting the members to suspend their judgment on the point in question, till I could be heard in my own defence; but the Board was so prepossessed either of my delinquency, or Dr. Rennell's veracity, that my application was utterly in vain. Nothing can diminish my esteem and veneration of that excellent Society, which I have now attended for almost thirty years, with an affection that cannot be surpassed by the attachment of its best and warmest friends; but I feel something like a departure from its usual candour, in the present instance: for if a charge against any of its members is published under the sanction of the Society, and that charge should prove to be groundless, the injury is no longer that of the writer, but of the publisher; and if an action for defamation would lie in this case, I imagine it must be brought, not
 against

against Dr. Rennell, but against the Secretary of the Society. That I harbour no such intention, your Lordship will readily believe; and the Secretary is so innocent of concerting any plan against me, or designing any evil by the publication, that he did not know the contents of the Discourse, till the morning it was laid before the Board, and many copies were in the hands of the members present. No, my Lord, the Secretary, with all his deference to your Lordship's rank, his attachment to your person, and his respect for your talents and abilities, had never been induced, by curiosity or duty, to read one word of your Sermon. It passed from your Lordship's hands into the Secretary's, and from the Secretary to the Printer: it returned from the Printer by sheets to your Lordship for correction; and when finished, it was committed to the Binder, with whom it continued till it was laid unread upon the table. Now, my Lord, suppose the accusation to be groundless; suppose the Sermon to have contained heterodoxy, or any thing worse,—who was culpable?—not the Board,—for the Board never does see the Sermon;—not the Secretary, for he never looked at it;—not the Printer or Binder, for they will print or bind any thing that comes into their shop;—and yet, my Lord, with nobody responsible or accountable, this report of the Public Schools in England is to be propagated from the Liffey to the Ganges, as the opinion of the Society, adopted on the authority of Dr. Rennell and your

Lordship.

Lordship. When I asked for the insertion of the Note for my own justification in the packet, I did not ask for the opinion of the Board.—I was to defend myself; and till that defence could be prepared, I requested only not to be prejudged by the sanction and publication of so venerable a body. Festus thought it unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him. I desired only the converse of this proposition, that my crimes should not be signified, without giving intimation at the same time that I was ready for my trial. I should have obtained this request from a Roman and a Gentile.

It is with infinite regret that I am compelled to allude to any transactions in a Society, which I respect above all others, for doing the most extensive good with the least possible parade; and I repeat, that it is with much concern that it is necessary to recur to Dr. Rennell's Discourse. But it is for your Lordship's information upon that point, that I must state the following particulars. When some members of the Board interfered to effect a reconciliation between Dr. Rennell and myself, I no sooner received his letter, with the exception in my favour, than I returned an answer by the same post, expressed in cordial terms, that I was contented to be silent. I was not a little surprized to find afterwards, that another letter was written by Dr. Rennell to the Board, much less favourable to me, and much more resolute in censuring Public Schools and

Universities, than even his publication. I repented of my acquiescence, but my word was passed, and I made no further complaint. Dr. Rennell will feel the value of this sort of moderation, when I acquaint him that my Defence was ready for publication, and could have gone to the press the next morning. An Author who can stop at such a point, can hardly be deemed irritable or implacable; but these facts it is now necessary to state, because your Lordship must have been unacquainted with them, or else you could not have grounded your own charge on the public testimony of Dr. Rennell, had you known his retraction in private. The express words of your accusation are these :

I had proposed to say a few words on the “ sad
 “ degeneracy of our Public Schools, in this most
 “ important part of education, and their systema-
 “ tic neglect of that religious instruction which in
 “ the earlier parts of the Reformation, and even
 “ to a much later date, was so carefully provided
 “ for the higher and wealthier classes of the British
 “ youth ; but I found the subject anticipated by
 “ Dr. Rennell, in his Sermon on this anniversary,
 “ and I could add nothing to what that zealous
 “ and eloquent preacher had there urged, to call
 “ the public attention to this portentous evil.”—

Note p. 39.

Surely, my Lord, “ degeneracy,” “ systematic neglect of religious instruction, and “ portentous evil,” are terms harsh enough for the most zealous
 and

and eloquent preacher in Christendom to adopt.— They could want no addition from your Lordship, if they are Dr. Rennell's language; and they cannot well be carried higher by any future eloquent preacher, if they are your Lordship's. You, my Lord, make no exception, because you were unacquainted with Dr. Rennell's exception; and thus, all the conductors of public education are comprized in one general indiscriminate charge, without a single qualifying clause in favour of any one.

But gross as this language is, there is nothing except the charge of systematic neglect of religious instruction, to prevent my arguing the question with the most perfect composure: *that*, indeed, is a crime of such a nature, that if it can be brought home and proved against me, or any master, no punishment can be too great. Neglect there is in all education, arising from the infirmity of human nature, and the tedium of treading the same dull round daily through a life of perpetual labour, confinement, and anxiety. Evils there are in all public education, produced by the habits and customs of the place, which can no more be eradicated out of schools than nations. Evils there are from the temper, habits, and manners of the times; and evils there are in the constitution and statutes; for our ancestors, though wise, were not perfect; and vice there is, wherever three hundred human beings are collected into a body. All this, therefore, I would have conceded; and on this, I imagine, your Lord-

ship's complaint is not founded. But the *systematic* neglect of religious instruction is a crime of the blackest dye; and I reserve my observations on the indiscretion and intemperance of my accusers, till I have proved the imputation to be a falsehood.

False I call it in direct terms; and calumnious I would have called it, but that to constitute calumny, I must prove that the intention of the accuser was malicious, and that his malice was founded upon what he knew to be a falsehood himself. Of this I acquit both Dr. Rennell and your Lordship; but I believe that the zeal of Dr. Rennell made him conceive that this was a splendid topic for his eloquence, and that your Lordship mistook rhetoric for argument, or assertion for truth; but in this instance, my Lord, you have gone a step beyond the information of your brief. Dr. Rennell confined himself to the term "*many*;" but you comprehend all public schools in general, and condemn all in one sweeping clause for degeneracy and systematic neglect.

But let us first settle the terms of the controversy, and the extent of the charge. What does Dr. Rennell, or your Lordship, comprize under the expression of Public Schools? Are we to understand only Winchester, Eton, and Westminster? or, are we to extend our notion, as we ought to do, to the three other great schools in the Metropolis; to Harrow, Rugby, Manchester, Wakefield, and many more of equal magnitude in the North? If all these

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are to plead guilty to the charge, the rising generation is ripe for the machinations of a Voltaire, a Diderot, a d'Alembert, a Condorcet, or a Lepaux; and we may expect a revolution in Church and State, as soon as ever a prime agitator shall start up in this country to set the conspiracy in motion. I do not think, my Lord, that either you or Dr. Rennell, carry your impeachment to this extent. If you do, I must maintain that your enquiries and your information will not bear you out in the event; for even in the three schools, which I suppose your accusations in reality to comprehend, your investigation is miserably deficient. Dr. Rennell was bred at Eton, and has lived at Winchester; but he knows no more of Westminster than Tom Paine does of the Bible. Just enough to misrepresent and condemn, but nothing to qualify him for a judge of what is excellent and good. But he does not include Westminster. No.—Not in his private judgment: but his Sermon is still sufficient to mislead your Lordship, and to influence the opinion of the public. If the attack is made in concert, it is overwhelming me with your united talents and abilities: if you have not consulted him, you have built upon a foundation which he has renounced.

What sense the Warden and Master of Winchester, or the Master of Eton, may have of this procedure, I know not; but they are men of abilities, and equal to their own defence. I have not communicated with them, because I had not the arro-

gance to offer myself as a champion in the common cause; neither ought their interests, or estimation in the world, to be hazarded on my defence, if it should prove inadequate to its purpose. Winchester I know enough of, generally, to believe that the accusation is groundless: and who is it that accuses Eton? a man bred under the protection of the pious Founder, whose abilities have been nurtured and expanded under his roof,—those abilities which are now employed to depreciate his establishment. We have among us a piety and a gratitude to our nursing mother; faults she has, which we rather dissemble than expose; and if one of her sons had acted in a similar manner, we should have disowned him as an alien. Dr. Rennell's character stands high in the world as a man of virtue, morality, and religion; those of a similar description whom we have bred, are generally our firmest friends through life, and our system is reprobated only by those who never profited by their education.

Thus far I have proceeded on the general grounds of the accusation. I shall now enter upon the specific heads of the charge; for which, however unwillingly, I must of necessity recur to Dr. Rennell's discourse, because your Lordship has not descended to particulars. The specific charges may be reduced to three heads.

I. That a preference is due to the religious education in Charity Schools, compared with instruction in Public Seminaries.

II. That

II. That the Paganism taught in Public Schools, is noxious to the cause of Christianity; and,

III. That Public Schools are guilty of a systematic neglect of all religious instruction.

1st. The first head of the charge is comprized in the following terms :

“ Another circumstance of the times, which
 “ render the labours of the Society of peculiar exi-
 “ gency, is the most lamentable and notorious defec-
 “ tiveness of Christian education in many of our
 “ Public Schools, and other great Seminaries of
 “ this nation.” “ All who are acquainted
 “ with the elementary ignorance of Christianity, in
 “ which young men are permitted to remain in the
 “ greater part of our Public Institutions, (and it is
 “ impossible to be much conversant in them without
 “ knowing this) will see how necessary the exertions
 “ of this Society are, for preserving the light of the
 “ Gospel among the lower ranks of men.
 “ The charitable hand which supplies the deficiency
 “ among the poor, is peculiarly grateful to God and
 “ beneficial to mankind.” See Dr. Rennell’s Ser-
 mon, p. 7, before the Society, 1799.

This is the language of the Preacher; and in order to inform us, that *by the other great seminaries of the nation*, he designates the two Universities, he uses in his note, A, the expression of *young men in this situation*; a term exclusively appropriate to those learned bodies.

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Here then we are to learn, that the *defectiveness* of religious education in Public Schools, and the Universities, can only be counterbalanced by preserving the light of the Gospel among the lower ranks; and if the light of the Gospel were extinguished in the higher Seminaries, every minister of the Gospel, who knows his duty, would unite with Dr. Rennell, in turning from the reprobate, and preaching to the poor, who would receive the glad tidings of pardon and redemption. But this is the fact to be proved, and Dr. Rennell has not proved it. When we look to the press of the two Universities for the last thirty years, we find greater treasures of Theology issuing from that source, than in any period of equal length since the Reformation; and if it shall be said, that there are a few learned in that science still remaining, but who pay little attention to the rising generation,—where did those that *are* learned acquire their knowledge? and what is the reason, that, previous to Dr. Rennell's animadversion, and without waiting for his advice, lectures in Divinity were given in both those Seminaries? lectures requiring so indispensable an attendance, that no Bishop will ordain a candidate without a certificate from the Professor, that this duty has been fulfilled.

This is a subject foreign to my purpose: the Universities are not deficient in those who are qualified to meet Dr. Rennell on any ground; and whenever his efforts

efforts shall be deemed noxious rather than intemperate, instead of one correspondent, he will have twenty.

But in Public Schools, wherein does this lamentable and notorious *defectiveness* consist? and why is a preference given to the Teachers of Charity Schools rather than to the Instructors in a higher sphere? Could not a popular audience be sufficiently flattered without levelling all above them? Could not the educators of the lowest be consoled under their laborious duty, without detracting from those whom the public voice, and the discernment of their nominators or electors had appointed to the management of the first Seminaries in the kingdom? Are not these men of the same profession as their accuser? And does Dr. Rennell deny faith and ability to every Churchman but himself?—No, not ability but will; *that* shall be answered in its place. But why are men bred to the instruction of youth by an apprenticeship, supposed more willing to execute their trust, than those who have received the most liberal education known in Europe? This is no vain-glorious boast. Foreigners subscribe to it; they allow the palm of general information to English travellers above all others. Where did they acquire it? In English Schools, in English Universities; and in nineteen instances out of twenty from the English Clergy. Why are these foundations to be decried? Why are these men to be degraded by a comparison with those who have never had similar means of ac-

quiring knowledge, or equal advantages in life, manners, and education? But this is not sufficient; the inferior is to be raised above the superior; the children of the poor are to be told, that they have better instruction than those above them; and the teachers of the poor are taught to believe, that their's is the pre-eminence; that they are to atone for the neglect, and compensate for the deficiency of all that are engaged in the education of the higher orders. If the children who heard this discourse understood it, I should imagine, that their respect for the rank above them must be greatly diminished, and their resistance to subordination greatly increased; and if they were capable of drawing a conclusion, the natural consequence ought to be, that, as they are wiser and better than their superiors, they ought to govern, and their superiors obey.

As to the masters who are to instruct the poor, a more useful order of men in their rank can hardly be supposed; and of the few known personally to me, I have had reason to judge well. The master, who presides in the school with which Dr. Rennell and myself are connected, as Rectors of adjoining parishes, is a sober, discreet, and laborious teacher; he officiates likewise as my parish clerk. If we suppose this good man to have listened with attention to Dr. Rennell's discourse, what must be his opinion of his Rector? It could be no other than this—that he was master of a Public Seminary, indeed, but totally disqualified either by want of will or ability, to
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give the youth under his care the same religious instruction as the children of the poor received in the parish school. But *was* this good man misled by Dr. Rennell's information?—No. He would think himself as little qualified to instruct me in the art of teaching, as to correct, by an harangue from the desk, the abominable doctrines which I was delivering in the pulpit.

The eloquence of Dr. Rennell on this subject, animated by his zeal, could not fail to impress the audience with an opinion that he was a more strenuous advocate for this system of education, than all who had preceded, or should follow him in the same office. But if this is the idea of his general patronage and protection, let us inquire how it stands in regard to its specific application? For if there should be two Rectors of contiguous parishes, connected with the same school, and one of these Rectors should, in the course of twenty years, have preached in favour of the institution, almost annually, while the other had afforded his assistance only once. If one should have taken a part in the management, while the other never attended a single meeting;—if one should have given his countenance to the master, encouraged him in his labours, and consoled him under his difficulties, while the other hardly knew his name or his person;—if one should have catechised the children, while the other never asked them a question;—if one should have expounded the catechism, either privately or publicly,

almost every year, while the other never condescended to so humble an office—we will leave it to the judgment of the Public, which of the two was the greater advocate for the general system? and which of the two was the more zealous supporter of the school under their common protection?

It is not meant to detract from the services of Dr. Rennell at St. Paul's: they were important and meritorious; but he ought not to arrogate all merit to himself: he ought not to assume a right of censuring every other species of education, but the one he was to recommend: he ought not to have flattered the poor at the expence of the rich: he ought not to have elated the poor above their condition, by enhancing the value of their acquirements, and depreciating those of every other order in society: he ought not to have told the instructors of these children, that they were more able, or at least more willing, to do their duty than his brethren of the Clergy, who were engaged in the higher departments, and the more arduous office of educating the children of the wealthy and the noble. Our service is sufficiently painful in itself: why is our estimation to be lessened in the eyes of the people, by the intemperance of a man who thinks he has no equal among his equals? If we do not fulfil our duty, we are amenable; but not before the tribunal of Dr. Rennell. He is not yet my Diocesan or my Principal, and I am thankful that he is neither.

II. The second charge brought against Public Education, is this :

“ There is scarcely an internal danger which we fear, but what is to be ascribed to a *Pagan* education, under Christian establishments, in a Christian country.” See Dr. Rennell’s Sermon, note (a) p. 18.

To enforce this assertion, Dr. Rennell adduces the authority of Mr. Jones, in a publication called *Considerations on the Religious Worship of the Heathen*. Here, my Lord, I must speak in very plain terms. I appeal to your candour, to your liberality as a man, and your charity as a Christian, to judge definitively between Dr. Rennell and myself; whether the introduction of Mr. Jones’s name on this occasion, does or does not point the charge to me, exclusively of all the masters of the Public Schools? Dr. Rennell has denied this, and does deny it in his letter to me. If I acquiesced in his denial; if I do not now charge him with an intention that ought never to be imputed to a man after his assertion to the contrary, I acquiesce in charity; but I leave the judgment to your Lordship.

There is a circumstance which I conclude is totally unknown to your Lordship, and it is this: Mr. Jones’s Tract, in question, was addressed personally to me in the advertisement, and in the title page. And if so, whom did Dr. Rennell address when he charged Public Schools with the crime of teaching

teaching P^AGANISM*, rather than Christianity? Speak candidly, my Lord. If you say I am not the person designed, I will submit to your judgment. If you say I am, what must be your opinion of Dr. Rennell, the guide you have followed, the oracle you have believed? I abide by your decision, without any appeal to the opinion of the public; for I will argue the question as if I admitted Dr. Rennell's assertion, that I am not the person charged with the offence.

The first point I have to complain of, is, that the reading of Pagan Authors is converted into a Pagan Education; a perversion of terms that conceals a fallacy under a most invidious assumption. For who is a disciple of Fo, because he learns Chinese? or a Bhuddist, because he reads Sanskreet? If the wild mythology of Hindostan is thought an object worthy the labours of a Sir W. Jones, a Wilkins, or a Maurice, to explore; if some men of the most consummate learning have dedicated their lives to investigate the extravagancies of the Egyptian, Persian, Peruvian, or Druidical system; does it follow that they are tainted with the respective superstitions?—but it will be said these are men, and we teach children; be it so. Yet I assert, that I never yet found a child of ten years old, who believed in the transformation of Jupiter into a bull,

* The word is in capitals, in Dr. Rennell's Note, A,

or a swan, or a shower of gold; nor a child, in the nursery, convinced that crows sung, or trees talked, or asses played on the fiddle. The scruples of Dr. Rennell, after banishing the abominable heathen Poets out of our schools, may wish to discard Æsop and Pilpay from our families. He has read Rousseau,—Rousseau complains, that in La Fontaine, foxes lie; and his *élève* must not suspect that there is such a thing as a lie in the world. Sweet innocence! he will find plenty of lies, and falsehood, and deception too, when he shall enter upon the scene of life; and perhaps it were better that he should learn the distinction in theory, before he suffers from them by experience. But children of five years old are not deceived by fables, more than by the parables in scripture. If Jotham makes a bramble talk, why may not Æsop? And children of ten, are no more misled by the Gods of Ovid, than men are by the miracles of Apollonius or Creechma.

I stated these sentiments in a letter to Mr. Jones, upon the publication of his Tract; and I explained to him the course of our religious instruction at Westminster. His answer I have in my possession, dictated by himself, but written by a friend. For, alas! his hand was no longer able to wield that pen, which he had employed so often, and so ably in the cause of Religion. He admits my exculpation; he approves of the propriety and consistency of our plan; he exhorts me to pursue it: and I reflect
with

with pleasure that he cheered my labours with his blessing, not many days before he was himself to be received into the habitation of the blessed.

The plan, my Lord, of our human, moral, and religious instruction, is not mine; it is in our statutes. I am accountable for nothing but the execution of it. I am not authorised, if I were willing, to substitute Prudentius for Virgil, or Gregory Nazianzen for Homer:—but I have not the will more than the power; for our authors are not intended to teach Paganism, but to set before our youth the best models of writing that the world affords. Whither shall we go for these, but to the Romans, or to the Greeks, who were *their* masters, as well as ours? and, Pagans as they were, these masters were not ignorant of the moral duties contained in the second table of the Decalogue: for we learn from Sophocles, that they acknowledged the

— ἀγραπτα, καὶ σφαλῆ θεῶν

Νόμιμα

Οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κάχθεις, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ποτε

Ζῆ ταῦτα, κούδεις οἶδεν, ἐξ ὅτι φάνη.

Antigone, l. 455.

And we are taught by the Hymn of Cleanthes, that in regard to the contents of the first table, they were not utterly in the dark.

The use that has been made of that extraordinary composition on the Continent, is no reason for excluding it from a Christian Seminary: it is the ap-

plication

plication of it, by the teacher, that may pervert it to a bad end; but there is no danger in shewing, that the Heathens in the midst of darkness retained some knowledge of the origin of evil; that some among them rejected the Epicurean doctrine of fate and chance; or that others did not place the first happiness of life in pleasure*. When we have such authors as these in our hands, if a master does not explain the sentiment of Sophocles by the text of St. Paul, and contrast the eternal unwritten law of the Gentiles, with *the law engraven on the heart*; if he does not compare the language of Cleanthes, Plato, Socrates and the Stoic school, with the doctrines of Revelation; if he does not point out how far those doctrines approach the truth, and how infinitely they fall short of the Word of God, that master is not of our stock, nor worthy of the place he holds. Upon such opportunities as authors or sentiments like these afford, I remember to this hour, the tone, the manner, the elevated warmth of my own preceptor, the venerable Metropolitan of York; and I feel at this moment, that I owe the firmest principles of my mind, and my first reverence of the Scriptures, to his instruction.

* Young men place their happiness in pleasure, and are soon compelled to own that all is vanity and vexation of spirit; those of riper years are taught that the first happiness of life is in their knowledge of God and of his agency. The second is, where Aristotle has placed the first, in the contemplation of the mind itself, in the acquirements it has made, and the information it possesses.

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You

You will think, my Lord, perhaps, that I catch at a splendid example of good, to hide the deformities of the bad ; that I suppress the ignorance of Pagan Poets and Historians, to take refuge under the more enlightened discoveries of Philosophers ; but I do aver once more, that I never found a child in the lower forms idiot enough to want guarding against the seduction of his mind by the Gods or Metamorphoses of Ovid ; or one advanced into the higher classes, who could not relish the sarcasm of Elijah, when applied to the Gods of Homer. “ Cry aloud ; for he is a God et her he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey : or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.” These are the admonitions which our daily duty affords us opportunity to enforce ; and the bitterness of an adversary dare not assert, that when we have Homer in our hands, our reverence for the Poet makes us forget our religious obligations.

Mr. Jones, with as sincere a faith as ever adorned a Christian, undoubtedly had prepossessions of this sort. The circumstances of the times operated more powerfully on his mind, than on others who were possessed of less fervency and zeal. He had lived to see the Christian religion overwhelmed in France, and altars erected to Liberty, and Reason, and Nonsense. He saw the grossness of Heathenism, as he thought, reviving in the caprice of imagination, and he wished to warn his own countrymen against a similar catastrophe. Had he lived to the present moment

moment his apprehensions might have been diminished; he might have been convinced that no such evil would have arisen here from a classical education; and that it did not spring in France from any such source, but from a philosophy that detested solid instruction next to the religion of the Gospel;—from a faction, that by a civic education meant ignorance and barbarism;—from a fanatic group of the illuminated, who replaced the professors discarded from the college of Louis le Grand by a corporal of the guards.

But if Mr. Jones was misled by his apprehensions, his language was calm, temperate, and friendly; he neither overcharged the colouring, nor perverted the terms. Dr. Rennell has done both. By substituting *Pagan* for *Classical* education, he cajoled all those who were ignorant enough not to know the distinction between reading Pagan authors, and teaching the Pagan religion; and thus he made a second appeal from the learned to the ignorant: to the ignorant, I say, because there is not an individual in the nation, of a rank to have partaken of a classical education, who could have been deceived by the fallacy for a moment. The luminaries of the Church in all ages, from Bede to Roger Bacon, from Bacon to the Reformation, and from the Reformation to the present hour, were all formed upon classical instruction. And if the writings of our English Divines stood higher than all others in the estimation of Europe, for solidity of reasoning, and superiority of composition,

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what other cause can be assigned for it, but the excellence of the models by which their style was formed, and their judgment corrected? And if we are now forbidden to have recourse to the same means of information, it is one step towards the re-establishment of the *imprimatur* of our own country, or the *index expurgatorius* of the Inquisition. We know that Chrysofom, Gregory Nazianzen, and Jerom were as well versed in the elegancies of classical literature, as in the sublime language and important truths of the Scripture. And we know that Tillotson, Pearson, Butler, and Sherlock, were all trained under this execrable Pagan institution, which is continued in our schools, both public and private, to the present hour. Are all who read the Koran disposed to become Mahometans? All who read Iamblichus, Myficks? or all who read Manetho, Astrologers? These, indeed, are depths of corruption which we do not fathom; but we assert, that our pupils are no more liable to delusion from the miracles of Livy, or the oracles of Herodotus, than men are from these seductions of deeper research. In History and Oratory, the Gods are not *always* presented to our contemplation; in Poetry, the finest Passages are not dependent on mythology; but it is the composition itself, the style, the diction, the manner, the sublimity, the perfection of the model that is ever before our eyes, ever present to our mind, ever instructing and forming our understanding, and ever stimulating us to a desire of equal excellence or competition.

Whenever

Whenever those who decry classical instruction shall produce us works more worthy of imitation than those of the ancients, we will leave the inferior models for the better; but if ever the human intellect was cultivated to the extent of its powers, if ever the arts were carried to the summit of perfection, if ever generous competition effected more than the thirst of gain, it was in Greece; and if the treasures of Greece, because they are Pagan, are now to be hidden from the British youth, they will be replaced, not by a religious, but by a civic education, and barbarism in its rudest form. All knowledge, all letters, arts and sciences may be misemployed; but it is notorious false reasoning to argue from the abuse of any good against its use; and all the eloquence of Dr. Rennell will never prove, that more evil is derived from Greek literature than good. *Whence* was the eloquence he employs to decry these wicked Pagans derived, but from a Pagan source? From his knowledge of the Ancients, from his contemplation of Demosthenes or Cicero? Perhaps he has been misled by the *divine* Philippic of the Roman, and mistaken Obloquy for Rhetoric; perhaps it was congenial to his talents to copy rather the railing accusation of the Orator against Antony, than his eulogy of Cesar.

But *where* did Dr. Rennell acquire that knowledge, which, in your Lordship's opinion, constitutes him the most eloquent preacher of the age?—At Eton. *Where* is Dr. Rennell's son training up to the

the same degree of eminence?—At Eton. And why is the family of the Rennells alone to escape the contagion of these Pagan principles, while thousands bred in the same celebrated Seminary are all tainted with the infection?

But I have done with this article of the impeachment. I had intended to close it with an answer to some of the more general reflections on Public Education, by Milton, Cowley, and Addison: but a few words must suffice.

Milton complained of the years that were wasted in teaching the dead languages, and proposed a more compendious method of his own; but Johnson, who had taught these languages himself, observes, that no man can teach faster than a boy can learn. We know nothing of Milton's success; for not a name of all his pupils is upon record: but we know that the brightest luminaries of the age issued from the school of Busby; and we know that to form the habits of literature, time is required as well as teaching.

Cowley complained that classical education taught *words* only, and not *things*; but it ought to be considered, that all the instruction of childhood depends more on memory than intellect. When the age of comprehension comes, from twelve or fourteen to sixteen or eighteen, if the master teaches only words, he is a blockhead. It is the composition of the Poet he is to notice, and not the rendering a word of the original by its correspondent term in English; the
 6 order,

order, connexion, and relation of part to part, the allusions to History, Mythology, and Geography; and if these are not things rather than words, where are we to search for them?

Addison deemed it an inexpressible error, that boys with genius or without, were all to be bred Poets indiscriminately; and if this were our object in teaching profody, his reproof would be just; but no ear can be formed to harmony, no Poet can be read with pleasure, no intimate acquaintance with any dead language can be obtained, without a knowledge of profody. Greek is less understood than Latin, because the compositions in that language are less frequent; and Hebrew is less understood than either, because no one composes in it at all. But will not prose composition answer the purpose as well as verse?—No teacher will think so who has tried the experiment; and the practice of all schools proves, that profody is never neglected, unless where the master is ignorant of it himself.

I have much more to say in answer to these several objections, but they are foreign to the immediate purpose of my Defence; and I shall proceed immediately to the consideration of the last article exhibited against Public Education, by your Lordship and Dr. Rennell. The recital must be dull, but it shall be true.

III. In the Note to Dr. Rennell's Sermon, the charge stands thus:

“ We cannot but lament that in *very few* of our
“ best

“ best endowed Seminaries, the study of Christianity
 “ has not * that portion of time and regard allotted
 “ to it, which the welfare of society, the progress of
 “ delusive and ruinous errors, and the true interest
 “ of sound learning itself, seems at the present time
 “ peculiarly to call for. In *some* of them, and those
 “ not of *small* celebrity or importance, *all* confide-
 “ ration of the revealed will of God is passed over
 “ with a resolute, systematic, and contemptuous
 “ neglect, which is not exceeded in that which
 “ the French call their *National Institute*.” See Dr.
 Rennell’s Sermon, note (a) p. 18.

Dr. Rennell, by the terms “ some,” and “ very
 “ few,” leaves an opening for exception, as has
 been already acknowledged; but when you, my
 Lord, adopt his expression of systematic neglect, and
 apply it to Public Schools in general, without dis-
 crimination or qualification, Dr. Rennell is still ac-
 countable for the error into which he has led your
 Lordship; and your Lordship accountable for the
 evil report which you have published to the world,
 without sufficient authority or examination. The
 same outcry, my Lord, is to be found in several of
 our religious and moral writers of the present day,
 —in Cowper, in Dr. Randolph of Bath, in Mr.
 Gifborne, and Mrs. Trimmer: and the Secretary of
 the Society informs me very coldly, that he is little
 acquainted with Public Schools, but he has heard
 similar reports. This from a friend, my Lord,

* The negative is omitted in Dr. Rennell’s text.

was a reproach more severe than from an adversary; a friend, my Lord, who had written the letter dictated by Mr. Jones; who had read the exculpation which I sent to that excellent divine; and who, by his present answer to my application, gives me reason to think, that he either did not remember my defence, or did not believe one word of it. I felt this as the reproof of a friend, and I am still in friendship with him; for he is a good man, and an admirable Secretary; but if his opinion, or influence, have at all contributed to promote the rejection of my request, by the Board, I shall feel that our excellent Society, like many others, is rather too much under the direction of its officers.

These, however, are incidental circumstances; and I now proceed to my Defence.

It would appear, from the imputations of your Lordship and Dr. Rennell, as if you were both ignorant, that every Collegiate foundation has a book of statutes, and that the statutes of all these foundations are very full and express on the enforcing of religious duties, and attendances on the office of worship. What the ordinances in other instances may be, I know not; but the religious offices at Westminster, prescribed by our statutes, amount to prayers (including the graces) ten times a day: of these none are actually omitted*, except the prayers
at

* The omission of early prayers in this, and other foundations, has arisen from the manners of the age; those who are not in

at six o'clock in the morning; the majority of the others is performed regularly from five to nine times every day, when we attend school twice, with a remission on one day only in the week; for this neglect, which is confessed, I must expect your Lordship's reprehension; but the world, in general, will perhaps think that the office is still too frequent. The performance of this service is generally enforced with as much external decency as can be exacted, allowing for the natural impatience of boys under restraint, and the levity of youth. The Latin prayers at six in the morning, and eight in the evening; with the English at twelve and five, comprehend nearly the whole service of the Church. These, so far as they are performed, are performed with all the propriety which the presence and authority of the master can effect; the others are brief and momentary: but in the execution of this duty, the second master, on three days in a week, at least, is often nine times personally present.

If it shall be asked, what effect this service has upon the morals of our youth? for the present I shall answer, that the habit of prayer is a good habit. I am now only contending against the re-

bed early, cannot rise early. Our ancestors retired with the curfew; and yet Matthew Paris complains, that, in performing the *Ante-lucan* service, the Monks of his Abbey (St. Alban's) were asleep, and the reader was unintelligible from dispatch.

folute

solute and contemptuous neglect of our duty with which we are charged; and I maintain, that whatever the effect may be, here is a *resolute* and *persevering* attendance on the offices prescribed.

The next object of our statutes is to put the Scriptures into the hands of our scholars, from the day on which they enter the School, to the day they leave it: they commence with translating the Psalms almost daily; they proceed to the Gospels; then to a collection of Sacred Exercises, appropriate to the School; and finally, to produce a composition in verse, from the Psalms, every Monday. This is the business of the lower School. In the higher classes, the Sacred Exercise is still used for compositions in verse, the Greek Testament, Grotius, and the Hebrew Psalms; and throughout the year, on Saturday, a History, or other portion out of the Scriptures, is appointed for a Bible exercise in verse: added to this, the Catechism, or Bishop Williams's exposition, is as regularly repeated on Monday morning, in the lower forms, as in a Parish School; attended with such an oral explanation as might instruct the Parish Teacher, as well as those he teaches. In the higher classes, there is another sort of Religious Instruction, which shall be noticed in its proper place.

Such, my Lord, is the Institution that Dr. Rennell calls a Pagan system; and such are the labours of men, that he accuses of resolute, contemptuous,

and systematic neglect of Christian Instruction. But in all this, my Lord, we claim no merit; it is the routine of business, the prescription of our statutes: whether any effect follows from it or not, we have performed a duty, we have fulfilled our covenant, and we are no farther accountable to man. If we have any merit, it is in the execution of voluntary and higher offices; but these, your Lordship and Dr. Rennell have no right to exact, nor the World, nor the Parents of the children entrusted to our care; we contracted only for this, and this we have performed. I have performed it for forty years; from the day I sat as Usher at the first form, to the present moment in which I am writing. I acknowledge no delinquency or neglect; and if any can be proved against me, I ask for no favour, but let judgment be passed.

So much for the resolute and contemptuous, but I come now to the systematic neglect; an imputation of your Lordship's, in common with Dr. Rennell. Now, this charge will fall to the ground of itself, if it can be proved, that, in any one instance, we do more than what the letter of our statutes enjoins. The instances I produce are these: First, The exposition of the Catechism; and, Secondly, The application of every passage in Scripture to instruction, as soon as our Pupils are of an age to comprehend. If there is a single lesson of the Greek Testament, where the opportunity for this is not embraced; if
there

there is a single exercise out of the Bible, proposed or explained to the Classes, without this object in view; without considering the moral and religious tendency of the subject, as well as its arrangement for poetical composition, among us, the teacher would be deemed inexcusable. This opportunity occurs weekly; and, in the course of passing through the upper classes, the whole History, and most of the prophetic Writings come at least once in review, and become objects of the labour, meditation, and reflection of every individual. But if this is thought a matter of course, what shall be said of our lesson in the highest class, where Grotius presents us with almost all the arguments that have been advanced in defence of our holy Religion? I aver, that it is now, and always was, the most laboured lesson of the week. If a boy were suffered, in this instance, to render the *words* only, then might we be said to neglect the *things* which belong unto Salvation: but it employs more time, and is enforced with more earnestness than any lesson in the week. The whole is read in the course of two years; and no individual, who completes his education, is sent into the world without having all the evidences of the Christian Religion set before him. This, my Lord, an indifferent person would call elementary instruction, at least; but Dr. Rennell, by an uniformity of perversion, transmutes it into elementary ignorance. I cannot sufficiently express my contempt of the insinuation.

In

In Passion Week, it is the custom of the School to take our lesson, for the highest class, from some peculiar subject of the New Testament: sometimes, it is the History of Paul, from the Acts; sometimes, the Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law, from the Epistle to the Galatians; at other times, the Sacrifice and Atonement, with the doctrine of Faith and Works, from the Epistle to the Romans; and our last subject was, the Sermon on the Mount. Whether the lectures upon these occasions are good or bad, sufficient or insufficient, must depend upon the ability of the instructor; but they are delivered with all his heart, with all his mind, and with all his soul, with all the powers that he possesses, with all the knowledge that he has acquired.

I shall not dwell upon the preparation of our boys for confirmation; it occurs but once in two years, and it may be considered as a duty in course, rather than proceeding from the voluntary inclination of the master; but it consists, my Lord, of a catechetical lecture, continued for four, five, or six days; it is executed with fidelity, and, I believe, with good effect. I have never seen an instance of that irreverent and tumultuous behaviour which occurs too frequently in the numerous assemblage from contiguous districts, but a sedate, temperate, and orderly attendance.

The last instance I shall produce, is a concern of such high importance, that I wish to speak of it with every

every caution that diffidence can suggest: It is the celebration of the Supper of the Lord; a momentous duty, when proposed to youth; and thought, by some, to be of too serious a nature to be undertaken by any of their early age, levity, and inexperience. But the opinion of the primitive Church was in favour of early communion; our own office of confirmation, supposes all that have been confirmed to be ripe for this duty; and the statutes of the Universities and collegiate Schools, which enjoin the participation in this bond of fellowship four times in every year, are in correspondence with the canons which bind the whole body of the Laity under the same obligation. The Laity have freed themselves from this injunction; the laws of toleration, and the manners of the times have taken all power out of the hands which ought to have enforced it, and religion is prejudiced by the change; but, as Ministers of the Gospel, it may be presumed, that we have no inclination to relax; and, if we had the will, we have not the power to abrogate our statutes, or relieve those from the obligation whose attendance it is our duty to enforce.

What remains then, but to execute the trust reposed in us, to the advantage of those committed to our care; to instruct and inform them in regard to the nature of the institution, to prepare them to the utmost of our power. This is a duty, my Lord, most painfully and energetically performed; prayers

are selected for the purpose; and, in addition to the other offices of the day, performed, during the whole week previous in the master's house; and upon one day in that week, a lecture, or rather affectionate address, is delivered to them, in a manner which I wish your Lordship or Dr. Rennell could attest. I have, with very little exception, personally, for thirty years executed this office, four times in every year; and I have every reason to believe, that it is acceptable, salutary, and efficacious. I have received the thanks of several, after they have been many years removed from my tuition; and, I persuade myself, that I have laid in many, a foundation of virtue and religion, which will be built upon by those who have received the instruction, and be acknowledged by every one but my accusers. The first part of Christian education is to make young people acquainted with the Scriptures: the second is, to explain the doctrines, and apply the precepts; both, so far as I am a judge, are provided for in the course of instruction, which I have now detailed: the former part by our statutes, the latter by the practice and attention of the instructors.

But here, my Lord, I expect to be told that all this may be done without effect; that the mere performance of this task is nothing, without the will, the mind, the example, the fervency, the zeal of the instructor. On this head I have nothing to offer for myself; but on this head I must observe, that
neither

neither Dr. Rennell or your Lordship are authorised to be my judges. To my own master I am to stand or fall, and whether my foundation is gold, wood, or stubble, must be determined before that tribunal, where I must plead no merit of my own, but appear with conscious trembling, for my imperfections, negligences, and omissions, and feel that there is but one hope of pardon for me and for you.

Or it will be said, that all this is without effect, because vice still exists. Doubtless it does, in schools as well as nations. Education can no more extinguish vice than law; but every good government, and every good institution of learning aim at the correction of the governed. And if you ask whether we perceive the immediate effect of our endeavours, I must answer with hesitation. For we cast our bread upon the waters, but we do not expect to find it till after many days. We experience no instantaneous conviction or conversion, nor do we hope it; and if we asserted it, it might be justly replied, that it is easy to make boys as well as men hypocrites, but very difficult to make them religious. As far as my own observation serves, it is the seed sown which is to ripen for the harvest, when the age of reflection shall arrive. Men, even young men, feel the want and consolation of religion; and it is when those thoughts present themselves, that memory will suggest the precepts and principles proposed to them in their youth. It

is to that period we look forward for success; for though the majority among us is always on the side of virtue, I dare not say that the principles of religion are as evident now as we hope them to be hereafter.

If Public Education were a system of corruption, in the second generation the stain of vice must be indelible; but some of the best families in the kingdom have been bred among us for six or seven generations, and they continue the ornament of our school to the present hour. I see the latest objects of my care promising to answer all the expectations of their friends, and of their country. The companions of my life are those who have been bred under my tuition, and better friends or better men I know not where to find: and whatever imputations I experience from the world, or those who know me not, my reward on this side Heaven I leave to their gratitude and remembrance. Of myself I am ashamed to speak; I know it is foolishness of boasting: but if I have offended in this point beyond the strictest line of self-defence, I entreat the indulgence of all that shall favour these sheets with a perusal. The charge against me was indiscriminate—it could only be repelled by a statement of particulars. I have now stated them, and I abide by the judgment of the Public.

But I cannot lay down my pen without calling upon your Lordship for a public revocation of your charge,

charge, so far as you impute systematic neglect to the conductors of Public Education; and if, with such revocation, you shall choose to insist upon the other articles of impeachment, I request your Lordship to make inquiry into the facts before you aggravate the injury. Those who have been bred at Westminster are to be met with in every circle; interrogate them on the subject—not generally, whether they have had a religious education, but particularly, whether the various duties here specified have been performed. Those only can satisfy your inquiries who have completed their education among us, and have enjoyed the benefit of the foundation: the information of others will be imperfect, extending only as far as their progress and situation in the school enabled them to see and judge. If, after such investigation, your Lordship shall find that you have injured a man who never gave you cause of offence, I think you will be sorry for having reposed implicit confidence in Dr. Rennell; and it will be no pleasing sensation to reflect, that you have prejudiced the interests and estimation of a body of men whose life has been devoted to the service of their country. Our life is not an unhappy one: the attachment of the good, and their success in life compensates for the failure of those who have profited less by our endeavours; and if the performance of a laborious duty does not render it unhappy, why is it to be made so by unprovoked insult or unauthorised animadversion? Forty years labour, and fifty years experience, entitle

me to a retirement of quiet and independence. But if my retirement is to be embittered with the reproach of having done no good, of systematic neglect, of resolute and contemptuous inattention to my duty—I answer, once for all, that “contemptuous neglect,” is a term past comprehension; contempt of a duty towards God is not wickedness, but insanity. And “resolute or systematic neglect,” I disclaim, as a charge utterly false and groundless; a falsehood I have proved it, if my testimony is worthy of credit; and if my assertion is not sufficient, I am ready to establish it by legal evidence, by oath, or any other ordeal that my accusers may demand. But for the present, I take my leave of them with the sentiment of a Poet and a Pagan.

Ἔτι δ' οἶδ' ἀμαρτάνουσι, μὴ πλείω κακὰ
Πάθοιεν, ἢ καὶ δρῶσιν ἐκδίκως ἐμέ.

POSTSCRIPT.

For the information of those who are unacquainted with Westminster School, it is necessary to state, that the Sacred Exercises, mentioned above, were collected and drawn up by the late Mr. Wilcox, son of the Bishop of Rochester, a most pious and devout Christian, and one of the most elegant scholars of his time. They consist of Lessons with appropriate Collects, and comprehend many of the moral

and poetical passages from the Prophets, Ecclesiastes, and the Book of Wisdom. They form only part of a general system intended to have been completed by an exemplification of Greek morality, from the Memorabilia of Xenophon; and of Roman morality, in a work called Roman Conversations. The first and second part of this plan were executed, and are adopted. The Roman Conversations were finished by Mr. Wilcox, but not published till after his death, when they proved too voluminous for the purpose intended; but they are always recommended to the Scholars for perusal.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

IN WESTMINSTER SCHOOL.

In the three first forms, where children are estimated from 8 to 10 years of age—The Psalms and Gospels turned into Latin, are an exercise four days in the week.

On Monday Catechism repeated.

In the two other forms of the Lower School—Sacred Exercises two days in a week.

On Mondays, alternately—Bishop Williams's Exposition, and the Catechism repeated and explained, *viva voce*.

Boys 10, 11, or 12 years of age.

UPPER SCHOOL.

Fourth Form.

Bible Exercise. Greek Testament. Sacred Exercises—and, at first, Greek Testament every day construed and explained.

Fifth Form, and Shell.

Nearly the same; with Sacred Exercises occasionally in all three.

Sixth Form.

Bible Exercise on Saturday.

Grotius Lesson on Monday, explained at large.

KING'S

KING'S SCHOLARS.

Grotius, Hebrew Pfalter, Bible Exercise weekly.

Upper Boys receive the Sacrament four times a-year; always lectured and prepared.

Throughout the Upper School,

Greek Testament during Passion Week—the history or doctrine explained.

Confirmation once in two years—a week's lecture to explain and prepare.

Prayers in College, and at the Boarding-houses.

On Saturdays in Term, Lectures are read to the King's Scholars by a Prebendary.

This Institution has produced two learned and useful Publications by Dr. Heylin and Dr. Blair; and the duty is now very meritoriously performed by the Rev. Mr. Hughes, Prebendary.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

AT WINCHESTER.

Prayers regularly morning and evening in Chapel.

Catechetical Lectures regularly read.

Upper Boys receive the Sacrament once a-month.

Grotius read and explained every Sunday evening.

This account is very imperfect.

F I N I S.