

1832  
National Ed<sup>n</sup>  
Dr. Cooke

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

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A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MAY-STREET,

BELFAST,

UPON SUNDAY, THE 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 1832.

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BY

HENRY COOKE, D.D.

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BELFAST:

WILLIAM M'COMB, HIGH-STREET.

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M. DCCC. XXXII.

1832

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NATIONAL EDUCATION

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A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MAY STREET,

BELFAST;

UPON SUNDAY THE 17th JANUARY, 1832.

BY

HENRY COOKE, D.D.

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BELFAST:

WILLIAM M'COMB, HIGH STREET.

MDCCCXXXII.

1832

Houses of the Oireachtas

## SERMON.

PROV. xxii. 6.

*“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”*

EDUCATION may be viewed under two aspects—private and public. Private education is confined to the children of a single family; public education embraces the children of many families. Private education is ordinarily confined to two forms, that of a parent, or that of a tutor. Public education assumes a greater variety of forms, from the ordinary school, under the management of an individual teacher, and furnishing a few of the commonest elements of knowledge, to the university, under the guidance of a union of Professors, and embracing the entire circle of literature and science.

Between the merits of these two systems our text institutes no comparison. The adoption of a private or a public education is left free to the choice of individuals and the influence of circumstances. The business of our text is not with the mode, but with the principle; not with the leader, but with the way, of education. The whole subject of education seems then reducible to one single question—what is the way in which God has commanded the teacher to train, and the child to go? The prophets of the Old Testament, the apostles of the New; the fathers of the primitive ages, and the heads of

the Reformation ; the national churches of Scotland and England, with all the other evangelical churches of these kingdoms, unite in one reply—Train up a child in the way of all Scripture, which is able to “make him wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

Though our text extends its authority over every possible form of education, we must limit our attention for the present to one view—that of national education. And happy should we feel to come at once up to the subject ; but the circumstances and opinions of these times interpose an obstruction which we must first endeavour to remove. The national education has assumed a new aspect. It has become an authoritative enactment of the state, including the creation of new powers, the establishment of new principles, with the implied surrender of ancient privileges, both personal and ecclesiastical. It has accordingly become not merely a great national experiment, but a great political question ; and therefore before we venture to approach the subject of education, we are compelled to inquire, whether the political character of the question do not bar ecclesiastical men from the right of interference. Most certainly we know “the kingdom of Christ is not of this world.” It therefore becomes a matter, perhaps of some difficulty, but certainly of great importance, to inquire and ascertain, whether the principles and enactments of the political power, should ever form subject of discussion, interference, or opposition, for the ecclesiastical power.

We feel it our bounden duty to discuss this question, because, should we learn from the Scriptures that ecclesiastical men should never interfere with political things, then the national education being now a thing political, we have nought to do, but sit down in silent acquiescence. Or should we learn from the Scriptures, that we have a right to interfere, then will our opinion assume a

legitimate and influential position, when we appear not as intermeddlers in matters too high for us, but as discharging a solemn duty, to which the watchmen of Zion have been appointed of God.

We feel the more imperatively called upon to consider this question, because an opinion has gone abroad, and continues to be strongly enforced, both by religious men and by worldly men—that religion has no concern, and should never, in the least degree, interfere with matters political. On the other hand may be found many who as strenuously maintain, that religion has not merely a universal right of interfering in things political, but that the temporal power is naturally inferior, and subject to the spiritual power in all things. Now when we come to judge between these two opinions, we can embrace neither; but on scriptural authority, we reject both. When any man affirms that religion hath no concern with politics, we will not lightly receive the assertion—religious men have natural connexions with society, which render political indifference utterly impossible; and the Scriptures demonstrate, that religious men owe duties to God and to society, which would render political indifference absolutely sinful. But if any man affirm, that religion is to commingle herself with every political transaction; that by her will, pleasure, and temporal interest, all political matters are to be adjusted—we believe him not: for this were to occupy religion with the moulding of outward forms, rather than with the establishment of inward principles; and this were to engage her heart and her hands about perishing secularities, while both should be fully occupied with things spiritual and eternal. How then may we reconcile these jarring opinions? We attempt not the reconciliation; we equally reject them both. Like many other opposing doctrines, we believe, that each is founded upon an original truth;

and each, we believe, becomes false, just by being carried beyond its legitimate bounds. Thus, when it is affirmed, that religion should never interfere with political questions, this general declaration is untrue. But were we to affirm that there are some, and even many matters political, with which religion should not interfere, the restricted declaration is perfectly accordant both to the nature of men and the word of God. Again, when it is affirmed, that religion should intermingle herself in all political matters, and raise her spiritual jurisdiction over the head of the temporal power, this general declaration we likewise hold to be perfectly untrue. But when it is affirmed, that upon many points religion and politics do so intimately and inseparably commingle, that, of the very nature and necessity of the cases, religion must interfere in their consideration and adjustment, this restricted declaration we receive and hold to be perfectly accordant with the word of God.

We feel an additional impulse to consider the relation between religion and politics, because, if we rightly read "the signs of these times," the hour is fast approaching, and is nigh at hand, when we of this kingdom may be compelled to put our principles to the test of practice. "Coming events (do often) cast their shadows before." Viewing, therefore, the proposed system of national education, not merely as an act for the present, but a presage of the future, we see that politics have determined to interfere with religion, and we therefore require to understand how far religion may interfere with politics.

That we may as far as possible be free from misapprehension, we shall commence with enumerating those departments of politics which religion delivers over entirely to secular hands, and which she leaves to be moulded according to the opinions of men, and the invisible over-rulings of divine providence, without any authoritative

interference, except as a moralist pronouncing an opinion about the right or the wrong of individual actions.

1. The Scriptures seem to us to have pronounced no opinion whatever concerning mere forms of government; and consequently to have reserved to the church no power of prescribing the preference of one form to another. Questions of forfeiture or contract, as unchangeable moralities, do indeed lie under her province; but farther than these, and such like points, it is not the business of religion to proceed. Government and magistracy we hold to be ordinances, not of man, but of God. But whether the power of government shall lodge in the hands of one man, constituting what we call an absolute monarchy; or in the hands of one man, aided and controlled by certain counsellors, elective or hereditary, constituting what we call a limited monarchy; whether it shall rest in the hands of the princes of the people, constituting what we call an aristocracy; whether it shall rest in the hands of certain persons elected by the people, forming a representative republic; or whether it shall rest in the hands of the whole multitude, constituting a simple republic;—all these are questions, in the determination of which, the word of God seemeth to us never once to speak; consequently, so far as they are political questions, unconnected with moral right or wrong, they are matters with which ecclesiastical men should never authoritatively interfere.

2. Religion interferes not with the management of secularities. Before Matthew became a disciple of Christ, he sat at "the receipt of custom." The moment he became a disciple, he "left all and followed his Lord." To this general rule we know of but one exception. Ecclesiastical men are bound by the very nature of their office, to attend to the secular concerns of the poor.—Gal. ii. 9, 10. James, Cephas, and John desired Paul, when amongst the Gentiles, "to remember the poor," a

duty which he declares he "was forward to do." Upon the office-bearers in the churches this secular duty still devolves; but farther than this to go, were to "leave the word of God to serve tables."—Acts vi. 2: a dereliction of duty which, when apparently necessary, the apostles pronounced unreasonable; and which, when unnecessary, we cannot hesitate to pronounce unchristian. In delivering this opinion, we would, by no means, be understood to interfere with those ecclesiastical men who, by virtue of certain temporal dignities, may be called by the constitution of particular states to the occasional exercise of secular duties. Our meaning amounts merely to this, that Christ claims for his servants no right of control over the secular affairs of states; that no man, merely in virtue of ecclesiastical office, necessarily enters upon a secular office; and that the instruction and ruling of the church is the sole function to which Christ has appointed his Ministers.

3. Religion cannot connect herself with worldly parties for worldly purposes. The history of man is a melancholy record of the existence and evils of a worldly party spirit. It was the spirit in which Cain slew his brother, in which Joseph was sold into Egypt, in which Korah and his company rose up against Moses, in which Absalom rebelled against his father, and in which the Chief Priests and the Pharisees crucified our Lord. A similar spirit of party early arose in the church: "one said he was of Paul, one of Apollos, one of Cephas, and one of Christ." How much it continues to agitate states and disfigure the churches, every man acquainted with the living world can tell. When the spirit of party originates with worldly men, is guided by worldly principles, and pursues worldly objects, society may suffer by its excesses; but no man is astonished if an evil tree bear evil fruit. But should the party spirit of the world extend its contagion to the church of Christ, and should the



name and honour of religion be made a cover for mere worldly designs,—religion, to the eyes of considerate men, will appear a mere pretence, and the pure gold of the sanctuary be despised for its commixture with the base alloy of the earth. Such an unhallowed union religion disclaims. For though the spirit of party be an efficient instrument for gaining worldly ends; and religion, when weak or in danger, may seem justly entitled to accept of its co-operation or protection; yet the servant of Christ knoweth no party, but that of truth, can enter into no fellowship with the world, nor seek his safety under any banner but that of the cross of his Lord.

We would not be understood to intimate, that religion precludes us from making any distinction between friends and enemies. Such a distinction must as certainly be made by the mind, as the distinction between light and darkness must be made by the eye. The very direction of our Saviour to pray for, to forgive, and do good to, our enemies, proves that we must recognize them as enemies. Neither would we be understood to teach, that a Christian may not accept the friendship or protection of worldly and unconverted men. But we would be understood to say, that the servants of Christ cannot seek to advance religious principles by assimilation to worldly principles, nor unite for the defence of religion with any who do not feel the power of religion; nor permit themselves to be made the dupes of the self-interested, who court the alliance and accept the services of religious men, for an hour, but discard them the moment their purposes are gained, or betray them to the very enemies against whom they had been promised protection. Of such delusive alliances between religious and worldly men, the history of all ages affords melancholy examples; and we can only avoid a repetition of the evil by standing to the great principle—that religion com-

bines with no worldly party, but holds her conversation and her fellowship with heaven, looking earnestly in faith, and waiting patiently in hope, for the glorious appearing of her God and Saviour.

4. Religion takes no part in the politics of expediency, nor in the trick and cunning of a worldly and short-sighted diplomacy. That a matter may be right in politics which is wrong in morals; that we may adopt from expediency what we detest in principle—are two favourite maxims of the pliant wisdom of this world. Hence it comes to pass, that worldly politicians apply all their skill to ascertain public opinions, and adopt their legislation to this changing and uncertain guide, without a moment's investigation of the unalterable requirements of the law of God. Indeed the professed politics of the world consist of little else than an appeal to public opinion, and in the trick and cunning of apparent concession and real evasion, or the sacrifice of principle to the demands of expediency. Now so far as worldly politics are composed of trick and expediency, it is manifest that religion can take no share in their management. Her principles are fixed, and cannot be moved; her hands are clean, and cannot be defiled; her allegiance is registered, and cannot be broken; her leader is chosen, and cannot be deserted. If she interfere at all, it is only with the voice and the authority of a stern and uncompromising moralist, condemning the base truckling of principle to expediency, utterly interdicting the employment of worldly chicanery, and instructing politicians not to direct their ear to the voice of public opinion, but to direct public opinion to the voice of God.

Yet while religion stands aloof from all these political concerns, there are other departments of politics in which she takes the deepest interest. These it be-

comes our business now to investigate. In doing so we premise, that our inquiry shall draw all its proofs exclusively from the New Testament. To this course we bind ourselves, not because we believe the Old Testament authority inferior to that of the New, but that we may come down to the prejudices of many well-meaning Christians, who, for want of examining the matter, suppose that the circumstances of the Jewish and Christian churches are so different, that illustrations drawn from the one, cannot be applied to the other.

We are fully aware that there are not a few who will feel astonished at the bare mention of New Testament politics. The New Testament they are accustomed to consider as confined to what they call mere religion; but religion, they have concluded, has no concern with politics, and, therefore, the New Testament can teach no political doctrines. In proof of this opinion it is not uncommon to hear one solitary and misinterpreted text again and again repeated. "My kingdom," said Christ, "is not of this world;" therefore, it is argued, there can be no politics in the New Testament. Most lame and impotent conclusion! Christ's kingdom, indeed, is not of this world; but yet it is in this world, and conquering this world. What is the kingdom of Christ? We agree not with those who say, that now is the kingdom of the Father, but that the kingdom of the Son is not yet. The Apostle destroys this interpretation, when he says that "God has delivered us out of the kingdom of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The kingdom of Christ is therefore now in existence; and is the same that is called the kingdom of God. Now the kingdom of God is thus defined—"the kingdom of God is—righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Now taking this definition of the kingdom of Christ, it will be readily discovered why his kingdom is not of this

world. These three powers, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are, like Christ, not of this world; but, we repeat it, they are in this world, and labouring to subdue the world to the service of God. Now righteousness and peace are not only matters between God and the soul, but they are likewise matters between man and man: they are the great political principles of the universe expounded in the New Testament in all their multiplied and subordinate details.

It is in establishing the authority of righteousness and peace amongst men, that the New Testament develops its various political principles, which, for the sake of order, we shall arrange as follows:—

1. All political power is only and directly from God. We draw our proof from Rom. xiii. 1. "There is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God." Full well we know the political maxim of the day which is applauded in senates, toasted by bacchanals, sung by poets, and sustained by philosophers,—which maxim affirms, that the "people are the only legitimate source of power." This sentiment is a most direct contradiction of the Holy Spirit. Neither the people, nor the magistrates, nor the legislators, nor the kings, can be either jointly or severally the legitimate sources of power, so long as that word remains unrepealed—"there is no power but of God." Now the origin of political power from God is, by Christians, readily admitted in the case of Moses and his successors, in the ancient days of the Jewish state; but it is as readily denied in the modern condition of the Jews, and in the case of Christian, Mahomedan, and Heathen kingdoms. The New Testament, however, affirms in the case of a Heathen state, ruling over many nations—"all power is of God"—a principle which we adopt and defend in its utmost length and breadth. The great difficulty that obstructs the settle-

ment of this question, seems to us to arise from certain crude and indigested notions about the difference between modern governments and the Jewish theocracy, as it is called. A form of government which, as the name imports, is supposed to be derived immediately from God, and is thus represented as differing from all other forms which are supposed to originate entirely from the wisdom and authority of man. Before we come to consider the divine origin of government in general, we must endeavour to settle the question of the Jewish theocracy in particular.

The proof of the temporary existence and subsequent abolition of the Jewish theocracy, is ordinarily drawn from 1 Sam. viii. 7, where the Lord said of the people, when desiring a king, "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." At this period the theocracy is supposed to have ended; and if again it partially revived in the times of David, Solomon, Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah, and a few other godly monarchs, it is nevertheless supposed to have entirely ceased when the irreligion of the government again, as it were, expelled God from the thrones of Judah and Israel, and established in his stead the reign of mere human authority.

Now we do readily admit, that the Jewish government, under Moses, Joshua, and the Judges, concluding with Samuel, the Prophet, was, indeed, a theocracy, or government in which God himself was king. But we do deny that, on the election of Saul, the theocracy came to an end. God was as certainly and as immediately the king of the Jews in the days of Saul, as in the days of Samuel. What then is the meaning of God's words—"They have rejected me?" Do they not intimate that God had rejected them, and ceased to be their king? The words warrant no such conclusion. Do the rights

of a parent cease, because an undutiful and ungrateful child has rejected his authority? No; he has the right of a parent still. Do the rights of an earthly king cease, because a province is guilty of unnatural rebellion? No; he is as certainly their legitimate monarch in the turmoil of the rebellion, as in the calmest hour of their loyalty.—Just so—the rejection of God's authority, implied no cessation of God's power; and the usurpation of his throne by the infidelity of the nation, weakened not in the slightest degree his legitimate claims to the sovereignty. Israel had indeed rebelled, but God remained Israel's king; and he still remains their king in the lands of their dispersion, as certainly as when he guided them like a flock by the hands of Moses and Aaron. Yes; at this very moment, the Jewish state is as certainly and immediately a theocracy, as when God came down in the Shekinah and answered them by Urim and Thummim. He reigns over them, indeed, in his terrible judgments; but he is as certainly and immediately their king, as when he showered upon them the abundance of his tenderest mercies.

This is a point of some importance to our subject, we shall therefore, dwell upon it a little farther. Two questions present themselves to our enquiry. First—wherein consisted the fault of the Israelites in seeking to change the form of their government and establish a monarchy?—Second—If the Jewish state, in spite of its rebellion against God, still continues a theocracy, then—are other governments, notwithstanding their infidelity, heathenism, or wickedness, likewise theocracies,—to be considered as deriving their authority directly from God, and to him immediately accountable for the manner of its employment? In relation to the first of these questions, it seems to be generally taken for granted that the objections of Samuel, and the displeasure of God, arose from

the demand of the people to establish a king. The record of the transaction, 1 Sam. viii. 9—18, seems to countenance this opinion. A little consideration, however, will show that this interpretation cannot be correct. The Scriptures never countenance any one model of government in preference to another. They busy themselves only in teaching the rulers and people their duties. Nor can it be supposed, by any one that has read the Bible, that God is offended with the people because they make choice of a monarchical government. The word of God had already provided both for the election, education, and government of a monarch. In Deut. xvii. 14, 18, 19, 20, it is provided, "When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the other nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the Priests, the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel." Here is the divine model of a king, unto which, we would to God, that all kings would seek grace to be conformed. This is, indeed, the true mirror of majesty, in which all kings should daily examine the features of their government. It is, therefore, impossible that God should find fault with Israel for seeking to elect a king, seeing he had already provided for such an occurrence. How then are we to account for God's disapproba-

tion when Israel demanded a king? We account for it thus: the people did not seek for a king as the mere executive of God's law—which, as the name implies, was the sole office and dignity of the judge—and was contemplated and ordained of God as the office and dignity of a king; but the people, as will be seen, 1 Sam. viii. 5—19, 20, were moved to ask a king, by no respect to the divine authority, nor in any conformity to the divine model, but they were moved by a mere desire to imitate the nations around them.—“Make us, say the people, a king to judge us—like all the nations.” Farther it appears evidently to have been the fault of the people, that they were actuated by no desire to sustain the authority of the divine law, nor by any rational design of protecting their own liberties; for when Samuel, from verse 11 to 18, draws the terrific portrait of the absolute monarch whom they seek to establish, and warns them, that for their disregard of God's law, “God will not hear them” in the day of their political calamity; yet unmoved by the warning, whether civil or religious, they persevere in their wilfulness, and declare—“We will have a king over us; that we also may be—like all the nations.” Here we perceive the cause of God's displeasure. It was directed not against the desire to have a king, but against the desire to erect him from a principle of political conformity to the nations, from a principle of disregard for the supremacy of the divine law, and of infidel contempt for the privileges of national prayer. For these reasons the nation rejected God, and He, for these reasons, was displeased with their rebellion. Nevertheless they could not dethrone God; nor does he ever once intimate, that because they had ceased to serve, he had ceased to reign.

This view of the first question will facilitate the answer to the second, in which it is inquired—how far other governments, notwithstanding their infidelity, heathenism, and wickedness, are likewise to be considered theo-



cracies, deriving authority directly from God, and to him immediately accountable for the manner of its employment? We hesitate not to state it as our confirmed opinion, that all governments, at this present day, are as much theocracies as was the Jewish state at any period of its history. For "the powers that be are ordained of God." But surely a power 'ordained of God' must be a theocracy. What! are Heathen, Mahomedan, Infidel, as well as Christian powers, ordained of God? We answer—every one of them. But let it be observed, while "the powers that be are ordained of God," the powers that be will be judged of God. The Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and Roman monarchies of old, were all theocracies—but theocracies in rebellion. So the Empires of China and Japan, the Sultany of the Turk, or the Caliphate of the Saracen, in modern times, are all theocracies—but theocracies in rebellion. The ten kingdoms into which the judgments of God have shivered the ancient Roman empire, are likewise theocracies; and though deeply possessed by the spirit of infidelity and apostacy, are not, upon that account, set free from the government of God. This statement requires no farther proof than what is derivable from the voice of prophecy, by which we learn that God is still continuing to treat these several states as accountable to his authority; beseeching all, punishing some, and threatening to punish others. These entreaties, threatenings, and punishments, are the works of a King, from whom all rulers derive their authority, and to whom they are accountable as their immediate and Sovereign Lord.

We can well imaginè how worldly and infidel politicians, and even not a few well-meaning, but unthinking Christians, will object to this doctrine, as tending to establish "the divine right of kings"—a doctrine which has been abused to all the purposes of religious and po-

litical oppression. And did the abuse of any doctrine form a rational or scriptural objection against its truth, we should be ready at once to resign the principle we have attempted to establish. But the grossest abuse of a truth forms no argument for its rejection. Parental authority has been abused in all the forms of wickedness and cruelty; yet parental authority is of "divine right." And because the parent is vested with a divine right, he is also subject to a divine law, and restrained by a divine accountability. Just so, "the divine right" of a government confers no power to do wrong. Nay, this very divine right forbids every attempt to do wrong; for it reduces all rulers to the level of Christ's subjects, and places them, as accountable for all their deeds, at the bar of his righteous judgment.

To this doctrine we can imagine another plausible objection. The Jewish theocracy, it may be said, consisted in God's frequent interference by judgments and mercies, by warnings of prophets, and exercise of personal authority. All this we readily admit; and all these things we believe as certainly to exist at this present hour, as we believe that they existed of old in Egypt, at Sinai, at Jordan, or at Jerusalem. True it is, the purblind infidelity of this age cannot see God in the clearest light. Men mock at the plague when it entereth the kingdoms, and refuse to recognize the evidence of a divine visitation. (1) They are thankless when it departs, and, without mention of the divine mercy, they attribute their safety to their own skill and care. They know his law, yet they break it by compact and advertisement; (2) they hear the warnings of his word, yet they harden their hearts, and will not repent. The very Churches, beginning to be infected by the infidelity of the world, almost forget the duty, and privilege, and efficacy of prayer, and trust themselves to men, instead of committing themselves

to God, as if men were possessed of all power, and God had forgot to hearken and save. (3) Yet wherever there are spiritual men, God is seen and acknowledged; reigning on earth as he reigns in heaven, and ordering all things according to the counsel of his will.

2. The second political principle of the New Testament asserts the headship of Christ over all forms of human government. The proof of this great principle is drawn from the following statements. We are informed, Col. i. 16, that "by (Christ) were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him." In the ii. 10 of the same epistle we are informed, that Christ "is the head of all principality and power." In Eph i. 21, 22, we are informed, that Christ is exalted in the heavenly places "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," that "all things are put under his feet," and that "he is head over all things to the church." In the book of Rev. xvii. 14, where his heavenly glory is exhibited to the prophet, he is recognized in the midst of his church as the "Lord of lords, and the King of kings." And in the same book, xix. 16, when he comes forth to smite the rebellious nations, "he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." Now if these several titles belonged of right to an earthly monarch, no one could hesitate to admit his supremacy; they now belong, by right of creation, (Col. i. 16,) humiliation, (Philip. ii. 8, 9,) and conquest, (Rev. xix. 15, 16,) to Jesus Christ; and though the kings and the people of the world generally refuse to acknowledge his power, the angels of light bow down in his presence, and the glorified saints of heaven do cast their crowns

before him, and acknowledge, "thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." This headship of Christ is the great principle of all true government; the only proper measure of the rights of subjects and the duty of kings. And whenever it comes to be acknowledged by rulers and people, then, and not till then, comes the political regeneration of the kingdoms.

3. The next department of New Testament politics is employed in the definition of the true ends and purposes of civil government. These ends and purposes, as we learn from 1 Pet. ii. 14, are two,—“the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well.” Whatever practical evils exist in the governments of the world, they may all be ordinarily traced to some neglect of one or the other of these two principles. Sometimes a government, seeking to attain its ends by severity, sees punishment degenerate into oppression. At other times a government longing after popular praise, allows evil-doers to pass unpunished, and so falls into contempt. At other times, the true and noble ends of government are totally reversed; and evil-doers receive the praise of rulers, while “they that do well” are the objects of their displeasure. The New Testament, therefore, assumes the commanding attitude of a great political teacher, and delivers her lesson to kings and governors, authorizing and commanding them to punish the wicked, and to protect the good; and that, not as the delegates of any mere human authority, but by virtue of their allegiance to Christ the King of kings.

4. The next political principle of the New Testament establishes the obedience of subjects to their rulers. We live in times when men have refused to be called “subjects.” We are not surprized at this proud refusal in

men who have neither been accustomed to derive their phraseology, or their religion, nor their politics from the Bible. Those who have learned from the Bible have received the following political lessons:—Rom. xiii. 1. 5: “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers—ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.” Tit. iii. 1: “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates.” Who that reads these words will afterwards dare to say, that there are no politics in the New Testament, or that the Ministers of the Gospel have no concern with political questions? The recognition of rulers and subjects, the establishment of power, not over the bodies, but the consciences of men, and the duty of Ministers to inculcate political obedience, are so many abiding witnesses of the determinate political character of the New Testament and of the teachers and members of the Christian church.

5. The next political principle of the New Testament establishes the right of government to require, and of subjects to pay, tribute. This topic is treated of in a variety of passages. Matt. xxii. 21: “Shew me (saith Christ) the tribute-money.—Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” Rom. xiii. 6, 7: “Pay ye tribute, (saith Paul.)—Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due.” These are political maxims, the practical importance of which must be acknowledged by all governments. And happy it were for rulers and for people, did they study their politics in the scriptural school. Were political principles extracted from the word of God, from how many vain, fantastic, and deceptive plans and expectancies would the nations be rescued. Rulers would not then set up, and profess to worship, mere Economy and Retrenchment as their gods, nor the people expect the national salvation from these ever promising, ever deceiving idols. Economy and Re-

trenchment, the political gods of this age, are mere words without meaning, and idols without power; and it is not by such idols that God will save the nation. God saveth a nation in its financial difficulties, by teaching its rulers, that in the enactment, demand, and levy of tribute, they are God's accountable stewards; and by teaching the people that, in the payment of the tribute, they are God's accountable debtors. It is only on the reception of these maxims, and the adoption of these principles, that onerous imposts upon public industry, and reckless waste of the public purse, cease to characterize governments; and that resistance and evasion of the law, through all the complicated ramifications of smuggling, cease to demoralize the people.

6. The next political lesson of the New Testament teaches us, 1 Tim. xi. 21, "that supplications, prayers, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." The world seems to suppose that politics are the exclusive property of the senate, the press, or the civic assembly; the New Testament assigns them to the public sanctuary and the secret closet. The world conducts its politics as a mere business between man and man; the New Testament pronounces them a transaction between a man and his God. The world traces the genealogy of its loyalty no higher than earth; the New Testament dignifies its loyalty with a descent from heaven. Prayer, as a constant reference of all things to God, is the appointed guardian of all moral principle; and, as individual duties expand into public concerns, it is the legitimate director of all political principle. We suspect, indeed, that in this generation—which equals or surpasses every other for being wise in its own conceit—we suspect, indeed, that the man who, in a political meeting, should propose prayer

to God, would be in some danger of being treated as a fool. We go beyond suspicion; we are sure he would so be treated. Politicians have generally rejected God; his word has ceased to be a book of reference or authority in their proceedings; and the mention of his judgments has been treated as 'cant and hypocrisy,' (4) at the moment when the nation was suffering the infliction of his rod. But do the errors or the infidelities of rulers loosen the bonds of a Christian's allegiance? Without pausing to examine the exceptions that may arise from national compact or constitution, we easily discover the general rule of the Gospel, which teaches us, that, for the faults of our rulers, we are not to diminish our loyalty, but to multiply our prayers; and not to resign our king and country to the wisdom and policy of man, but to commend them, with humble and assured confidence, to the care and the blessing of heaven.

7. But whilst the New Testament inculcates a devoted loyalty, it by no means enjoins a slavish substitution of will for law. On the contrary it establishes the privilege of the Christian to claim the protection of law against the aggressions of power. Acts xxii. 25, exhibits Paul, when unjustly bound, asserting respectfully, yet firmly, his right of Roman citizenship, and claiming the protection of the state against the decision of its officer. "Is it lawful for you," said he, "to bind a man that is a Roman,\* and uncondemned? Then the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yes. And the chief captain answered, With a

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\* The name of Roman originally belonged to the inhabitants of Rome in Italy. These claimed and possessed many legal privileges. The name of Roman and the privilege of citizenship came, in process of time, to be extended to the inhabitants of other cities. Tarsus in Asia, where Paul was born, had been formally enfranchised for its services to Rome—and Paul is consequently called a Roman, and claims the privilege of citizenship.

great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born." The value and the dignity of law have seldom been more conspicuous; but the case becomes especially valuable, as it serves to establish a great political principle, and to overturn for ever the slavish doctrines of tacit submission and universal passive obedience.

8. As the New Testament inculcates the principle, so it also fixes the limit of obedience. This political institute is happily, like the former, not derived from general statement, but from special example. And, as if providence had intended to render the case absolutely complete, the limit is assigned when the civil and ecclesiastical powers were united in the claim of unreserved submission. The case occurs, Acts v. 29, where Peter and the other apostles, when brought before the council, answered (to their command) and said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." Here rulers learn the origin of their power, and subjects the limit of their obedience. The power that resides originally in God, is delegated to his creature man; but the stream can never rise above the level of the fountain, nor the servant exercise an authority contrary to the will of his master. And should any one affect authority over his fellow-servants, commanding them to do what God has forbid, it is their duty and their privilege to refuse obedience, by virtue of the allegiance which is due to their Master in heaven.

It will now appear, with evidence which we believe irresistible, that the New Testament contains an ample and complete enumeration of political principles; and that, while in the plainest terms it recognizes and establishes the power of rulers, it equally recognizes and establishes the privileges and rights of subjects.

It is in the legitimate exercise of these rights that we now advance to examine the plan of national education lately introduced by our Government. Around this plan



its defenders have endeavoured to draw a political line, beyond which they refuse liberty for ecclesiastical men to pass. This flimsy and untenable line it has been our duty to assault. The right of the churches in matters political we have endeavoured to investigate, defend, and establish. The churches have their political rights. He that becomes a Christian ceases not to be a man. When he puts on Christ, he puts off no human privilege. Therefore we resign not to the demands of worldly hypocrisy the political rights of our Christian charter. The demand upon the churches to resign their political rights, proceeds from the most absolute hypocrisy. To establish this charge, let us inquire into the nature of hypocrisy. The essence of hypocrisy with men consists in having two rules for the same action; one for ourselves, another for our neighbour. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, ye bind heavy burdens upon other men's shoulders, and ye yourselves will not touch them with one of your fingers." Here are the two rules of the hypocrite—one for his own 'finger,' another for his neighbour's 'shoulder:' one rule when an action pleases, another when it displeases him. Just so, ecclesiastical men are privileged to speak when they throw the weight of their opinions into the favourite scale of worldly politicians; but they are condemned to silence when they dare to transfer their authority to the opposite side of the balance. Unmoved, therefore, by this cunning craftiness, we enter upon the subject of national education, holding an equal privilege to discuss the question, whether it be considered as religious or political.

Two objects present themselves before us: First, to ascertain the Scripture principle; second, to examine the Government plan of education.

The principle of education we find frequently discussed in the Bible; from which authority it will appear that—the

Bible, without mutilation or addition, forms the only divine basis of family or national education. This statement we prove by referring to the following scriptural authorities:—Deut vi. 6: “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Psal. cxix. 9: “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.” 2 Tim. iii: 14, 15, 16, 17: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” From these passages the following principles are clearly deducible: First—that the duty, together with all the privileges and responsibility of teaching, lies with parents. Second—that the Holy Scriptures alone have received the authoritative sanction of God for the education of children.—Third—that all Scripture is alike inspired of God, and is, without deduction or mutilation, to be employed in the training of Christian children, and the perfecting of Christian men.

How far the Government plan of education comes short of these scriptural principles, a brief review will abundantly demonstrate.

To understand the true bearings of the plan, we must go back to some of the fundamental principles of the Reformation. The original difference be-

tween the See of Rome and the Protestant Churches, commences about the Bible. The Church of Rome affirms that the Bible derives all its authority from her: the Protestant Churches affirm that it derives all its authority from God. The Church of Rome affirms that she is the sole depository of the Bible: the Protestant Churches affirm that it is, and ever has been, the word of the Spirit committed to all the Churches—nay, to the Churches' enemies, whom it rebukes and condemns. The Church of Rome affirms that she is the sole interpreter of the Bible: the Protestant Churches affirm that the Spirit of God, speaking in the word, and the consciences of his people, is the only competent interpreter; and adduce the promise of Christ for that end—John xiv. 26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The Church of Rome affirms that no man has a right to possess or to read the Scriptures but under her sanction: the Protestant Churches affirm that all Scripture is the common legacy of Christ to the Churches, and that every man is free to possess, and bound to read, study, and determine, on the ground of his accountability to God. Now, if the Church of Rome be right in all these positions, then the Government plan of national education is right in all its details. But if the Protestant Churches are right in all their positions, then the Government system is constitutionally and incurably diseased in every member of its body. Lend us your attention while we examine this Government plan, which Infidels admire, Roman Catholics tolerate, and Protestants detest.

1. Its first essential feature is, a supreme, despotic Board. Three parts Protestant Establishment: two parts Roman Catholic: one part Unitarian: one part

Church of Scotland. What a motley group! What a discordant combination! A house divided against itself! of which divine truth has testified, that—it must fall.

2. But the constituency of the Board, though worse is almost unimaginable, is by no means so bad as the despotic power with which it is vested. It is vested with a “complete control” over all teachers. By this usurpation, it robs every father in the kingdom, who may send a child to one of the Government Schools, of all right to choose a schoolmaster for his children, until the Board has had the right of choosing him first. Parents are then free to choose; but they *must* choose one with the mark of the Board on his forehead! Now when our schoolmaster is elected, parents, it might well be supposed, might yet have the power of managing him in his office. Not so; the Board take all this power into their own hands. They censure, they fine, they suspend, according to their will and pleasure. In short, the plan goes to denude parents of all real authority in the choice of masters, the management of schools, or the dismissal of negligent or injurious teachers.

3. Farther, the Board is invested with the ‘entire control over all school-books, whether for literary or religious instruction.’—That the Bible has ever been the chief Protestant school-book, every child can tell. But here is a Board with ‘entire control’ over it. Yes, vested by Government with ‘entire control’ over God’s Holy Word, to forbid altogether, if the fancy strike, and to say to the child, the schoolmaster, and the minister, ‘not a word of the Scriptures beyond what we please to approve.’ A power to *approve* any portion of the Scripture necessarily implies a power to *disapprove* the remainder: a power presumptuous in principle, and that may soon be tyrannical in practice. We do not insinuate, that the Board intends to act tyrannically; but we do be-

lieve and affirm that it contains all the essential elements of tyranny; and because it contains these elements of danger, we are compelled to resist its establishment. We openly and determinately, therefore, protest against the power conceded to the Board to expurgate and mutilate the Bible; and we protest against the power of excluding from schools any portion of the word of God upon any unfounded plea of its unfitness for the instruction of children. The alleged necessity for the expurgation of the Scriptures, seems to us an awful act of presumption. It is a principle which, once admitted, renders the Scriptures liable to the utmost perversion. A case in point will be found in Matt. iv. where the devil having failed to deceive our Saviour, as he had formerly deceived our first parents by falsehood and appetite, carries him to a pinnacle of the temple for another temptation, and says to our Lord, at the 6th verse, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down headlong; for it [is written, he will give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' No argument can appear more conclusive; and it would be conclusive, had not the devil applied the principle of *mutilation*. By turning to the xci. Psalm, from which the devil quoted, you will perceive that he *expurgates* from the latter end of the 11th verse the words, 'in all thy ways,' thus producing an extraordinary change of meaning. The mutilated Scripture offers to our Lord a promise of 'keeping and bearing up,' absolutely, and without exception; consequently not in the ways of our Lord's choosing, but of Satan's advising. Now though Satan spake nothing but Scripture, the Spirit of God had made no such promise as he gave. The Spirit had promised to Christ 'keeping and bearing up' "in all his ways," as the

Son of God. But it would not have answered Satan's purpose to make this announcement, and therefore he mutilates the text, to bring it to his own purposes. Satan himself, then, ranks first in the list of Bible mutilators, and possesses the infamous honour of having introduced the first recorded specimen of the great *index expurgatorius*.

To meet the Protestant objection against the purposed mutilation of Scripture, it is asserted that the Board of Education will not mutilate the Bible, but merely publish a school-book of "Scripture Extracts," in the form of an abridgment of Scripture history and Scripture doctrine; and we are triumphantly informed, that as we have never hitherto objected to "Scripture Extracts," we cannot now plead principle or practice against the extracts of the Board. This is a serious allegation, and requires a serious reply. We reply, by explaining the difference between "extracts" and "mutilation" of Scripture. "A Scripture Extract" we define—an abridgment of Scripture, containing a condensed, yet *full and faithful* narrative of all Scripture facts and doctrines. To such works we offer no objection. "A Scripture mutilation" we define—an abridgment of Scripture containing a condensed, but *imperfect*, and consequently *unfaithful* narrative of Scripture facts and doctrines. The "extract" and the "mutilation" are both abridgments; but the one is an *abridgment of all* the truth; the other is a *removal of part* of the truth; the one is the statue of a man reduced to the miniature dimensions of a child; the other is the statue not only diminished, but broken. Of the difference between "extracts" and "mutilation," we have a notable example in the case of a purposed school-book, which has already received the unreserved approbation of a member of the Education Board. The example we select is the narrative of the Lord's Supper. This begins in the "extracts" with Matt. xxvi. 26: "And

as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body"—but instead of going on with the narrative in Matthew, which would have overturned the doctrine of Rome in denying the cup to the laity, the extractor dexterously forsakes the narrative of Matthew, which says, "*drink ye all of it,*" and subjoins Luke xxii. 20, in which it is merely said, "likewise (he took) the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Now this we call not an "extract," but a "mutilation," because it breaks off a part of the truth. We say not that the Board will be guilty of repeating this criminal misrepresentation. Put on their guard by Protestant watchfulness, they may, perchance, avoid such a palpable error; but many such mutilations they must necessarily practise; for they can no more agree about a full and faithful abridgment of the Bible, than they can agree about a full and faithful translation and commentary. In fact, as no man can abridge a book, unless he understand the book, so as a man understands the book, so will he give his abridgment. A faithful abridgment must, in every case, be more or less a commentary. Upon such a nominal abridgment, but real commentary, evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Socinians, can never possibly agree. Extracts they may give in name, but mutilations must they give in reality; mutilations in which Rome conceals her errors, in which Protestants omit the truth; mutilations in which Rome abides by her principles, in which Protestants abandon their principles; and into which abandonment they are now about to be betrayed by the cunning of Jesuits, the liberalism of Unitarians, the indecision and plans of Evangelicals, and the power and patronage of their rulers.

4. There is another circumstance, that will no doubt astonish those who have not studied the Government

plan. It appropriates four days in the week to what is termed literary and moral education ; and the two remaining days are set apart, one for the religious instruction of Protestants, and the other of Roman Catholics. That the plan is illusory, impracticable, unjust, wasteful, and demoralizing, a moment's attention will discover. It is illusory: for it proposes a religious education for children, while it provides no one to carry the proposal into effect. If any man say, let the clergy perform this duty, let him know that every conscientious Minister has already too much to do, and is unable to bear an addition to his burdens. The plan is impracticable ; for (the assistance of the schoolmaster in communicating religious instruction being totally withdrawn) no Minister—at least none with a large parish—could possibly attend in one day to the religious instruction of all the children of his charge. And if any one reply, that he has the morning and the evening, before and after school hours, for teaching, little do they know of the habits of children, or the perpetual and diversified employments of Ministers, who could defend such a scheme. It is unjust ; for it gives an entire day to one Roman Catholic Priest ; while it yields but one day between two, three, or four different denominations of Protestants. It is a wasteful scheme ; for while it robs the children of a sixth part of their time, it wastes an entire third of the life of the schoolmaster. But worse than all, it is a demoralizing plan. Her ever recurring holydays have been the ruin of the South of Ireland. The Pope himself has interfered to diminish them. But our Protestant Government are determined to feed our little children upon the offals of Rome, and force them into idleness during fifty-two days in the year. We believe there would not be an over-statement in saying that more than an average of seven years are generally devoted to school—if so, then let our Government be reminded, that *one whole year* of



this time they would *compel* every Protestant father, and every Protestant child, to surrender to Popery. Now, can the holydays that demoralized the Roman Catholic, produce any other effect than to demoralize the Protestant? Other parts of the plan may be worse in principle; but this is the part, we believe, will be worst in practice.

5. Another most unholy portion of the plan enjoins upon Protestants not merely to permit, but absolutely to “encourage” the teaching of Popery, Unitarianism, and every possible form of apostacy and infidelity. To what the liberalism of this generation will next extend, it is impossible to foretel. But surely it is not presumptuous to say, that when men have come publicly under such an obligation, there is no visible limit to future concessions. While we speak with sorrow of this melancholy inconsistency—while we speak with plainness of this sinful stipulation (for sin we hold it in any Protestant to guarantee the *encouragement* of Popery,) yet let us not be misunderstood, as if we would for a moment interfere, to *prevent*, by authority, the teaching of the doctrines of Rome. We would not for a moment meditate such an act of interference between any man’s conscience and his God. To his own master let him stand or fall. Toleration, *passive non-interference*, not *positive encouragement*, we hold to be the common law of heaven. God himself doth practise a *passive toleration* towards the errors and idolatries of the world. Yet he *encourages* them not—nay, he bears witness loudly against them. So should we, after his high example, practise *passive toleration* towards all men’s consciences; but the moment we stipulate to “encourage” them in the teaching of their errors, we bid them God speed, and are partakers of their sins. And a partaker of this public sin, (this public resignation and barter of a great Protestant principle,) will be every Minister or layman who acknowledges this

Board by any submission to its requirements, or by any participation in that *price of his principles* which it has now been appointed to distribute. We do openly pronounce this *stipulated encouragement* of Popery, a most unholy compact, to the inconsistency and evil of which, we trust, God will soon open the eyes of the Government who have proposed it, and of the Protestant Ministers by whom it has been patronized.

6. We have hitherto considered the plan as it respects Protestants in general, let us now consider it as it regards Presbyterians in particular. The part of the plan to which we refer vests one Presbyterian Minister with a power of dictating to his brethren how much or how little of the Bible they may be permitted to use for instructing the children of their congregations. He may refuse the whole Bible if he pleases; that is, if his brethren acknowledge the authority he has derived from Government. He is vested with power to expel the larger and shorter Catechisms, and to dictate every other book that any of his brethren may employ. True, it is now admitted, even in the High Court of Parliament, that the Board will not refuse the use of our Bibles or our standard Catechisms. All this is so far well. But it is a victory we have gained by opposition to the Government plan. The advocates of the plan have not, however, the candour to acknowledge their attempt against our liberty, nor our successful resistance; but they endeavour to persuade the nation, that they never contemplated to interfere with the Bible or Catechisms. But if words have meaning, they did intend such an interference; and, if Protestants had been silent, their purpose would have been effected. To prove our assertion, let us hear the following Government order:—

“They (the Board of Education) will exercise the *most entire control* over ALL BOOKS to be used in the schools, whether in the *combined moral and*

*literary, OF SEPARATE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION; NONE to be employed in the first, except under the sanction of the Board; nor in the latter, but with the APPROBATION of those members of the Board who are of the same religious persuasion with those for whom they are intended."*

No man who reads these words will dare to deny, that the original powers of the Board extended over Bible, and Catechism, and every other book that Ministers might wish to employ in the religious instruction of children. But why complain if the power be withdrawn? We complain, because, while verbally disavowed, it is not formally and openly withdrawn; but stands upon record in all its original force upon the face of the Government commission. We complain because, even were this one obnoxious and un-presbyterial principle fully disavowed; and were the Board, not only verbally, but formally divested of all power to interfere with the use of the Bible and Catechisms on the days of religious instruction; still they retain the power of rejecting every other religious book which a Minister might wish to employ. We care not how dormant this right might remain; we care not how meekly this power might be exercised—against its bare existence we most solemnly protest; for, on the part of the Board, it contains all the essence of spiritual supremacy; and, on the part of Ministers and people, all the acknowledgment of the most abject slavery. Can the free-born Presbyterian Church ever submit to this supremacy? We cannot for a moment tolerate its name or existence. Our ministerial power to instruct our people and their children, is immediately from God, and we will never hold it at the hands of men.

Having now discussed at length some of the most palpable objections to this plan of the experiment, we think it but justice to produce all the show of argument that ever we have seen in its favour.

1. The first argument amounts to this—Government do not compel you to go to the National Schools. Government do not compel you to take money or submit to the Board; therefore do not complain, seeing you are left perfectly free to take or to reject the plan. Well, indeed we have reason to be thankful, that, bad as the plan is, *it could be worse*. This we grant most willingly—there certainly could be a worse. But what would any one infer from this? That we are to drink muddy water, because poison is more detestable? We protest against any such selection. We will drink of neither the one nor the other, while one drop of a pure fountain can possibly be obtained. God has mercifully opened for us his free and uncontaminated word, springing up in this desert world as the waters of old from the rock of Kadesh; and we will protect its purity from every contaminating mixture; and we will preserve its fulness from every abstraction; and when we will assert our right to drink of it as freely as we will, against every intruder who may attempt to limit or control our approach. Truly, however, the freedom to take or reject is all mere pretence, and the men who make it do not believe in its existence. For, let it be remembered, the question at issue is chiefly concerning schools for the poor. Now, suppose we establish one school where children must pay a full remuneration to the master; where they can get no books, paper, or other requisites, but at the very highest price; and, suppose the Government endow a school in our very neighbourhood, pay the master one-third or one-half of his entire salary, give books, paper, and other requisites at half price, does this plan leave us free? No; it ensures the desertion of the poor from dear to cheap education, and effects by bribery all the purposes of compulsion.

2. The next argument, in favour of the Government

scheme, comes in the form of a bold demand—if we receive not this plan, what can we propose in its stead?—We answer by an offer of three plans, with either of which we will rest satisfied, and beyond some of which we cannot possibly proceed. First, we propose the continuance of the former plan—the Bible, and nothing but the Bible. Second, we propose the Scottish plan—the Bible and the Catechism. If neither can be granted, we propose a third—let us alone. Let Protestants choose and pay for their own plan, and we barely ask of our Protestant Government not to support against us the interests of a Popish rival.

3. Another argument, like to the foregoing, is founded upon the assertion, that all previous attempts at national education have failed, and that the present is an experiment, at least, worthy of a trial. The first position of this argument is founded upon a false assertion. The former plans of scriptural education have not failed. Scriptural education was advancing with a steady and accelerating pace, in spite of all opposition, and time alone, under divine blessing, was wanting to ensure success. (5) And should Scriptural education be now arrested in its progress, fearful will be the reckoning of those by whom the arrest has been made. The second position of this argument, which represents the Government plan as an experiment worthy a trial, is equally fallacious. An unphilosophical experiment would be accounted a foolish thing; and can an unscriptural experiment be accounted a good thing? We forbid not the Government to try, as experiment, how much Scripture Rome will be able to bear; but we protest against the experiment of how much Protestants can be induced to resign. If the mole will bear but a little light, must we hoodwink the eagle that gazes upon the sun?

4. It is an important feature of the Board, that it pro-

mises the first place in its "probable favour" to the united application of the Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy. That is, the first place in its probable favour is reserved for practical insincerity. A sincere Protestant Minister and a sincere Roman Catholic Priest, can never unite about scriptural education. We are ready to exchange with them all the courtesies and charities of life; but in the management of our parochial and national education we stand aloof from their influence; and, until they come to acknowledge the fitness and authority of the Bible as a book of instruction, our most earnest wish is simply—to have nothing to do with them. And why should we enter with them into this most ominous and fatal combination? They can retard, but they cannot accelerate; they can counteract, but they cannot encourage; they can exercise over us a censorial espionage, but in our scriptural instruction they cannot bid us God speed. They can bring us by the combination into probable favour with the state, but, by the dereliction of our principles, into the certain displeasure of heaven.

But because we cannot give up our principles for a combined education, we have been accused of an unsocial spirit. Such an accusation, however, could only proceed from ignorance or injustice. Protestantism neither refuses to give nor to receive assistance, so far as it can be effected with clean hands and a good conscience. We will combine heart and hand with Roman Catholics, with Jews, with Mahometans, with Heathens, with men of every clime and every colour, to effect any benevolent object. We will combine, for example, with any man to effect, by honest, honorable, and legal measures, the extinction of the African slave trade. But supposing that, in order to cement our league, we must first commit murder, or in performing an act of mercy with the one hand, commit an act of injustice with the other, we would shrink

from the proposal as from a thing most horrible—and though the freedom of all Africa were to be effected by our union, upon such previous conditions, into that union we could not enter, upon any previous condition of sin. Just so, we are well content to commingle in education with Roman Catholics, and with men of all other names whatsoever. We merely protest against uniting upon a previous compromise of principle—we would sacrifice much upon the altar of peace, but we will not for the universe sacrifice one word of our Bibles.

5. The last shadow of argument that we have seen, rests upon the ground that we have already made concessions, and therefore should not now stand upon niceties, but for sake of consistency and peace, concede all that is required. We admit that we have made concessions and sacrifices to reconcile our Roman Catholic countrymen to a scriptural education; and it may be our duty to continue concessions and sacrifices still. But we do not grant, that the concessions of the former system were such as we are required to make upon the new system. The former and present plans are scarcely alike in a single feature. The former plan gave us the whole Bible—the present merely gives us a part. (6) The former system left us to choose our own masters—the present deprives us of that privilege. The former system left us free to dismiss a schoolmaster—the present vests his dismissal in the hands of the Board. The former system left the clergy free to employ, out of school hours, what books they pleased—the present deprives them of this right, and will not allow a Minister, ordained of God, to nominate or select the books by which he is to instruct the little ones of his charge. The former system was founded on the reception of the Bible—the present on its virtual rejection. The one was a system of general freedom—the other a system of universal despotism. The argument drawn from the concessions we have already made,

is the worst of all arguments to induce us to make more. As long as we go on to make our concessions, so long will Rome continue to press her demands—concession must continue to follow concession, till the long array affright us into complete surrender, and leave us hopeless and powerless in the hands of our enemies.—Let them tell us, then, of concessions no more. We have conceded too much already—we have gone as far as consistent Protestants can go; and he that would carry us farther must try other arguments—for our Protestantism and our Bible we will surrender but with our lives.

The times that are, brethren, are ominous; and God only knows what events are about to come. It is the duty of a Christian people to stand steadfast for the present, and watchful and prepared for the future. But while we stand steadfast in the defence of our principles, even against the expressed will of our Government, it is our duty to judge candidly and leniently of their motives. A Christian should always judge “righteous judgment;” but in no case is this “righteous judgment” more requisite than when we canvass the measures of the “rulers of our people.” Governments are beset with many great and peculiar difficulties, and like all other human beings, are entitled to “judgment mingled with mercy.” We do not therefore arraign the motives of our rulers. We admit, and we believe, their plan has been intended for the public good. But as all human councils are liable to err, so we believe our rulers have erred. They have regarded the wisdom of men more than the authority of heaven. They have consulted with changing expediency more than with permanent principle. Their ears have been disturbed by the clamorous demands of Rome, and they would purchase quiet for the land by a great Protestant sacrifice. We must respectfully answer them—the sacrifice cannot be made. Demand any thing but our Protestant principles, and to the utmost of our abi-



lity we will render compliance. We will pay our tribute; we will lift up our prayers; we will give our loyalty; but we will retain our Bibles.

But while we retain the casket, let us look well to the jewels. We may have the form of godliness, while we deny its power; we may be nominal Protestants, but unreal Christians; we may honour the Holy Bible, while we grieve the Holy Spirit; and with Christ on our lips, may have the world at the bottom of our hearts. Let us therefore bring our principles to the test of the word, and carefully "examine ourselves whether we be in the faith." Let us call to mind the sincerity, the charity, the boldness, the faithfulness, the zeal, the devotedness of the Reformers. Let the contrast of our own lukewarmness, or coldness, or deadness of heart remind us "from what we are fallen." Let us remember "our first love." Let us "be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that (on account of our sins) are ready to perish;" and "that which we have, let us hold fast," as the gift of the Spirit, till the Saviour come. "Amen. Even so; come quickly: come Lord Jesus."

## NOTES.

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(1) In the House of Commons, and in a large portion of the public press, and sometimes from the philosophical chairs—the idea of Cholera being a “divine visitation” for sin, has been repeatedly denied, or treated with contempt.

(2) “*Compact.*” The Committee of the Belfast Commercial News-Room have pledged themselves to the subscribers, that they will keep their establishment *open every Sunday* during the current year.

“*Advertisement.*” The sailing of Steam-Boats on Sunday, which, at considerable inconvenience, had been discontinued by one company, has been resumed by another; and the public are informed of their determination by *advertisement*, in which we have their days of sailing during a whole month—Sunday—Sunday—Sunday—Sunday!! Will this prosper?

(3) The Presbytery of Edinburgh having, of their own authority, ordained a day of public fasting and humiliation, relative to the approach of Cholera—and, in the meantime, an order for a fast having been appointed by Government—an attempt was made by some of the members to set aside the day appointed by the church, and wait for the one appointed by the Government. We are happy to say, that the great majority of the Presbytery stood fast by their appointment, and argued the subject with an eloquence and piety worthy of the olden time.

(4) The arguments for a public fast, on account of the threatened approach of Cholera, was denominated by Mr. Hume, in the House of Commons, “cant and hypocrisy”—and in this view he was joined by nine other members. The misrepresentation of Mr. Percival’s motion by the Parliamentary Reporter and the public press, affords an awful specimen of the dishonesty by which the self-denominated liberals distort the arguments they cannot answer.

(5) The progress of education, on the principle of reading the

whole Scriptures, may be seen by a few references to the state of the national schools. 1816. Schools 85—scholars 556.—1823. Schools 1122—scholars 79,287.—1828. Schools 1497—scholars 106,839.—1831. Schools 1621—scholars 137,632. If to these we add the Hibernian School Society—the Baptist School Society—the Irish School Society, &c., it will appear that upwards of 400,000 children were, in the year 1832, in progress of education upon the basis of the unmutilated Bible.

(6) How much of the Bible the Board will APPROVE, (yes *approve*, for so runs their commission,) we do not yet know. But we learn, from one of themselves, that they are proceeding with a *new translation*, upon their own authority—a new selection of *notes and comments*, partly from the Douay, and, we suppose, from the Rhemish versions, and such *extracts* from this *new version and commentary* as they may think fit to afford. The attempts of their advocates to prove that the Board do not withdraw the Bible, are all in vain. They *withdraw* it, they *refuse* it in their *combined education*; that is, during four days of the week. They *have power*, from their commission, (as we have shown,) to *refuse* it both in the *combined literary* and *separate religious* instruction; against the acknowledgment of such a *power* every Protestant must lift up his voice. It matters little what the *will* of the Board may be during the present opposition, the proper object of dread is their *power*, if once consolidated by a public law.

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 of the Board may be doing the present opposition, the proper  
 object of dread is their power, if once consolidated by a public  
 law.

Houses of the Oireachtas