

THE  
DUTY OF NATIONS  
FAVOURED WITH DIVINE REVELATION  
TO PROMOTE  
SCRIPTURAL EDUCATION:  
IN  
TWO DISCOURSES.

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## DISCOURSE FIRST.

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ISAIAH xxvi. 2.

*“ Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. ”*

HOWEVER political parties or sentimentalists in religion may assert that ministers of the Gospel are travelling out of their proper province by introducing into the pulpit subjects connected with national institutions or acts, we have no fear that you, brethren, will readily adopt such a conclusion. We address the descendants of those who loved not their lives to the death, while they overcame the enemies of civil and religious rights by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. These patriotic and devoted men contended earnestly for a principle, which they embodied in all their declarations and testimonies, and doctrinal symbols,—the right of Christian men and ministers to apply the infallible rule of the Sanctuary to public functionaries and their measures ; and the positive duty of yielding approbation to systems, or official persons, or their proceedings, only when they are found to accord with its holy and unalterable requirements.

That we follow the “ footsteps of the flock ” is not, however, our sole or principal warrant for discussing national proceedings in the ministrations of the Sanctuary. We plead not for the adoption of the principles of men however eminent, or for the imitation of their conduct, but as far as both are scriptural ; and our rule in reference to the illustrious men of former times is this,—*We desire to follow them as they followed Christ.* The Word of God is a perfect rule of faith and practice for men in every relation : and

to its inspired and unerring dictates, as the ultimate arbiter, every question in morals or religion must be referred for decision. The sacred Scriptures contain a complete system of politics, stamped with a heavenly origin, and susceptible of application to men in every condition, and in all countries, till the end of time. Large portions of the Inspired volume are taken up with the concerns of civil government; and some of the most eminent believers, whose lives are recorded, and whose characters are delineated in the Bible, are not less distinguished as patriots than as saints. We are, moreover, assured that the time is rapidly approaching when the principles of Messiah's benign government shall leaven all political society, the "kingdoms of this world" shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ;" and when, according to the prophet's lofty prediction, "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." \*

The passage of inspired prophecy, from which we have selected our text, necessarily calls us to consider the character and policy of nations, as connected with the progress and ultimate triumph of pure and undefiled religion. By a series of sublime and animated predictions, the Evangelical prophet had, in the preceding chapter, exhibited the desolations which the Lord had wrought throughout the earth, and the bright and delightful prospect of a universal reign of righteousness and peace succeeding the subversion of systems of error and oppression. Egypt, Tyre and Babylon had fallen by the vengeance of heaven, under the weight of their own accumulated wickedness. Kingdoms and cities, opulent and powerful, had already been overwhelmed with irretrievable destruction: their foundations had either been wholly swept from the face of the earth, or their desolations remained, a monument of Divine indignation to future generations. These judgments, wrathful and retributive to the enemies of Zion, were fraught with mercy to the Church of the redeemed. They broke the strength and withered the arm of her cruel oppressors; they held forth signal manifestations of the perfections of her Covenant

Head; and they were the immediate precursors to her of a period of enlargement and comfort. In anticipation of this happy era, the prophet called the denizens of Zion to be joyful in their King. Satisfied with the feast prepared in his holy mountain, and beholding his stately steppings as he comes in power and majesty, they welcome his appearance as the fulfilment of their earnest desires, and the fruition of their dearest hopes. In the day when he will rend asunder the vail of the covering spread over all nations, and take away the rebuke of his people from off all the earth, it shall be said,—“Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

The period to which the song of thanksgiving and triumph, begun in the preceding and continued throughout the twenty-sixth chapter, has special reference, is “the year of the recompense” of Zion, and the “day of vengeance” upon all her oppressors. Whatever allusion it may have to past deliverances, such as the preservation of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, from the hosts of Assyria, the return of the captives from Babylon, and the victories of the Maccabees over Antiochus Epiphanes, there seems to be no ground to doubt that the sublime imagery and exalted language of the prophet have a relation to a more glorious and extensive deliverance, yet future. As the ancient enemies of God’s Israel were emblems of the Church’s oppressors under the New Testament, so their destruction was prefigurative of the ruin to which mystical Babylon, the great adversary of Christ and his cause, is foredoomed, and which shall surely be executed in the tremendous judgments of the seven last plagues. The day in which this joyful song shall be sung in the Church of God, will therefore be the time when the cause of truth and righteousness shall triumph over the delusions of the Man of Sin,—when the glad tidings of salvation shall be made known to all nations,—when Jew and Gentile shall become one in Christ,—and when the city of God, an enlarged and purified Church, shall, through the power, truth and love of her glorious Head, appear ascendant over every enemy, exalted on the tops of the mountains, and established above the hills.

Preparatory to this delightful consummation, and as one of its brightest accompaniments, nations shall secede from their league

with Antichrist, and adopting a Scriptural standard of legislation, shall acknowledge subjection to Messiah, the Prince of the kings of the earth. Contemporaneous with the resurrection and ascension of the Witnesses, we are informed in the Apocalypse that there shall be “ a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city shall fall.” \* Amidst the commotions in the kingdoms of men that are connected with the final deliverance of Zion, a most important revolution will be effected. One of the nations that had long been degraded by subjection to Antichrist shall renounce for ever the debasing alliance ; and arraying itself around the banner of truth, shall stand forth, an example before the nations of a people embracing the true principles of scriptural order and rational liberty. The effect will be powerful, and most salutary upon surrounding communities. “ *The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.* ” Nations shall be emancipated from a thralldom that had long oppressed them, and Babylon, “ the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” forsaken of her friends, and exposed to the judgments of God, shall be cast into destruction, as a great millstone into the sea.

The true interest of Churches and nations is to ante-date these joyful events. Churches would partially enjoy even now the blessings of the Millennium, by preserving the purity of Divine institutions, and by walking in the light and power of a holy profession. And nations would realize the blessing from above upon their national policy, and would attain to abundant prosperity, were they faithfully to maintain the truth in opposition to the delusions of Antichrist, and employ their resources for its diffusion throughout the earth. The cause of righteousness, it is true, will not reach its complete and final triumph, nor will the nations be fully converted until mystical Babylon shall be removed by the breath of the Almighty,—but there shall be a work of extensive previous preparation, and in proportion as nations embrace and hold forth the truth as it is in Jesus, shall they be honoured as harbingers of the Day-spring of salvation, and as partakers of the munificent blessings of the Redeemer’s glorious kingdom.

The command contained in the text supposes a season of abundant enlargement for the Church. The truths of sal-

vation are extensively proclaimed,—the gates of Jerusalem, the city of God, are thrown wide open to admit crowds of spiritual worshippers from all countries,—the Spirit is poured out in his plentiful influences, like the rich and refreshing dews of heaven, and the Church appears in her spiritual glory and beauty, as a garden which the Lord hath blessed. To the believer in revelation there can be no doubt that a special characteristic of this era of enlargement will be the submission of civil authorities and nations to the yoke of the Redeemer. Kings shall become “the nursing fathers, and their queens the nursing mothers” of the Church. “The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.”\* It is the duty, as it should be esteemed the privilege of Christians, in every station, to hasten this universal submission to the Lord’s Anointed. Pledged by solemn engagements to the King of Zion, they should employ every effort to bring nations that are enveloped in darkness to receive his truth, and to submit to his authority. And by holding up to rulers and people in Christian lands their obligation to “kiss the Son,” they should labour that all may render cheerful homage to the religion of Christ; that the truth may be generally known, professed and practised; that when the day of enlargement comes, the whole nation, as a people righteous and keeping the truth, may enter in through the gates of Jerusalem, and receive the blessing that descends upon the heritage of Jacob.

While we have no disposition to deny that the terms of the text may refer to multitudes of converts coming to Zion, each made righteous through the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer, and by the work of the Spirit on their hearts, each holding in his hand the standard of truth, we cannot but regard the command as referring peculiarly to civil communities in their associated capacity. The “*righteous nation which keepeth the truth*” has a place of special honour in the future gathering to Shiloh; and while Christians should labour and pray that new converts should be enrolled as citizens in this strong city from every part of the earth, they should take a particular interest in the dedication of national sovereignty

\* Isaiah xlix, 23. Psalm lxxii, 10, 11.



to the Redeemer; and as not less connected with the true and permanent prosperity of nations themselves, than with the advancement of the Mediator's glory, they should fervently desire the approach of the time when "the nations of them that are saved shall walk" in Zion's light, and "the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour" into her.

By the term *nation*, as it is employed in common speech, and as we design to use it in the discussion of this subject, is intended an organised community, placed under a system of political government, capable of intercourse with other communities, and the subject of reward and punishment. It is hardly necessary to remark that the term does not refer to one generation merely. Both by the common consent of mankind, and by Jehovah, the moral Governor of the universe, a nation is regarded as a permanent body, having a continued moral identity, notwithstanding various physical changes, so that the political body remains the same, though the persons who compose it successively pass off the stage of time. On this principle, nations, under the moral government of God, are regarded as subjects of blessing, or as exposed to judgments. The *Two Witnesses*,—a succession of faithful men, are represented as the same during the 1260 years of Antichrist's reign. The witnesses of one age are the instruments of blessing to those that succeed them; and when they shall have finished their testimony, the triumph is shared by the whole company, from the earliest to the last that honestly protested against the abominations of Rome. The Jews in Jeremiah's time are spoken of as identical with those who came out of Egypt; and the generation that then composed the nation, is regarded in the Divine denunciation as having broken the covenant which God made with their fathers at Horeb.\* The Egyptians and Assyrians have a continued identity ascribed to them in Scripture; each succeeding generation inheriting the crimes of their fathers, and when the measure of their iniquity is complete, the vengeance that accomplishes their final destruction being retribution for the sins that have accumulated from the commencement of their history to its close. The destruction of the Amorites in the days of Joshua was the consequence of the cup of their iniquity which was filling

\* Jeremiah xi. 10.

up from the time of Abraham. And when Jerusalem fell under the victorious legions of Titus, and the Jews were dispersed throughout the nations, their national polity being destroyed, this was the visitation of Divine Justice, for sins against heaven that had been increasing from the earliest times. "Wherefore," says the Saviour to the impenitent Jews of that day, "be ye witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation." \* Privileges, sins, threatenings, judgments, spoken of in relation to organized communities, all have an intimate connexion with the doctrine of their continued identity. On this principle, too, national compacts have a descending obligation upon posterity, and legislative measures exercise a certain and incalculable influence for weal or wo upon the future destinies of the commonwealth.

Loving as we do sincerely the lands of our nativity, and earnestly desiring that they may be led to repent of national sins, and to become the depository and herald of truth to other countries, we propose, with an eye to the subject of legislation on education, to consider, from the text, the approved character of Christian nations, and their duty in receiving and holding forth Divine truth. Our theme is,

#### THE RIGHTEOUS NATION WHICH KEEPETH THE TRUTH.

To this we shall chiefly confine our attention in the first place; we shall afterwards apply the views that may be presented to the subject of National Education, and to some modern schemes that have been adopted by the nation; while, in both Discourses, we shall have reference to the special command of the text, to "open the gates," and admit the nation possessed of this character to the full enjoyment of the chartered privileges of the city of God. Humbly desiring in our place to be instrumental in promoting national righteousness and truth, as the sure means of national exaltation, and in opening the gates of Zion, that men of all ranks may submit to the sceptre of Messiah the Prince, and may share

\* Matthew xxiii. 31, 32, 33, 36.

in the blessings of his benign administration, we shall, in dependence upon gracious promised aid, consider, for the present,

I. The Duty of a Nation to exhibit a Righteous Character; and

II. The Duty of the Nation to keep the Truth. In accordance with this method, we proceed to speak of

I. *The duty of a Nation to exhibit a righteous character.*

The epithet *righteous* is of frequent use in the sacred Scriptures, and of very extensive signification. As applied to the principles and conduct, whether of individuals or of communities, it always has regard to some fixed rule or standard, and it denotes conformity to this rule. This standard can be none other than the Moral Law, the rule of universal rectitude, propounded with greater or less degrees of clearness, but demanding of all cordial and unlimited-obedience. National righteousness implies freedom from national crimes,—recognition of the obligation of the Divine law,—and the practice of equity, truth and mercy, in acts of positive obedience to the will of Jehovah, the universal Sovereign. To have the character of *righteous* in a proper and full sense, nations must receive the law from the hands of the Mediator, and rulers and subjects to a large extent embrace and exemplify the Gospel. They must assume the revelation of mercy as the basis of their public measures, and carry into application those principles of universal justice which receive the fullest developement, and the most powerful confirmation from the Mediatorial system. The *law of nations*, or the *law of nature*, is the same as the Moral Law, originally written on man's moral constitution, and still found in scattered and imperfect lineaments in the hearts and consciences of men, and in the laws and customs of all nations under heaven. The only full and clear republication of this law is contained in the Scriptures of truth, in connexion with the remedial scheme that effectually provides for man's recovery from ruin, through the wondrous obedience and death of the Lawgiver. This is the grand rule of moral rectitude to nations as well as to individuals. Wherever the revealed law of heaven comes, it advances paramount claims to homage and subjection. None are truly righteous, save those who are conformed to it in heart and life. So in nations, the righteousness which exalts them, consists not in the number and excellence of their public insti-



tutions, nor in their commerce, literature, wealth, or military prowess, nor even in a lengthened course of outward prosperity. Many of these advantages have been enjoyed by States that have been the scourges of mankind, and that have sunk under the vengeance of the Almighty. But a righteous national character,—the fountain of countless blessings to a people, is put on, when the nation in its collective capacity, its rulers and people, frame their constitution and regulate their proceedings in accordance with the supreme standard of rectitude, the revealed law of heaven. Having principally in view the character and duty of a nation keeping the truth,—one to which the truth of revelation comes, and which is constituted the depository and defender of the truth, we shall notice a few of the more special and weighty obligations that rest upon a people thus favoured to exhibit the eminent character mentioned in the text,—A RIGHTEOUS NATION. That we may be clearly understood, we regard this character as comprising three essential elements,—cordial submission to Messiah, the Governor among the nations,—the reception of his Word, as the foundation of national legislation,—and practical subjection to its holy requirements. Nations are bound to be thus righteous, as they are

*In the first place, UNDER LAW TO GOD.*

The law of God is a perfect, universal, unalterable rule. Society, equally as the individual, is under the Divine government, and the subject of the Divine law. He that implanted in man's constitution the social principle, instituted the social state, and placed it, not to be the sport of accident, or as the irresponsible creature of man's caprice, but in subjection to himself as the moral Governor of the universe. God is the only legitimate source of authority, and his law, natural or revealed, the ultimate and infallible standard to regulate its exercise. "There is no power, but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." \* Under this perfect rule, society, in all its modifications and changes, is necessarily placed. God is supreme, and man, whether as an individual or as a member of society, is constantly dependent upon him. The moral law was engraven on the heart, as well as revealed in the Bible; communities absolutely depend on God for being and happiness; and the law of God prescribes social duties,

and awards blessing or punishment to national obedience or transgression, as in the case of individuals. Human language and common consent recognise the obligation of nations to the Divine law. We speak of public virtue and national morality. The national will, and honour, and sovereignty, are phrases in common use, and these all suppose a standard according to which public measures are to be regulated. Men act on the same principle, in speaking and judging of national acts. The nation is viewed as an individual amenable to some higher authority, deserving of praise or blame, of reward or punishment, according as it obeys or violates the law of unchangeable rectitude, by which all the decisions of that august tribunal are pronounced. The principle thus admitted by man's judgment and conscience is fully declared in Divine revelation. Jehovah's moral government of the nations proceeds on the ground that society is the subject of the Divine law. In fact, the very nature of a holy and righteous government supposes this. If God would not act towards his creatures as a capricious tyrant,—if men's consciences bear testimony to the work of the law written therein,—if the Governor of the world sways a righteous sceptre, and the Judge of the whole earth only and invariably does right, then must He have perpetual regard to the law which he has propounded, and by which he regulates his dealings with his rational and accountable creatures. Hence is it declared, "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all."\* The honour and dignity of nations are connected with their enjoying a clear revelation of the Divine law, and with a course of faithful obedience. Surrounding communities behold with admiration this privilege of God's Israel. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation." "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law?"† Communities are still prospered and blessed when they obey the ordinances of justice and walk in the way of truth: they are punished as they are dis-

\* Psalm ciii. 19. † Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. Deut iv. 6, 7, 8.

obedient and rebellious. And not to one nation alone, or to one age of the world only, does this rule of retribution apply. Wherever the social state exists, there the obligation of the Divine law extends; and there the crimes of the community draw down the bolts of vengeance, while manifold blessings follow in the way of righteousness. The law of God, the transcript of the Divine character, demands perfect rectitude. It were derogatory to the honour of Jehovah to require less; and therefore are nations under the highest obligation to display a regard to righteousness in all their measures.

2. NATIONS ARE PLACED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST THE MEDIATOR.—There is no principle more explicitly declared in the Sacred Volume than this. The Lord Jesus, as Mediator, has received power over all flesh, and all things are delivered to him by the Father. In his designation from all eternity, his exaltation as universal sovereign was contemplated; for he was set King upon the holy hill of Zion; and when the decree is declared, the judges and kings of the earth are commanded to submit to his authority, under pain of his displeasure. The first revelation of mercy given to the world, contained a discovery of his irresistible power and authority, as a suffering and yet a conquering Redeemer. The Seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head, to bring down, and utterly destroy the kingdom of darkness. For the suffering of death which he endured, He was crowned with glory and honour, and all things were put under his feet. And in his ascension to heaven, he obtained actual investiture with the throne and sceptre of power, and with the sovereignty of all worlds. As the reward of his meritorious obedience and sufferings, and by the Father's donation, the Mediator has been highly exalted, and has received a name which is above every name, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The Father has "set him at his own right hand 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. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things

to the Church. ” “ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. ” \* In the administration of this extensive empire, Prince Messiah is represented as exercising authority over all. Opening the seven-sealed book of the Divine purposes, and conducting all events to their predestined issue, he has on his head the crown of regal authority, and in his hand the bow of power, and he rides forth conquering and to conquer. That the sovereignty of the Mediator extends over the nations of the earth, and that the sons of the mighty are subjected to his dominion, we have the express and reiterated testimony of the Spirit of truth. He wears on his vesture and thigh the august title, “ King of kings, and Lord of lords : ” he is Messiah, “ Prince of the kings of the earth. ” Men may refuse to acknowledge him in this elevated character, and may even attempt to break asunder his bands and cast away his cords. The attempt is madness and folly. The command of the Father to Messiah is, “ Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. ” † In the day of his wrath, He will strike through kings ; and though the potentates of the earth agree for a season to give their power to the beast, and rebel against the righteous authority of the Lamb, the Lamb shall overcome them. Resistance to Messiah is vain. The crown that he wears shall flourish upon him, despite of every attempt to tarnish its glory, or pluck it from his head. “ He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ” ‡ “ His throne shall endure as the sun, it shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in the heavens. ” § Backward as are the rulers of the earth to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Redeemer, and manifold as is the opposition to his righteous claims, throughout the nations, the doctrine of Messiah’s Headship is essential to all right civil government. Nations to which the Redeemer’s character and claims are made known, are bound

\* Phil. ii. 11, 12. Eph. i. 21, 22. Daniel vii. 13, 14.  
† 1 Cor. xv. 25. ‡ Psalm lxxxix. 30, 37.

† Psalm cx. 2.

to own his authority and receive his laws. The Father will have all men, and of consequence, civil rulers as well as others, to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. The maxim is of universal application,—“He that hath not the Son, the same hath not the Father.” Nations who refuse homage to Messiah, the Prince of the kings of the earth, can never adopt the principles of universal righteousness, nor carry them into application in their administration. Nature’s law, without the light of revelation, is dim and obscure ; and through the force of human depravity, the dictates of natural religion are insufficient to restrain the selfishness of men’s hearts, or to secure the full exercise of justice and mercy. The religion of Jesus is alone effectual to dry up the springs of evil in the heart, and to purify and bless the nations. Because the Redeemer reigns, and advances an indefeasible claim to national homage and submission, nations, as such, should be characterized by righteousness. This is a prevailing feature of his own benign and powerful government. Of him it is emphatically said, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.”\* He is, by way of eminence, “the king that reigns in righteousness,” and under him “princes rule in judgment.”† And in reference to the excellent character of his administration, and the numerous munificent blessings which he dispenses, it is declared, “He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor”‡ Righteousness is his delight. As he can never give a dispensation to violate his law, or to withhold any portion of the homage that is due to his name, so national injustice or ungodliness must be the object of his unalterable abhorrence. As nations and their rulers therefore would escape the wrath of the Lamb, or approve themselves faithful subjects of the Great King, or enjoy the incalculable benefits of his administration, they are bound to profess and practice righteousness.

3. NATIONS ARE PROSPERED IN THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.—  
 “Righteousness exalteth a nation ; but sin is the reproach of any

\* Psalm xlv. 6.

† Isaiah xxiii. 1.

‡ Psalm lxxii. 2, 3, 4.



people."\* The principle thus declared by the Spirit of Truth has received countless illustrations in the history of nations, from the earliest ages. It were easy to shew that righteousness contains in itself the germ of every thing that can render a community contented, prosperous, and happy. It enthrones justice on its high seat of authority, and by establishing laws of the most excellent kind, derived from the purest source, and directing their administration, it secures to all their rights. Restraining and eradicating evil principles, it purges the throne from iniquity; and exalting piety, truth, and benevolence to seats of influence and authority, it diffuses unnumbered blessings throughout the various ranks of society. Among the mass of the people it produces honesty, temperance, industry, and contentment; and health, peace, riches and honour, are realised in connexion with national righteousness. A virtuous society has within itself the elements of its own happiness, and a righteous character is the bulwark of its defence, and its crown of glory among surrounding communities. "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Of wisdom, by which "kings reign and princes decree justice," it is declared, "Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."† The *promise* of Jehovah is addressed to nations, and is realized in the way of obedience. This is the established law of the dispensation,—“Them that honour me, will I honour.”‡ “The Lord is with you, while ye be with him.”§ How frequently are national blessings guaranteed to ancient Israel, in connexion with the observance of the Divine law, and faithfulness to the national covenant! “Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land, which the Lord sware unto thy fathers.” “Behold, I set before thee this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day.”|| “And it shall come to pass,

\* Prov. xiv. 34.    † Prov. iii. 16, 17.    ‡ 1 Samuel ii. 30.    § 2 Chron. xv. 2.  
|| Deut. vi. 17, 18; xl. 26, 27.

if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments, which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field," &c. "And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, and in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand."\* These multiplied blessings are evidently national. Nations, as such, only exist in the present life, and therefore if they enjoy prosperity, it must be in their national character, and during the term of their existence on earth. The favour promised to Israel is more particularly seen in the enjoyment of temporal benefits; but it is not exclusively confined to them. These blessings are declared to flow from the special love and distinguishing choice of their covenant God, and they are possessed in connexion with the Lord making Israel his kingdom, and Judah his sanctuary, and accounting them to him as "a peculiar treasure," above all people. The blessings which were promised to the ancient people of God were largely enjoyed by them, at those periods in their history when they walked in the paths of righteousness. When under the guidance of Joshua they took possession of the land of promise,—in the days of Samuel, David and Solomon,—in periods of revival, under Hezekiah, Jehosaphat, Josiah, and Nehemiah,—in short, at all times when righteousness was characteristic of the nation, and when rulers and people combined in promoting reformation, they were prospered, and plenteous providential blessings descended upon the land. Few as the Israelites were, compared with other nations, and although the Canaanite remained still in the country, and they were hemmed in by enemies round about, in the way of obedience, the Lord rendered them victorious over all their foes. He multi-

\* Deut. xxviii. 1, 2, 3—11, 12.

plied the fruit of the ground ; gave them peace and rest in all their borders ; and by peculiar favour exalted them above all the nations of the earth. At these seasons, the Hebrew people were peculiarly “ the righteous nation, that kept the truth.” True religion was the animating principle of their national polity. Like the sanctuary placed in the midst of the camp, with the Priests and Levites lodging around it, and the hosts of Israel encamped on every side ; so the pure doctrine and worship of God formed the central principle of the Jewish administration, whence its measures emanated, and by which they were directed and purified. Israel was moreover the depository of Divine truth. Unto them were committed the oracles of God. This was the true source of their dignity and prosperity. When other nations, involved in midnight darkness, were debased by superstition and idolatry, while empires rose and fell round about them, and states, more numerous and powerful, were rent with strife and confusion, or swept to destruction, the light of Divine truth beamed upon the hills of Judea ; and a people comparatively few, obscure, and feeble, enjoyed a degree of prosperity, wholly unknown besides, in the annals of ancient history. Inquire we the reason of this singular distinction ? It is found alone in the sovereign favour of the God of nations, who chose Israel, and loved them above all people,—and who dignified and blessed them as they maintained a righteous character.

That righteousness in a nation is the source of national prosperity and happiness, has been exemplified in the history of many other communities, since the close of the canon of Inspiration. Under the Divine Government, the same salutary effects may be expected to flow from holy principles and practice till the end of time. The maxim is of universal application,—“ The work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. ” \* There was no peculiarity in the Jewish commonwealth, in respect of national righteousness and reward, that hinders the system from being carried out in other countries. The connexion between public virtue and social happiness is based upon the eternal principles of the Divine government, and is morally unalterable. Modern nations have frequently exemplified the truth for which we contend. Their bright-



est eras have been those in which legislation approached nearest to a scriptural standard ; and in which justice, holiness, and mercy, characterized national proceedings. The example of *Scotland*, the land of our fathers' sepulchres, stands conspicuous among the nations as an illustration of the truth, that " righteousness exalteth a nation." With all her disadvantages of soil and climate, and limited resources, from a condition of barbarism and frequent internal strife, she arose to a lofty pre-eminence in literature, religion, industry, and in almost all the elements of national happiness. We search in vain for any other ground of this distinction than this,—that, in adopting the principles of the Reformation, the noble-minded sons of Scotland, amidst suffering, and trial, and long-continued struggles, honestly laboured that the truths of the Bible,—the perfect rule of righteousness,—should mould the national character, and have a commanding position in all the national measures. For this they pleaded, and for this they loved not their lives to the death. The God of nations approved their faithfulness and owned their cause. The torch of Divine truth was lighted upon their native hills. It shed its celestial brightness upon all departments of society ; the storms of persecution served only to exhibit its purity, and to diffuse its radiance ; and notwithstanding the attempts that have been made to extinguish its beams, glory still dwells in the land ; and to the piety and faithful contendings of our Scottish forefathers, and to the scriptural principles which were adopted in their national institutions, may be traced the morality, and religion, and industry, for which Scotland's children are still distinguished throughout the world. It was the righteous character which, through the instrumentality of its Reformers and Martyrs, was impressed upon the Scottish nation, that exalted it above others, and secured countless blessings to its inhabitants. But for this, Scotland had been like Spain, which, notwithstanding all outward advantages, is, through its slavery to Antichrist, degraded and miserable ; or like the Southern parts of our own country, steeped in poverty, and disgraced with treachery and crime. Thus, too, *Holland*, with a soil, of which it has been said that it would not support one-tenth of its inhabitants one-tenth of the year, became at one period the cradle and van-guard of liberty in Europe, and secured to its citizens the blessings of education,

and industry, and commerce. It was the Reformation, embodying the great principles of scriptural righteousness, that rescued the Low Countries from the thralldom of Spain, and rendered Holland and the Dutch renowned throughout the nations. Because evangelical religion was adopted into the national profession, and provision was made for carrying out its influence into every department of society, national blessings have been largely enjoyed by the people of that country throughout many generations. Why should we multiply examples? All the experience of the past,—all the records of history bear unequivocal testimony to the truth, that a righteous character in a nation has been the means of securing national prosperity and happiness. The same nations have been blessed abundantly while they walked in the way of righteousness, and when they have forsaken the truth, acted in opposition to the precepts of the Bible, and sanctioned iniquity by a law, they have been rejected of heaven, and their glory has departed. Poland, once Protestant, and afterwards degenerating into the vassalage of Rome, and becoming an oppressor of the saints, is an instance of the retribution of heaven consequent upon forsaking the path of righteousness. Holland, at one period, disregarding religious obligation, and lapsing into heartless infidelity and grievous immorality, and then becoming an easy prey to Revolutionary France, affords a similar example; and the future history of Britain and America seems destined to record the doom of these nations, once rising rapidly to prosperity, power, and grandeur, by legislating in some cases upon Christian principles, and exemplifying, in some degree, the practice of justice, mercy, and truth, but afterwards falling from their high elevation, by forsaking the law of righteousness. When the future era of Millennial glory will have arrived, we have the indubitable assurance that national righteousness shall conduct to national greatness and felicity. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and then shall wars cease unto the ends of the earth. The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth, as the waters cover the channel of the deep; and consequent upon the profession of the truth, and the practice of national godliness, riches, honour and felicity shall abound throughout the earth. In the establishment of Messiah's peaceful and righteous kingdom, the nations

shall be greatly blessed,—“ His name shall endure for ever ; His name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in him ; all nations shall call him blessed. ” \* In sure anticipation of this delightful era, the kingdoms of the world are now called to rejoice. “ Let the people praise thee, O God ; let all the people praise thee. O ! let the nations be glad, and sing for joy : for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God ; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase ; and God, even our own God, shall bless us, God shall bless us ; and all ends of the earth shall fear him. ” † The enjoyment of rich and diversified blessings,—even of all that render a nation free, contented, and prosperous, is thus connected with a righteous character, and supplies a powerful motive to induce rulers and people to labour for its possession.

4. *National sins are visited by national judgments.*

The principle of such retribution has been already noticed. Political bodies only exist in the present state, and therefore the proper punishment of the sins which they commit in this capacity must be national judgments. These are necessary to shew that that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, that his wrath may be revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men, and that nations may be kept in subjection to his moral government. Accordingly, when bodies politic refuse homage to the Governor of the world, in the deed of their constitution, or in their national acts,—when they violate His law, or rebel against His authority,—when, unmindful of high privileges, they make defection from former attainments, or break solemn vows,—when their rulers do wickedly, and the people connive at their sin, or follow their evil courses,—and when sins openly and generally abound in a nation, without restraint or repentance, then are transgressions of a national character, and retributive justice visits them upon the community. And in proportion as privilege has been abused, and crimes are persevered in, and become multiplied and daring, a severer vengeance overtakes an offending people. “ You only have I known,” says God concerning Israel, “ above all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you.” This principle is maintained through-

\* Psalm lxxii. 17.

† Psalm lxxvii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

out every part of the volume of Inspiration. The Lord is said to have a "controversy" with nations because of their wickedness. The cup of their iniquity is filling up for ages, and when it is full, the vials of Divine indignation are poured out, and guilty nations are made to drink out of the Lord's right hand the cup of trembling. Thus was Israel punished at various periods of their history, for national apostacy and rebellion; and the final destruction of their church and commonwealth was the righteous vengeance of heaven for crimes that had been accumulating for many generations. Amalek, Idumea, Babylon and Tyre fell by the judgments which their sins had provoked; and the four great dynasties seen in prophetic vision by Daniel, rose to greatness and power, and were successively overwhelmed by the superincumbent weight of their own great and multiplied transgressions. And when Antichrist shall be destroyed, the harvest of the earth being fully ripe, shall be reaped by the Angel of judgment, and all those nations that yielded their power to support systems of superstition and idolatry shall be utterly wasted. The sins of rulers provoke Divine vengeance, and draw down judgments upon a people. What is the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah under the Kings, but almost one continued recital of the wickedness of men in power, and of God's indignation against them and the nation who walked after their evil ways, Sin is the reproach of any people; and when it is committed amidst abundant light and privileges, and notwithstanding solemn rebukes and warnings, the retributive visitations are proportionally the more fearful and destructive. Even one great act of national rebellion, as in the case of Israel rejecting the Divine government, and seeking a king after the manner of the nations, subjects to punishment. When a nation forsakes the way of righteousness, its defences are departed, and an unexpected and despised enemy will obtain the mastery and do the work of vengeance. While Israel obeyed the law of their God, it was promised that "one of them should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight;"—but when they dealt deceitfully in God's covenant, they were warned that their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up. How often, in the time of the Judges, do we see a strange and contemptible enemy, and one that had before been subdued under the sword of Israel, become the minister of

wrath against a sinning people. And in periods subsequent to this, a mean and despised adversary was frequently the instrument of punishment for national sins. All was peaceful and prosperous while Solomon walked in the way of the Lord, but when his heart was turned aside, his reign was involved in troubles. Hadad and Jeroboam were arrayed against him, and inflicted evils on the land. The Assyrian had a commission against Israel, because of national provocations. "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets."\* These "things happened" to ancient nations for "ensamples" to us; and they are written for our admonition, "upon whom the ends of the world are come." The judgments poured out upon the nations of Europe, at the close of the last century, when a soldier of fortune ascended rapidly to sovereign power, and made kings and emperors kiss the dust of his feet, were the just punishment of accumulated national transgression. Germany had observed the light of the Reformation; the rulers of Prussia had become openly infidel and abominably licentious; Holland had ceased to remember her first love, or to do her first works. The superstition and idolatry of the Man of Sin, with their countless train of attendant evils, had overspread Popish countries; while a blighting and pestilential Neology infected the Continental churches of the Reformation. These were national sins that cried to heaven for vengeance. The day of exhausted long-suffering, and of recompense, at length arrived; and a devastation more extensive and tremendous than modern times have ever witnessed, proclaimed the wrath of heaven against all unrighteousness of men. We have reason, as a nation, to remember this awful lesson. The tempest lowered above us, and spent itself around our shores; but if national sins have been increasing, despite of mercy and warning, then a day of sterner retribution awaits us, when the cup of Britain's iniquity shall be full. It has been matter of observation, that, in every past period of her history, when national countenance was given to idolatry, judgments in public calamities have

\* Isaiah x. 5, 6.



followed. And who can fail to observe the connexion, in recent days, between the national favour bestowed on Popery, and the open neglect of God by those in authority, and the intestine discontent and strife, the commercial difficulties and crippled resources of the empire? If the Mediator rules the nations, he is specially bound to pour contempt and ruin on those in power who would exclude him from the government of his own world, and on those who follow their delusive counsels. Let the kings of the earth be wise, and kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way. Let the nation repent, and return to the path of righteousness. Thus, and thus only, may we expect that impending clouds of vengeance will disperse and vanish away. “Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”\*

Having thus considered a few of the obligations under which nations, as such, lie to exhibit a righteous character, we proceed,

## II. *To speak of the Duty of a nation to “keep the Truth.”*

Without attempting any formal definition of “the truth” spoken of in the text, it may be regarded as including the doctrines of the Bible, in opposition to all error and falsehood respecting things religious, moral, or political. It centres in Jesus Christ, who is emphatically the “Truth,” as he comprehends in himself all real excellencies, has fulfilled all ancient prefigurations and predictions, and is the substance of every thing important in the sacred history, law, or gospel. The word of salvation is the declared truth of Christ, given to guide the sinner from the paths of darkness and sin to the realms of light and holiness,—and the whole of divine revelation is “the truth,” by way of special emphasis, designed to be the infallible and sufficient rule of faith, and unerring directory of conduct.

The text implies that the righteous character of a nation is inseparable from the maintenance of truth, and that this is one of its principal duties. To embrace the truth,—to hold it fast,—to walk according to its requirements,—to exemplify its sanctifying and transforming efficacy,—are essential to a full display of national righteousness. We deny not that there are truths in natural reli-

gion, which may be partially discovered without the aid of Divine revelation. There are truths too in government and jurisprudence which are important and valuable, to the knowledge of which men have attained, who were unacquainted with the Bible. But still this knowledge is limited, obscure, and inoperative : the world by wisdom knows not God ; and, unacquainted with the Governor of the world, and the principles of his government, and, above all, with his intentions of mercy, the wisest of the sons of men walk on in darkness, and grope as the blind at noon-day. The Scriptures, which have God for their author, are the truth, without any mixture of error, or the least shade of human imperfection. Given chiefly to make known to man his character and future destiny, and the way of salvation through Christ, they yet declare the principles of the Divine government ; and they come to all to whom they are addressed with the commanding authority of a law proclaimed from heaven. Regarded in this light, nations, equally with individuals, are bound to embrace, profess, defend, diffuse, and transmit the truth,—and they cannot be said to be righteous, keeping the truth, except they recognise and practise these duties.

We are aware that it has been offered as a preliminary objection, that nations and their rulers cannot know the truth ; and that as there are various conflicting opinions respecting what is truth, therefore there should be no special countenance given to one system above another, lest error should be embraced, and what is really truth condemned. It might be sufficient to reply to this cavil, that it would lead to universal scepticism, and therefore it cannot rest upon a solid foundation. Societies and men in authority have similar means for distinguishing truth from error, as men in other relations. Parents and ministers of religion are laid under the most solemn obligations to teach nothing but truth to those who are committed to their care ; and on the principle of the objection, they should utterly refrain from this duty, since they too are in danger of mistaking truth for error, and so of exposing themselves and those dependent upon them to eternal ruin. The fact is, however, that Divine truth is sure and immutable ; and when we plead for nations submitting to its authority, we place the obligation not on the ground of human testimony,

nor do we regard the truth as a matter of human opinion, but as a light and a law, bringing with it its own evidence and authority. It were an insult to the Moral Governor of the world, to suppose that his law is unintelligible, or his Word incapable of being clearly understood and definitely applied. The means of arriving at certainty are fully made known and freely offered. The Statute-book of heaven is in the hand of the august Mediator, who unfolds its contents, and declares its authority. Were the rulers of the earth to kiss the Son; were nations to submit to his laws, and yield him willing obedience, there would be less difficulty in distinguishing truth from error. Truth is too frequently sought in the spirit of Pilate, as a matter of idle speculation or mere theory, and with no serious desire to reduce it to practice; and it is therefore no wonder that it is neither discovered nor embraced.

“In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies.”

The secret of the evil is the aversion of the heart to the authority of God. Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. They refuse to come to the light, lest their deeds which are evil should be reproved. He who is the faithful and true Witness has declared,—and the declaration is applicable to nations and their rulers, as well as to individuals,—“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.”\*

The statement of the text evidently implies that truth may be known, and that it should be received and maintained. The righteous nation is characterized by keeping *the Truth*. The expression is emphatic. In the Hebrew, the word is in the plural number. It is all “*the truths*” that God has revealed in his word, the whole law and testimony which have been left in Israel. These precious principles nations are, first of all, bound to *embrace*. The truth comes to all invested with commanding authority. As individuals, to whom Jehovah’s character and law are made known, are not left at liberty whether they will receive the light or walk in darkness,—so nations favoured with a revelation of Divine truth are bound to embrace it as all-important and valuable. They should welcome it as the best boon of heaven, and conform their



constitution and administration to its holy requirements. This is at once their true dignity, as well as their imperative duty. "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation." \* Nations should moreover *profess* the truth. Not only should they adopt it into their constitution, but they should reject from their legislation every thing inconsistent with its precepts, and they should hold it forth to other communities. Light and darkness can have no real communion, truth and error can never amalgamate. Rulers are specially bound themselves to profess the truth in their official capacity as God's ministers. As organised societies require symbols of agreement, the Church, "which is the pillar and ground of truth," should extract out of the Sacred Record the principles of a religious profession. To these the Civil Ruler, as having the national sovereignty lodged in his hands, is bound to append his authoritative sanction. This adds nothing to the intrinsic power of the truth, nor does it increase the obligation of individuals to embrace it,—but it serves valuable purposes notwithstanding. It defines and declares the national profession, and secures all the advantages which may be easily shewn to result to society from a defined and well-understood creed, while the national power is pledged for the protection and support of the truth. Nations should be God's witnesses; and to be entitled to the character of a holy people, they should profess the truth in the love of it. In this way, chiefly, the nation confesses Christ; and yields subjection and allegiance to Him.

Again, the righteous nation keeping the truth is called to *defend* it. If received aright, it is embraced as a costly treasure. The nation becomes, by its possession, the sacred depository of the most excellent benefit that God confers on the sons of men. The trust calls for all the resources that are under the nation's control to preserve it inviolate. Communities are to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,"—and they are required to "hold fast" that which they have of truth, and profession, and privilege, that no man "take their crown." The grand aim of Satan, the god of this world, and of all his instruments, is to root out the truth from the earth: and by innumerable ways is the attempt

\* Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20.

carried forward. Sometimes by open violence the truth is assailed, at other times, its friends are reproached and calumniated; and again, by the introduction of systems of lies and delusion, Satan deceives the nations. Against all these attempts, nations keeping the truth are required constantly to guard. They should throw the shield of *legal protection* around the truth; they should be ever prepared to appear resolutely in its defence; and kings should be nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers to the Church. And, lastly, nations are bound to *diffuse* and *transmit* the truth. The truth is a public and universal blessing, and the source of innumerable blessings to the world. God's word is for the healing of the nations; and were it to be generally made known and received, national crime and misery would in a great measure disappear from the face of the earth. Entrusted with a deposit so precious, those who keep the truth are bound to diffuse it as widely as possible, and to transmit it unimpaired to succeeding generations. Every man should say to his neighbour, "*Know the Lord,*" until the day come, when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days. The trust is committed to nations under the condition of general dissemination; and they never can fully display the character of righteousness, or realise the blessings that are connected with keeping the truth, if they are unmindful of this great duty. "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children."\* Rulers favoured with the truth should make provision that all their subjects might know it, not by affording equal countenance to instruction in error as to education in the truth,—but by providing that the youth be trained in the way in which they should go, and that the means of religious instruction be placed within the reach of every member of the State. Having thus provided for the illumination of their own subjects, they are bound to diffuse the light throughout the world, and to transmit the truth to posterity. Every approved method of effecting these ends,—such as public institu-

\* Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6.

tions, national covenants, national missions, should be willingly employed for this purpose. How dignified and honourable for the rulers of a State to be thus the heralds of truth, and to contribute to its propagation throughout the nations. Were the same resources to be applied to this great and godlike enterprise that are lavished on unholy wars, for the support of the pageantry of worldly honour, or for other purposes sinful and destructive, what valuable results might be anticipated! The light of truth bursting from one land, would diffuse its radiance throughout the earth. Other nations would follow such an attractive example. Future generations would walk in the truth, and speedily would the vail that is spread over the nations be rent asunder, and the darkness in which they are now enveloped be dispelled. "The earth would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "The glory of the Lord would be revealed, and all flesh would see it together."\*

In considering the keeping of the truth as a national duty, we observe,

1. *That the Truth is worthy to be kept.*

It is admitted on all hands that there are objects so valuable in themselves, or that confer such benefits, that the resources of a nation should be employed in securing and perpetuating their enjoyment. Thus the liberty, knowledge, and independence of a people are each regarded as worthy to have every effort expended in their attainment; and if they are assailed, the treasure, strength, and even blood of the nation, are willingly offered in their vindication. The laws, institutions, and commerce of a free people,—every thing that can be termed their rights, or possessions, in like manner, are held entitled to costly sacrifices in their defence; and honour, interest, and patriotism, all demand that they should be preserved, and transmitted unimpaired. If these things are reckoned so valuable, that that person would be regarded as destitute of proper principle who would refuse to defend them, how much more is the truth worthy to be embraced, supported, and propagated! It possesses an intrinsic excellence, surpassing every other object. The testimony of the Spirit concerning wisdom, which is but another name for truth, is,—“She is more precious than ru-

bies ; and all that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. ”\* The truth is the reflexion of the Divine mind, and, like its glorious Author, is infinite, eternal, and immutable. Unlike the diversified and changeful forms of error, it is simple, firm, and unalterable. The grand principle of the Divine administration, that which regulates all God’s dealings with his creatures, and inspires confidence in his character and government, it is at the same time the basis of all that is really excellent and valuable in human systems and institutions. The Scriptures speak of the majesty, purity, and power of the truth. They compare it to light, represent it as a treasure of inestimable value, and exhibit everything excellent as connected with it. Life, riches, honour, and happiness spring from it, and it conducts to felicity in this world, and in the world to come. Why is one system of government to be preferred to another? Why is education esteemed valuable? Why are laws and institutions regarded as excellent and salutary? The answer in all these cases must be the same,—it is because they are based on rectitude and truth. Divest them of this character; let them be founded on falsehood, or propagate deception, and whatever consideration of expediency, whatever fancied advantages may result from them, they can be no real, substantial, or permanent blessing to any people. Why has Christianity blessed the nations, while Paganism and Mahomedanism have been the scourge and curse of mankind, and cruelty, oppression, and immorality have prevailed in every country where they have been established? It is because Christianity comes accredited as a revelation of mercy from heaven, and is light without any darkness, and truth without the smallest admixture of error. The splendid forms of Paganism, on the other hand, and the system of Mahomet, have falsehood as their prevailing character. They are the devices of the father of lies to perpetuate his fearful dominion in the earth ; and hence have resulted from them the most deleterious fruits. Thus too have nations that embraced and held fast Protestant principle been blest ; while others that have bowed down under the yoke of Popery, even with greater external advantages, have had their blessings turned into a curse, and have become ignorant, impoverished, and miserable. The reason is to be found in one fact

alone, and on every other principle it is unaccountable. Protestantism is the truth ; Popery is a system of lies and delusion. It is error in doctrine, falsehood in worship, and delusion and oppression in government and practice. The master-piece of the policy that is from beneath, it is Satan's grand instrument for deceiving and enslaving the nations, and hence the Spirit appropriately designates it the "Mystery of Iniquity," and the "Mother of abominations." The excellence of truth appears not alone in relation to the interests of time ; it is connected with man's spiritual nature, and with his destiny for eternity. It sheds its light upon the valley of the shadow of death, and guides the pilgrim to the mansions of glory. It is like tried silver, and like gold "of the seventh refining." Of nations and their rulers, it may be declared,—“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding ; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.”\* Thus excellent in itself, and the source of numerous blessings to the children of men, nations are under paramount obligations to embrace, hold fast, and propagate the truth.

2. *The truth is addressed to nations as such.*

The Word of God concerns not individuals alone ; it is spoken to men in their associated capacity, and in every station they are amenable to its authority. Jesus Christ the Mediator is the Governor among the nations ; upon his vesture and his thigh He has a name written,—“King of kings, and Lord of lords.” He is the Son of God that speaks from heaven, and nations, as being the subjects of law, are specifically addressed, and should hear and obey his voice. Rulers are called “*gods*,” because “to them the Word of God comes.”† They are exalted by the message of heaven being addressed to them, and having the Divine law put into their hands, they are bound to employ it as the directory of their conduct. Thus alone can they fully exemplify the character of God's ministers, and be a public blessing to their people. The ruler of Israel, on coming to the throne, was commanded to write out a copy of the law for himself, and regarding it as specially addressed to him, he was enjoined to study it daily,—“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth ; but thou shalt medi-



tate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein ; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. " \* Princes, judges, and kings, are frequently exhorted in the Sacred Volume ; their sins are denounced ; their duties are specified ; encouraging promises are held out to them in the way of obedience ; and they are threatened, if they refuse and rebel. These exhortations are tendered to them, it is evident, not as individuals merely, but in their official station, administering the affairs of the State ; they are in fact spoken to the nation through them ; and the consequences of their obedience or disobedience are reaped by the communities with which they are connected.

Nations themselves are often addressed in the words of the king of Israel. The Lord declares his designs of mercy or judgment towards civil communities, as they sustain a friendly relation towards his Church, or are in hostility against her. The Mediator is exalted to judge among the nations. † "His eyes behold" them, as he inspects their character, observes their national proceedings, and judges them by his immutable law. He calls the nations to rejoice with his people, ‡ and invites them to be glad in his sovereign administration, and in the future triumphs of the Gospel. § He lifts up an Ensign to the nations, and causes the proclamation of mercy to be sounded, that they may come and submit to his sceptre of righteousness. || The future gathering of the nations to Shiloh is the subject of frequent and cheering prediction and promise. "Many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. " ¶ "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people. " "And many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. " \* These reiterated declarations evidently suppose that nations are moral subjects, and that the truth which is spoken to them should be embraced and held fast. We have already obser-

\* Joshua i. 8. † Isaiah li. 4. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 8. § Psalm lxxvii. || Isaiah v. 26 ; xxvii. 11.  
¶ Micah iv. 2. \* Zechar. ii. 11 ; viii. 22.

ved that the truth speaks with majesty and commanding authority. It utters its behests as a law of supreme and universal obligation ; wherever it comes, and to whomsoever it is spoken, it presents paramount claims to be heard, received, and obeyed. Besides, it is addressed to nations as the pillar of their safety, the foundation and safeguard of all their privileges. Coming to them in this character, their dearest interests, as well as their primary duty, require them to embrace and maintain it. It is not the mere passive reception of the truth that is demanded of nations and rulers in virtue of its being addressed to them. They should employ all proper means for preserving and promoting truth, and for repressing error. The Word itself, prayerfully and diligently considered, will supply an infallible directory here, as in other parts of official or national procedure. Notwithstanding the acknowledged difficulties of the subject, the fact that the truth is spoken with authority to nations, and that all their precious rights and privileges are connected with its maintenance, furnishes an unanswerable argument that they should put far from them “ the wicked way of lies,” and employ all scriptural means competent to them for the promotion of truth.

*3. There are special commands to nations requiring them to keep the truth.*

Except their peculiar nature, or some expressed limitation requires it, the precepts of the Bible are not to be confined to individuals ; they are equally applicable to communities, and demand from them unreserved homage and obedience. The moral law was spoken with an audible voice from Mount Sinai to an assembled nation, as well as to all the individuals composing it, and as it were, in the hearing of the whole world, to shew that from every nation it demands national submission. Every precept of the Decalogue, and every command to receive and maintain the truth, should be explained on this principle. Nations are required to receive the truth of the Divine existence and unity,—to avouch God as revealed in his scriptural character, and to render him the homage which is competent to them in their national capacity. They should keep the true worship of God in opposition to superstition and idolatry, and preserve pure and entire the ordinances of

religion which he has prescribed. They are commanded to reverence and honour his great name, and all blasphemy and profanity they are bound to repress. The Sabbath of the Lord is a national institute, as well as a day of spiritual rest to individuals; and nations, from a regard to the glory of Him who has appointed it, and for their own best interests, should remember to keep it holy. In short, every requisition of the moral law may be viewed as a command, embodying some great and unchangeable truth, as well as prohibiting error and sin, and nations are to embrace it, and to maintain it with fidelity. There are, moreover, other special commands that enjoin the reception and maintenance of truth, and in them nations have a deep and permanent concern; they are addressed to them in their national character, and neglect or disobedience is rebellion against the authority that gives them. Judah is commanded to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.\* The testimony and the law left in Israel is accompanied with a solemn charge, binding upon the nation, that it should be faithfully transmitted to posterity. Communities are required to buy the truth and not sell it,—to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,—to walk in the maintenance of former valuable attainments,—to bind up the law and seal the testimony,—and by the solemn ratification of national vows to preserve the sacred inheritance, and transmit it to succeeding generations. Churches are to “hold fast” the truths that have been entrusted to them, that no man take their crown;† and their keeping “the word of Christ’s patience,” which is his *present truth*, is connected with gracious preservation from “the hour of temptation,” which comes upon “the whole world, to try them that dwell on the earth.”‡ Nations have likewise a solemn interest in these commands, and by means proper to them, as bodies politic, they should obey them, as they would secure their national honour and privileges, and be preserved in safety from the desolations that are sent upon the earth.

4. *Divine promises are given, to encourage nations to keep the truth.*

God’s faithfulness is pledged to the obedient, guaranteeing †

\* 2 Chronicles xiv. 4.

† Revelation iii. 11.

‡ Revelation iii. 10.



them excellent and abundant blessings. The promises to nations as to individuals are exceeding great and precious: and spoken by Him who cannot lie, they propose sure mercies to all who embrace them. As the blessings that are enjoyed by nations are chiefly of a temporal nature, so they are obtained in the way of obedience. Keeping the truth is an eminent part of holy obedience, as well as an evidence of subjection to the authority of Jehovah. Accordingly, promises of Divine favour to communities and civil rulers, are offered in connexion with this character; and these embrace every blessing that can render a people prosperous and happy. The law and covenant with ancient Israel were a compend of Divine truth entrusted to them to keep. While they continued faithful to the trust, they were assured of favour and manifold blessing. Protection from enemies, and victory over them,—internal peace and comfort; fertility in the land and propitious seasons; increase and outward prosperity,—in connexion with the Lord's special presence and favour, were all secured to Israel, while they observed inviolate their National Covenant, and walked in the truth. Civil rulers were repeatedly promised support and success, and continuance of power, as long as they were willing and obedient; and the providence of the Mediator corroborated the words of his faithfulness. Search the whole Inspired record, and nothing is more prominently marked therein than the invariable connexion between the faithful maintenance of the truth, and the blessing from on high upon civil rulers and nations. Threatenings on the other hand, solemn, and frequently repeated, are pronounced against national apostacy and defection. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."\* Because of departure from the truth, the Lord threatens to turn a people's blessings into curses, to withdraw their defences, and give them into the hands of their enemies,—to cast them out from his sight, and make them a perpetual desolation. His grand controversy with the nations is on this ground. He sends a sword to avenge the quarrel of his broken covenant; and because the Gentiles inherit vanity, lies, and works wherein therein is no profit,—because Satan deceives them, and

they follow systems of falsehood and delusion, the Mediator rules them with a "rod of iron," and dashes them to pieces like the vessels of a potter. The promises or threatenings spoken in the word to nations, as they keep the truth or depart from it, are not intended for one age or country. The Strength of Israel will not lie. He is not a man that he should change, nor the son of man that he should repent. The word that goes out of his mouth cannot return void. It shall surely accomplish that which he pleases, and shall prosper in the thing whereto he has sent it.

In the book of Psalms, and the inspired prophecies, where there is obvious reference to New Testament times, there are numerous promises of blessings made to nations in connexion with the profession and maintenance of the truth. It is foretold, in the Seventy Second Psalm, that "the kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before the Messiah; and all nations shall serve him." And the promise of abundant blessing is connected with this reception of the truth, and national homage to the Redeemer. "Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."\* Deliverance from oppression, the manifestation of the Divine glory, and joyful praise, result from the gathering together of the people, and of the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.† Nations, formerly idolatrous and outcast, embrace the truth, and enter into solemn vows to maintain it, and then are they made partakers of eminent favour and blessing. "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."‡ And, like as of old, the dew of heaven descended on the land of Israel, and while the nation kept the truth, it enjoyed exuberant fertility, so it is promised, that when God's saving health is made known among the nations, "the earth shall yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all ends of the earth shall fear him."§

*5. The Truth is essential to genuine morality, and to the maintenance of genuine godliness.*

The basis of all genuine morality is truth. Ignorance and error

\* Psalm lxxii. 10, 11, 17. † Psalm cii. 23. ‡ Isaiah xli. 24, 25. § Psalm lxxvii. 6, 7.

are the parents of vice; and where they prevail, the sense of moral obligation must be imperfect, and the bonds of society are relaxed. The Sacred Scriptures unequivocally ascribe a holy practice to correct principle; and, on the other hand, trace immorality and ungodliness to error and delusion. “Sanctify them through thy truth,” prayed the Saviour, “thy word is truth.”\* “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged; and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.”† All that is excellent in character,—the sanctification of the heart and life,—the practice of virtue, and the right performance of every duty to God and man, are uniformly connected with truth, as the foundation of the whole superstructure. Jesus Christ, who is truth embodied, is the great model of perfect morality and of complete holiness. The Scriptures,—the revealed truth of God, are not only able to make wise unto salvation, but they are useful and necessary “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”‡ What is true in relation to individuals, is applicable to men in official stations, and to political bodies. “Mercy and truth preserve the king; and his throne is upholden by mercy.”§ Ignorance is never harmless; and systems of error among any people can only be productive of impurity and wretchedness. Where there is no vision, the people perish. The dark parts of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. The history of the Israelitish people,—the condition of the heathen world, either in past ages or at present,—and the state of lands nominally Christian,—all confirm the position, that ignorance of the truth or opposition to it has always resulted in immorality and ungodliness; and that, on the other hand, the knowledge and profession of truth have tended to diffuse healing waters throughout the nations. The times when Israel was distinguished for a severe morality, and when piety greatly abounded, were those in which, under godly princes, the people were instructed in the law of the Lord, and in which the nation held fast, and reared high the banner of truth. Just in proportion as the standard was suffered to fall,—as the teaching priesthood became remiss, and princes adopted systems of error and idolatry, as more con-

\* John xvii. 17. † Prov. xvi. 9. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 17. § Proverbs xx. 28.

genial to the tendencies of their depraved hearts, did the morality of the nation decline, and floods of ungodliness swept over the land. And when the Lord would bring again his backsliding people, cure their moral evils, and wash away their grievous sins, he directs them to the profession and practice of truth as the grand remedy. "Love the truth and peace." "These are the things that ye shall do; speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour, and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord." \* Consider the nations where the light of Divine truth has never shone; and whether they are the famed countries of antiquity, Greece and Rome, or the most enlightened of Pagan lands at present, of them all, without exception, it may be declared, that, ignorant of truth, and immersed in the darkness of error, they have been immoral and ungodly. Heathen philosophers have been praised for their maxims of morality, and statesmen and patriots of antiquity have exemplified some of the sterner virtues,—justice, courage, and self-devotedness. But even in these cases, a right motive and a proper end were altogether wanting; while humility, and mercy, and the fear of God, entered into none of their systems of morals, and were never displayed in practice, even by those who were exalted above vulgar prejudices or ignorance. The moral systems of heathen philosophers were besides wholly inoperative. The Deities of the Pantheon were monsters of wickedness. Even the temples of the gods were sinks of moral contamination. The mass of the people, despised by the learned, were sunk in the most degraded immorality; and the most hateful vices were openly perpetrated, without a sense of shame, and with entire impunity. The description of the Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, was literally true of the state of morals among the population of the most favoured nations of heathen antiquity; and it is emphatically applicable to the most favoured of heathen lands still. An excellent American Missionary† tells us, that in travelling through various places of the East, he had witnessed crimes committed in open day that were too abominable to be recorded. Lord Teignmouth, who held for

many years a high official station in India, testifies to the universal relaxation of morals in heathen countries ; and declares that, in all his experience, he had never known a Pagan, of whom it could be said with any propriety, he feared God and wrought righteousness. Turn we again our eyes to Christian countries, where false systems of religion and government are established, and, throughout them all, immorality and ungodliness are fearfully prevalent. Open licentiousness, cruelty, injustice, and oppression, are characteristic of all Mohammedan lands. Popery systematically looses the bonds of moral obligation, and lifts up the floodgates of immorality ; and hence we need not wonder that in such countries as France, Italy, Spain, and the South of Ireland, with all their external advantages, treachery and crime should so generally prevail. Ignorance of the truth has debased the people. The errors of the Man of Sin have enslaved them ; and throughout these countries we behold exemplified, on an extensive scale, what will always be found to result from the establishment of Antichristian delusion, relaxed morality, and prevailing ungodliness. A similar lesson too might be learned from nations to which Protestant truth has been addressed, and which have made a profession of Protestant principle. In embracing the truth, and adopting it in their national profession, they were purified from former abominations. While they walked in the love of the truth, genuine morality and true godliness flourished ; and as soon as they exchanged truth for systems of error, became indifferent to the progress of truth, or regarded with favour the abettors of lies and delusion, the tone of morals among the people has been lowered, and floods of ungodliness have overspread the land. The Protestant nations of Continental Europe,—Switzerland, Holland, and Germany, afford many confirmations of this statement. Passing these, however, our own lands supply more than one illustration of the position, that in proportion as the truth is embraced and held fast, so will be a nation's piety and morality. The time was when Britain was famed throughout the world for Gospel illumination. This was the era when an unfurled banner for truth was raised aloft on the battlements of the State, as well as on the walls of the Church,—when rulers and their people pledged their allegiance by solemn covenants to Messiah the Prince, and when the national



resources were willingly consecrated to the maintenance and advancement of the truth. History bears unequivocal testimony, that this was a period distinguished for purity of morals and eminent piety. \* However partizan politicians, or the advocates of corrupt systems, may misrepresent or denounce the Scottish and English reformation,—however profane novelists may caricature the eminent reformers and their deeds, the fact stands unquestionable, that, even amidst manifold disadvantages, the truth professed and established produced the fruits of a holy practice, and intelligent and fervent piety, such as are not to be found in any other period of British history. And when the truth once attained was abandoned, and a nation's vows were unblushingly violated, under the profligate Charles II., an inundation of ungodliness and immorality speedily swept over the land. The bulwarks of truth being removed, the disgusting and shameless pollutions of the court spread throughout all ranks of society; and a national prostitution of morals, and a blight of practical religion followed, which have

\* At the king's return, every parish had a minister, every village had a school, every family almost had a Bible; yea, in most of the country all the children of age could read the Scriptures, and were provided of Bibles, either by their parents, or by their ministers. Every minister was a very full professor of the reformed religion, according to the Large Confession of Faith framed at Westminster by the divines of both nations. Every minister was obliged to preach thrice a-week, to lecture and catechise once, besides other private duties in which they abounded, according to their proportion of faithfulness and abilities. None of them might be scandalous in their conversation, or negligent in their office, so long as a presbytery stood; and among them were many, holy in conversation, and eminent in gifts; nor did a minister satisfy himself except his ministry had the seal of a Divine approbation, as might witness him to be really sent from God. Indeed, in many places the Spirit seemed to be poured out with the word, both by the multitudes of sincere converts, and also by the common work of reformation upon many who never came the length of communion. There were no fewer than sixty aged people, men and women, who went to school, and even then they might be able to read the Scriptures with their own eyes. I have lived many years in a parish where I never heard an oath, and you might have rid many miles before you had heard any; also, you could not for a great part of the country have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped by reading, singing, and public prayer. Nobody complained more of our church government than our taverners, whose ordinary lamentation was, that trade was broke, people were become so sober."

continued till the present time to sap and undermine the social fabric, and to draw down the vengeance of heaven for its destruction. And according as, in more recent days, there have been successive departures by the nation from any article of the truth, so have we witnessed the abounding of immorality, the increase of crime, and the prevalence of ungodliness. These things speak to the nation the language of loud exhortation and solemn warning. They call upon rulers and people to forsake every false and wicked way; they declare that the truth is the only safeguard of national morality; and as the presence of ten righteous men would have saved Sodom, and as genuine piety can never exist but as founded on truth, they loudly call upon the nation, as it would be safe from threatened vengeance, to return to the truth, to hold it fast, and propagate it, despite of all opposition.

Lastly,—*The truth is essential to permanent national prosperity.*

All admit that it is the duty of civil rulers to promote the welfare of their subjects, and that national measures should be such as tend to secure the nation's prosperity. Even on the principle of those who adopt a low standard of government,—who base it on popular consent,—and who confine its objects to the outward good of society, national prosperity is admitted to be a primary concern. The person would be held to be destitute of all right principles and feelings, and unworthy of the privileges of citizenship, who would not promote it; and for this end, it is admitted that all are bound assiduously to labour. The welfare of the commonwealth is connected with the comfort and happiness of all its members, and a state of national prosperity is one in which the streams of enjoyment are diffused throughout every part of the social family. The true Christian can never be indifferent to the happiness of the civil communities in which Divine providence has ordered his lot. He is of a higher family, it is true, than any that is only earthly. He is a chosen and willing subject of the great King, and by his holy calling, he is the predestined heir of a kingdom, eternal in the heavens. But he is likewise a member of the great family of mankind. His religion inspires a universal philanthropy; and true to his character, he cannot but do good to all men, as he has opportunity. He is commanded to seek the peace of the nations in which he sojourns, and

he cannot but labour, as far as his influence extends, to promote social peace and happiness. Others mistake the elements of real prosperity, and err greatly in relation to the means by which it is reached. The sincere believer in revelation views it as the fruit of Divine favour, and looks for it alone in the way of truth, as connected with a course of holy obedience. "There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."\* Take national prosperity in its most comprehensive sense, as implying liberty and peace, security of person and property, good laws and a righteous administration,—greatness and honour, with the plentiful gifts of providence:—View it as connected with industry, arts and literature; regard it as embracing all that can improve the physical and moral condition of a people, and that can render the inhabitants of a country contented and happy, and none of all these objects can be fully secured or perpetuated, apart from the maintenance of truth. Here it is that the wise are taken in their own craftiness,—that the wisdom of the world is emphatically foolishness with God. Infidel philosophers talk of the perfectibility of human nature; the pretended advocates of civil and religious liberty seek to secure freedom and concord by giving up the Bible; and statesmen who know not God, offer their worship to a deceitful expediency. A thousand empirics propose their nostrums to heal the diseases of the State. By one class, education without the Bible; by another, freedom of trade; by a third, universal suffrage is the sovereign remedy for every political evil;—while with others the freedom of the press, and political institutions of various kinds, are the grand means of national regeneration and general prosperity. Of one and all of these specifics, separated from the truth, it may be fully affirmed, they bring no healing medicine,—they heal the hurt of the people slightly, and say, peace, peace, when there is no peace. If the nation receives not the truth, if it forsakes the law of the Lord, or extends national favour to error as well as to truth, then no system of secular education, and no mere political measures can cure its disorders, or secure its prosperity. The reason is obvious,—these things only affect the outward estate, and exert no commanding

\* Psalm iv. 6.

or subduing power on the inner man. They cast no purifying salt into the corrupt fountain in the heart ; and after every application, the root of the disease remains untouched, ready to discover itself with renewed vigour on any fitting occasion. Separate from the truth, no element of real prosperity can be properly secured, and no nation can calculate on its lengthened enjoyment. Justly has it been said,—“ Whatsoever stands in the way of setting up Christ’s kingdom must be shivered in fragments ; whatsoever promotes the establishment of that kingdom shall be enlarged, and flourish along with it. If we wish to be great and successful, we must be more solicitous about the cause of God than our own ; we must carry the Gospel along with us, and like Constantine, must perceive that victory is attached to the cross. Popery is the ruin of all who support it. The imposture of Mahomet is weighing down to the dust its wretched votaries ; idolaters all over the world are calling out to false gods, who cannot save their worshippers from defeat and debasement. The religion of the Bible alone will prosper, and those who bear the Bible along with them, will find every obstacle giving way that opposes their progress, and be carried forward with a tide of success which they themselves scarcely expected.” \* Civil liberty,—the object of such veneration to the patriot,—the darling theme of the poet and the orator,—the blessing for which so many in all ages have struggled and bled, never can be enjoyed but through the truth. Men may talk of the influence of particular forms of government in securing it ; they may seek its attainment through the power of political institutions,—by the diffusion of knowledge, or by any other method that has been employed by persons who submit not to the authority of the Lord’s Anointed. The attempt is futile and vain. He, and he only, is a freeman, whom the truth makes free. No country has ever attained to true freedom, nor has long enjoyed it, where the Bible was unknown, or whose institutions and policy were not conformed to the dictates of inspiration. Without the purifying and subduing power of Divine truth, men can neither understand the true nature of civil liberty for themselves, nor secure it to others. The power of depravity unsubdued in the heart will always hold in bondage its captives ; and this is a slavery

\* Douglass’s Prospects of Britain,—p. 92, 93.

which no political changes, no human laws, no increase of knowledge apart from the truth, can ever fully destroy. If the Bible is taken away from a nation, and the influence of its truths removed, then, even under the most favourable circumstances, liberty will become licentiousness or oppression; and while men boast of freedom, as in the Republics of Greece and Rome, or in Revolutionary France, they will be the slaves of the tyrant or the demagogue, or will remain under the still severer and more degrading bondage of their unbridled lusts and passions. Nor can any other element of national prosperity be obtained, but under the presiding and benign influence of the truth. Commerce with its sails may whiten the ocean, and collect its treasures from distant climes; eloquence and wisdom may be found in the senate; extended possessions, diplomatic skill, and military prowess may combine to secure national greatness; and the cultivation of arts and sciences may multiply the conveniences and the luxuries of life,—yet not any nor all of these can render a nation really prosperous or happy, or serve to maintain to it those privileges which have exalted it above other political communities. Tyre, Venice, and Genoa, in ancient times, were opulent and powerful through their merchandize. Assyria, Rome, and Macedon could boast of military glory and extended conquests. Greece was renowned for literature and freedom. Spain once sat chief among the nations of Europe; and Revolutionary France spread the fame of its prowess throughout the world, and ascended to almost undisputed sovereignty, by steps more rapid than ancient nations ever trode. But the dream of their greatness speedily passed, and they were either swept away by the besom of destruction, or they sunk down degraded among the nations.

The mere dissemination of knowledge among the mass of the people cannot remove their miseries, or conduct them to lasting prosperity. We admit with the immortal Bacon, that “knowledge is power,”—but unillumined by the light of heaven, unsanctified by the Spirit, it may become like an archangel’s power wielded by a demon’s depravity,—it may be a giant’s strength, directed by a madman’s fury. A sense of popular rights, and the exercise of the popular will, may reform systems of government, and ameliorate the state of society,—but without the restraint and



guidance of holy principle, the popular mind will rise in rebellion against God, and will only work out for a nation a more speedy and fearful destruction, by arrogating for puny mortals the sovereignty that belongs alone to the Eternal, and impiously attempting to dethrone the Almighty. Why should we allude to other objects that are connected with national greatness or prosperity? None of them can be attained, or if apparently reached, their possession cannot be secured or perpetuated, but through the influence of true religion,—but by the power of the truth as it is in Jesus. There may be an appearance of greatness and honour with a people; success may crown their measures; and prosperity may seemingly flow with a full tide upon the land; but it is only the illusion of a dream, or the baseless fabric of a vision. There is a canker-worm at the root of all the worldly prosperity that is enjoyed in ignorance of, or opposition to, the truth. As with individuals, so it is with civil communities. The prosperity of fools destroys them, and success in sin blinds and infatuates them to their ruin. Nations and cities have become prosperous through the truth, and have flourished through the knowledge and power of the Gospel, and the only civil or municipal communities that have enjoyed substantial or stable prosperity, have been those that were thus blessed. And whenever they have become indifferent to truth, and forsaken its guidance, the pride of their glory has been tarnished, and their power and greatness have speedily fled away.

The rulers of the earth should learn wisdom from the past; the nations of the world should receive instruction. A great moral and political crisis is approaching in the history of human government. God is sending forth his light and truth throughout the world, despite of man's apathy and opposition. One of the grand purposes which its diffusion is designed to subserve is for judgment, that nations which refuse the light, or rebel against it, may be condemned and destroyed. The Moral Governor of the universe is upon the throne of judgment. He is now shaking the heavens and the earth; the idol of human dominion and prosperity he is breaking to pieces; the seats of empire are tottering to their fall; and ere long, the potentates that have rebelled against him, and the kingdoms that refuse to serve him, shall be destroyed. Hurling

from their thrones, and driven from the dwellings of their former magnificence, the despots of the world will be covered with confusion and dismay, and be forced to confess that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The marks of decay and decreasing prosperity are visible and manifold upon our own nation, and upon others that have forsaken the way of truth, and that are yielding support to systems of falsehood. But one course remains to avert the threatened doom. Prosperity stands alone in God's favour, and this can never be enjoyed but in the way of righteousness, and by the full and steadfast maintenance of the truth. Let the nations humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Let them seek his favour by timely repentance. Let the kings of the earth "kiss the Son lest he be angry, and they perish from the way." And regarding his truth as the path that conducts to honour and true greatness, and lasting prosperity, let the nations receive it as the light and the law of heaven,—hold it fast as the safeguard of all their privileges, and diffuse it as a universal blessing throughout the world.

We have thus shewn that the truth is worthy to be kept,—that it is addressed to nations as such,—that special commands are laid upon them, requiring them to keep it,—that Divine promises are given them, to encourage them in the performance of the duty,—that the truth is essential to genuine morality, and to the maintenance of genuine godliness, and that it is the basis of all real national prosperity. These considerations are calculated to shew nations that their best interests are inseparably connected with the profession and maintenance of the truth. They should be constantly opposed to all temptations to compromise or surrender the truth, and they should be employed to excite to vigorous efforts for its diffusion and transmission.

One or two concluding observations shall finish the discussion of this department of the subject.

1. This text furnishes a proper rule by which *national character and measures may be estimated*.

The law of heaven is the perfect and unchangeable standard of righteousness, and conformity to it is necessarily implied in the idea of a righteous nation. The national constitution, the rulers, the administration, must partake of this conformity, to

entitle the collective body to this high and honourable appellation. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and he cannot but require his creatures to love it too, and to pursue after it as their highest attainment. The Word of God displays the nature of national righteousness, and declares clearly the way in which it may be possessed. The nations to which it comes are under primary obligation to receive it as a universal and all-controlling law. To embrace the truth is the grand way of putting on righteousness, and to maintain and diffuse it, are evidences for a people that they have submitted to the Supreme Ruler of the nations, and that they are walking in subordination to his authority. This is the Christian's simple and plain test for examining the claims of civil rulers, and of political bodies, upon his approval and conscientious support. He can never approve what his Lord disallows, nor bind himself up with systems that tarnish his glory, or retard the progress of his kingdom. In the balances of truth, all persons, principles, and systems must be weighed; and if found wanting here, while the follower of the Lamb is to labour for their amelioration, he is not at liberty to connect himself with what God condemns. No other rule supplies so plain and satisfactory a test of judging of political persons and measures as this. Let others follow the guidance of a deceitful and ever-shifting expediency: let them range themselves under the standard of some worldly leader, or pursue the phantom of earthly honour or greatness. The devoted subject of Immanuel must never overlook the honour of his Sovereign. The witness for truth must in no case compromise the cause entrusted to him. The time will come, but is not yet, when the sceptres and diadems of the earth shall be consecrated to the Redeemer, and the saints shall take the kingdom and possess it. Meanwhile our plain and paramount duty is to follow the Leader whose vesture is dipped in blood, and to contend for the honours of his crown; and taking in our hand the measuring reed of his word, honestly and fearlessly apply it to all men and to all systems. The duty and the interest of civil rulers and bodies-politic equally lie in coming up to this standard. Righteousness is their exaltation; sin is their reproach, and will be their ruin. The truth is the well-spring of their peace and purity, and the foundation of all their prosperity. Destitute of this char-

acter, and neglecting the duty of keeping the truth, they are removed from under the shield of special Divine protection ; they are disapproved of God, and exposed to his righteous indignation. Exemplifying a righteous character, and walking in the truth, they enjoy the favour of heaven ; they have the prayers and active support of the saints, the excellent of the earth, and are crowned with manifold blessings.

2. The subject supplies a *true test of genuine patriotism*.

While political partisans often assert exclusive claims to patriotic principle, it is palpably evident, that they possess nothing which deserves the name. The love of country is a noble virtue, too exalted to dwell in hearts sordid and selfish, too pure for minds in which the love of sin reigns unsubdued. They, and they only, are genuine patriots, who, having the charity that is heaven-born shed abroad in their hearts, are actuated by a supreme concern for the promotion of the Redeemer's glory, and who fervently desire to see all things subordinated to his authority. We deny not that there have been striking instances of self-devotion in the love of country among the heathen, and with men who were unacquainted with true religion. Still it were easy to shew that not a few of the cases which history has recorded, are far from advancing a right claim to unmixed admiration. To exalt one's country on the wrongs of another,—to do injustice or commit sin for the advancement of what is idly termed the public good,—to worship as an idol the phantom of national glory, and to present to it the sacrifice of right principle or a good conscience,—this is not patriotism ; and however it may assume the name, it merits nothing but our strongest reprobation. He is the genuine patriot who labours to render his country truly great by being truly good,—who contributes his exertions to remove from its constitution, laws, and administration, every thing opposed to truth and righteousness,—who would entrust the reins of authority to the hands of men that fear God and hate covetousness,—and who himself, loving the Saviour fervently, would desire to behold the whole civil state becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. It was a spirit of the purest and noblest patriotism that led the Non-conformists of England, and the Covenanters of Scotland, to seek that the State should be leavened by true religion ; and their

Saviour fervently, would desire to behold the whole civil state becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. It was the spirit of the purest and noblest patriotism that led the non-conformists of England, and the Covenanters of Scotland to seek that the State should be leavened by true religion ; and their faithful contendings, and testimonies, and solemn Covenants attest that they accounted no sacrifice too great to accomplish this valuable object. That the land of their nativity might be a holy nation, —that it might be married to the Lord, and delighted in, —and that from it might radiate forth the bright beams of truth to illuminate other nations, were with them matters of earnest and constant solicitude. For this they prayed, and struggled, and died. The grand means whereby they laboured to advance the welfare of Britain, and to raise her to a lofty pre-eminence among the nations, was the establishment and diffusion of truth. They sought to encourage righteousness in the State, by purging the throne of sin ; and their unceasing labour was, that truth might be emblazoned on the nation's escutcheon, preside over her counsels, and direct her proceedings. To have the throne based upon the Bible was the object of their fondest ambition. Their attachment to liberty was not the effervescence of feeling ; their patriotism was not an ideal theory, or the watchword of party. It was a pure and holy affection, springing from the justest perceptions of national rights and responsibility. The proof of their patriotism is written in their prayers and tears, on account of national sins, by which they sought to avert the wrath of heaven from the land. It is found in the monuments of their piety and learning which remain in their writings ; and it lies before us in the struggles and sufferings by which they sealed their testimony, and transmitted the precious legacy to posterity. An ungrateful people may forget their heroic achievements, and neglect the sacred inheritance which they bequeathed ; but the fact is, notwithstanding, unquestionable, that to them we are indebted, under Providence, for much of the righteousness and truth that yet remain in the nation, and, in consequence, for much of the eminence and prosperity that distinguish Britain throughout the world. This is still the way of genuine loyalty and patriotism. Let us sigh and weep for national sins, and stand in the breach



when national judgments are approaching. By disseminating Scriptural principles, let us promote truth and righteousness, let us display a holy standard to the nation, and urge its return to faithful allegiance to Prince Messiah. Men may call us bigots, or enthusiasts, or anti-government men, as they did those of whom the world was not worthy. We despise their reproach, as we dread not their rage. Ours are the tried and true principles of social order, and we have no doubt that they will yet be universally acknowledged in the lands of our nativity, and throughout the earth.

Lastly, we are hence reminded *of our duty in relation to the land wherein we dwell.*

The British nation was formerly one of the brightest gems in the diadem of the Mediator. It was one of the ends of the earth that were given him for his inheritance from all everlasting. Early did he assert his claim to its possession. These remote isles were made to wait for his law ; and gospel truth and righteousness shone with pre-eminent splendour throughout the land. The sun of Britain's glory has long since suffered an eclipse, and it seems at present to be fast hastening to descend below the horizon. Clouds of vengeance impend over the nation, and the doom denounced against a people that despise their privileges, appears to be near its execution. Would we desire to witness the storm dispersed, and the nation enjoying the smiles of heaven, prosperous and happy ? We should take in our hands the censer of prayer, and go forth to stand between the living and the dead. We should testify honestly and fearlessly against every step of national defection,—against every departure from the path of truth and rectitude. Remembering that the nation is the aggregate of the individuals of which it is composed, and that a guilty land may be spared for the sake of the righteous, we should ourselves exemplify personal righteousness, and shine as lights in the world. Oh ! let us seek, through union to the Saviour and the work of the Spirit, to be really holy in heart and life. Let us betake ourselves to the chambers of the Divine protection, and hide ourselves for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast. In shaking and eventful times,—when systems of error are extensively prevailing, and when the nation by its rulers affords them countenance and sup-

port, our great duty is boldly to unfurl a banner for the truth. Let us never compromise or lower our testimony against national unrighteousness and perfidy; and ourselves labouring in every station in which Divine providence has placed us, to diffuse right principle, and to exhibit a holy practice, let us thus declare, by the emphatic language of action, that we will buy the truth at whatever price, and never sell it, even were all the treasures of the earth offered for the purchase. We are encouraged to labour with assured hope. The clouds of vengeance may descend upon guilty nations, and judgments may be at hand, to waste all those kingdoms that persist in rebellion against the Lord's Anointed. The day of brightness and glory, however, is rapidly approaching. The cause of truth and righteousness shall ultimately triumph. The Lord will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations. The proclamation shall yet be made throughout the expanse of heaven, and heard to the farthest limits of creation,—"Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

## DISCOURSE SECOND.

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### THE DUTY OF NATIONS FAVOURED WITH DIVINE REVELATION TO PROMOTE SCRIPTURAL EDUCATION.

ISAIAH xxvi. 2. “ *Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the Truth may enter in.* ”

THE exalted prospects that are exhibited in the text and context, relate to the glory of Zion, and to the peace and happiness of the nations. For a long period, the Church was low and oppressed, and the kingdoms of the earth were under the bondage of sin. To the eye of the holy prophet, rapt in the visions of futurity, there was opened up a view of the termination of the reign of wickedness. Instead of warfare, anarchy, and confusion, peace and order prevail; righteousness takes place of violence and injustice; and a scene of moral beauty and loveliness succeeds the desolations of former generations. The blissful change is effected through the diffusion of scriptural truth, and in connexion with the enlarged privileges of the sanctuary. Divine light breaks upon the darkness of ignorance and sin, and shines with attractive lustre upon the families of men. In the mountain of the Lord's house, a feast of fat things is prepared for all people. Convinced of their moral destitution, and assured of the excellency and suitableness of the provision, the nations bring their glory and riches to Zion, and enjoy abundantly the fatness of the Lord's house.

In prospect of this joyful consummation, the inspired prophet bursts out into an exalted hymn of thanksgiving and praise. We have already alluded to the subject-matter of the song. Its full import will not, however, be felt, nor will it be sung in all its extent by rejoicing worshippers, until the nations shall submit to the Redeemer, till the isles wait for his law, and there is willingly rendered to him the tribute of national homage from many lands.

In the former discourse, we have considered the approved character of nations, to which are secured gracious privileges, and for which the gates of Jerusalem are opened, that they may come to their enjoyment. Their duty to embrace and maintain the truth, as the charter of all their privileges, the bulwark of their safety, and the source of their prosperity, has likewise been the subject of discussion. Trusting that the views which have been advanced may be instrumental in inculcating the importance of a national profession of the truth, we proceed to consider their application to one particular department of national policy,—THE PROMOTION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION. In discussing this subject, we propose to observe the following method of illustration :—

I. Consider National Education as a principal means of securing National righteousness.

II. Exhibit the character of the present New National System of Education, and the duty of Christians in relation to it.

I. National Education is an eminent means of securing the ends which are spoken of in the text.

In every view of the subject, the education of youth has a direct and important bearing upon the duty enjoined in the text. The young form an important part of the nation ; and if the State is to sustain a righteous character, or to know and maintain the truth,—if it is to be prepared for the enjoyment of peculiar blessings, and the gates of Zion are to be opened for its admission to distinguished privileges, then it is evident that the rising generation must have a principal concern in this preparation, and in the benefits to which it conducts. It has been properly remarked, that in almost every instance in which there has been a plentiful outpouring of the Spirit on the Church, or an abundant communication of blessings to nations, the young have shared largely in these manifestations of Divine favour,—they have been objects of peculiar concern both to God and to men, and have frequently been called forward to take a distinguished place in the advancement of the Redeemer's glory. When a people become “willing in a day of power,” and appear arrayed in the beauties of holiness, it is said concerning them,—“Thou hast the dew of thy youth.”\* And when restored mercy and favour are

\* Psalm cx. 3.

shewn to Jacob, the Lord's servant, and to Jeshurun, his chosen, the promise has a special reference to the young,—“ I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”\* The gracious effects are seen in vigorous growth and spiritual increase, and in joyful acts of personal dedication, and public social covenanting.†

Education, properly viewed, means such a course of instruction, correction and training, as is calculated to produce the happiest results on the principles, temper, habits, and conduct of the young. To be entitled to the name of Christian education, it must relate not only to the present life, but to the life to come. Conversant with immortal beings, whose existence on earth is but a span compared with their duration throughout eternity, and whose eternal weal or woe depends on the character formed in time, it must embrace the interests of man's higher nature, and have a primary regard to his happiness for eternity. Man is not merely a creature of intellect, he is also a moral, responsible, and immortal being. His nature is not alone adapted to the present scene ;—it looks onward likewise to the momentous concerns of eternity. Of what avail are all the arts of life at the hour of death? Of what use the knowledge of all that science has ever revealed, to a person destitute of an interest in the crucified Saviour, when he is called to appear before the judgment-seat? What profit would there be in the triumphs of genius, and the fame of learning, when, destitute of meetness for heaven, the soul takes up its lot in eternity? Education, therefore, if suited to man's nature, must have special regard to the interests of the soul; and it will direct its main efforts to the cultivation of the noblest part of his nature. The sentiment of a distinguished writer ‡ on this article is deserving of notice :—“ In taking a Christian view of the objects of education, there can be no doubt that the first is to instil and cherish, in dependence on the Divine blessing, true religion, both in the soul, and in the daily and hourly habits of life; and the second is to convey general knowledge to form the mind and manners.” The leading object in Christian Education is obviously to produce, as early in life as possible, a radical, saving change in the hearts of the young. “ What they need is, not so much to be amended

\* Isaiah xlv. 3.

† Isaiah xlv. 1, 5.

‡ Babington.



and improved as renewed,—not so much to be kept from falling into sin, as to be delivered from the reigning power and dominion of sin. And the great object to be promoted in every part of their education is their renewal,—their sanctification, and consequent salvation. ”

These higher ends of education should be kept constantly in view ; and it were only to mar the whole matter, to direct the attention to lower and subordinate ends, while the grand design is overlooked. *Christian* education should obviously assume the grand truths of the Gospel, and assign them their due importance. It must be such as Christians, who are taught to do whatever they do to the honour of Christ, should give ; and such as is suitable to be received by those who are dedicated to his service, and who are destined to be the jewels of his Mediatorial crown. It is freely admitted that education is only the means for the attainment of a desired end ; and that no system of training, however excellent, can renovate the nature, without Divine influence. The blessing, however, is to be expected in the faithful employment of means. He who has laid his command on parents and teachers, and all concerned in the education of the young,—“ *Train up a child in the way he should go,* ” has added the promise, as a powerful motive and encouragement “ *When he is old, he will not depart from it.* ” \*

Though it is granted that education cannot change the heart, or infuse holy principle, there appear to us to be *three* things which it can effect, which all efforts for the training of the young should steadily contemplate. 1. *It can form proper habits.* The power of habit is universally admitted. It has been styled a second nature, and when once formed, for good or evil, it operates with the intensity and power of a natural propensity. One purpose of education, of all intellectual culture and mental discipline, is to eradicate evil dispositions, and, through the power of association, to produce such habits as are approved and useful. The idea of training involves the cultivation of proper habits : and it is unquestionably within the province of education to superinduce valuable habits, both intellectual and moral. Diligence, punctuality, a habit of speaking truth, and honouring

superiors, obedience, courtesy, affability,—these, and other useful habits, may be produced through the power of education, even where grace has not been present to renew the nature; and who will venture to say that they are not important and valuable in the practical affairs of life? 2. Education can and ought to impress upon the young *a sense of their duty to God*. Children may be early made to understand the doctrines of God's omnipresence and omniscience, and of his sovereign authority as Judge of all, and be impressed with a sense of their own dependence and accountability. Who does not see that these are important considerations in all education? Nothing can be so necessary for a child early to know and feel. Even in imparting common literary instruction, when the impression is constantly kept before the minds of youth, of their duty to God in the improvement of time and the acquisition of knowledge, the advantage is incalculable. 3. And education should assume the fundamental truths of *human depravity, and of the future state*,—and should aim to make youth early acquainted with them. These are not doctrines of revelation alone,—the one is a fact to which experience bears ample testimony, and in reference to the other, nature furnishes many affecting analogies. But whether dimly shadowed forth in the volume of nature, or fully and clearly declared in the Scriptures, they are truths, most important to be early received and applied. Leave them out of view, and the whole business of education must proceed on a delusive and dangerous mistake,—it will tend to foster the natural pride of the heart, and to encourage selfishness and disobedience. On the other hand, these principles being laid as the basis of instruction, and the child's mind being constantly directed to them, an humble and docile frame will be induced, most favourable to the acquisition of useful knowledge.

It is undeniable that Christian parents have a principal concern in the education of their children, and from them chiefly we are to expect a thorough training of the rising race in the way in which they ought to go. To them the command is plain and pointed;—they are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and in rearing them for usefulness in the world, they are to train them for God and for heaven. Parents, however, in the matter of education, entrust a portion of the task, and dele-

gate their authority to others: but if the transfer is effected, and the important concern managed on Christian principles, it is obvious that the teachers of youth, and the guardians of education, whether in the Church or the State, must supplement and not oppose parental instructions, rightly administered. The command rests upon them as on parents,—“Train up children in the way they should go;” and it plainly implies, that children are to be subjected to a course of moral culture,—that they are not to be left, as to their moral principles or habits, the sport of accident,—that they are not to have presented to them a number of opposing paths, and left, in choosing, to follow the natural propensities of their own hearts. The course of education or training is definite and unalterable,—it is “THE WAY” in which children should go in youth, and from which they are not to depart in old age,—it is the path of rectitude and holiness,—the one way, which, while it conducts to usefulness and comfort in life, leads forward to the enjoyments of the blessed in glory. The Christian education of the young, whether conducted by teachers, or directed by the guardianship of the Church, or by the fostering care of the State, must assume the fundamental principles to which we have alluded, otherwise it is undeserving the name of Christian, and cannot realize to the community the benefits of a Christian institution. It should aim to form proper *moral and intellectual habits*,—it should inculcate *the duty of the young to God*, and shew them their *responsibility*,—and impressing them with a sense of their *depravity*, and lifting up the veil from their *future destiny*, it should be a handmaid to lead them to the Physician who can alone cure the disease within; and it should aim to inspire them with the hope that shall never make ashamed. Beyond all question, the great end to which all instruction should look forward, should be the knowledge of Jesus, the most excellent of the sciences. Education, it is readily granted, may not always be directly conversant with the truths of supernatural revelation: it must instruct the young in the knowledge of language, make them acquainted with the objects of natural science, and train them up to usefulness in the common affairs of life. But if education be not a mere mechanical process, if it is designed to develop the intellectual and moral faculties, and to fit an immortal being for filling aright the

station which he is to occupy,—then it must proceed on the principles to which we have adverted, and keep them steadily in view in every department. The Saviour's command may be taken as a maxim in education, as well as in other parts of human conduct, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”\* Education has been properly defined to be, “The progressive and harmonious development of all the intellectual and moral powers of our nature; the complete subjection of ourselves to the control of right principles, and the acquisition of all the knowledge that may be useful to enable us to fill well the sphere of duty in which our Creator has placed us, or to which he may call us.” Adopting this comprehensive view of the subject, and keeping in mind the fundamental principles to which we have adverted, we proceed to remark,

1. *That a right education is a proper object of National Legislation.*

That the education of the youth of the community is a subject of general and absorbing interest, and should be an object of national legislation, will scarcely be doubted by persons of any class. In times past, there may have been much and criminal neglect on this article: and many of the modern schemes of national education have been so defective, or so opposed to Christian principle, that some serious minds may have become averse to all legislative interference on the subject. We admit, at once, that it is better by far for statesmen to let the education of a Christian people alone, than to attempt to establish it in opposition to scriptural principle,—that it is infinitely better to leave the matter wholly untouched, than to give the sanction of state-support to destructive error; but in this, as in other cases, we hold it unfair to reason from the abuse of a thing, against its fair and legitimate use. Education stands so inseparably connected with the stability and welfare of a State, that it can never be safely neglected in the measures of national administration. Let it be overlooked, and it may easily be shewn, that a large portion of the youth of the community will grow up in ignorance,—unfitted, in a great measure,

for the practical duties of life, the ready prey of crime and misery. Men feel not their intellectual and moral wants as they do their animal, and desire not the food of the mind, as they do that of the body. Instead of becoming more eager for intellectual or spiritual provision, according to the greatness of their destitution, they become more callous and indifferent. A state of ignorance is a state of enmity to the light; and whatever desire persons in this condition may at times evince for the information which education confers, it is only that they may the better compass ends selfish and earthly, while the higher ends of education are entirely overlooked or rejected. It is the clear duty of Christian rulers to remedy the defect, and to place, at least, within the reach of all, the means of instruction, both as it respects this life, and the world to come. All the great ends of a Christian government warrant a public provision for education; and without such a provision, in ordinary cases, they cannot be fully or effectively realized. These ends may be regarded as twofold: — 1. The Divine glory; and, 2. The good of the community. The command is equally imperative upon governors in their official capacity, as upon individuals,— “Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”\* This is their highest duty, and should be the grand end of their administration. They are “ministers of God,” and therefore should they, with singleness of heart and aim, labour to honour him in all their ways, and to advance his glory. They are Heaven’s vicegerents, and they should display and exemplify the principles of the Divine government, and labour to promote heaven’s designs of mercy and love. With the advancement of God’s glory, education is continually associated; it is an instrument which must be diligently employed by all who would adequately discharge their duty to the young, or who would promote this high and principal end of their existence. “That the soul be without knowledge it is not good.”† The human soul, originally created in the Divine image, has become disordered and darkened by the fall. All its faculties are depraved; all its powers are perverted; and it is like a temple in ruins, still shewing some traces of former magnificence, but in confusion, and apparently beyond hope of recovery. While the

\* 1 Cor. x. 31.

† Prov. xix. 2.



creature remains in this condition, God is robbed of his revenue of glory from the noblest of all his lower works. There is darkness instead of light, sin instead of holiness, deformity instead of moral beauty and loveliness. A principal object of education should be to raise man from his degradation, and to restore him to his forfeited rank among the intelligent offspring of God. To this high design, all other parts of education should be rendered subservient. Intellectual and moral culture is valuable as it serves to raise man from a state of degradation and misery, and its noblest achievement is to bring from the human soul the revenue of glory which is due to the Creator and Moral Governor of the universe. In this high purpose, civil rulers should be co-workers with God. Admitting that they may not themselves directly become heralds of salvation, they should do nothing to obstruct, they should do every thing to help forward the grand design of restoring a rebel world to allegiance to its rightful Sovereign. The youthful portion of the community may become eminent instruments of promoting the Divine glory. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," God perfects praise. "Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts."\* It depends in a great measure on a proper education, whether an individual becomes afterwards a Hume and a Voltaire,—moral pests of society, whose pernicious sentiments and example are productive of incalculable evil,—or as an Edwards or Brainerd, an eminent light in a darkened world. If the young are to be rescued from a state in which every trace of knowledge and holiness is obliterated, and shine forth in the lustre of the Divine likeness, they must be educated on right principles; and national legislation can contemplate no higher object about the young, can be employed in no more exalted or godlike undertaking.

And if Civil Government is conversant with that which some consider its highest or only end, the *good of the community*, then it is equally its duty to promote the best education by sound legislation. We have already seen, that, without the truth, no part

\* Isaiah xxviii, 9.

of the true welfare of a people can be properly advanced. It is the business of education to dispel ignorance, to remove misconception and prejudice, and to diffuse the truth. The best instructions, it is admitted, may be perverted, and the powerful weapon which education furnishes may be applied to purposes mischievous and destructive,—but this is equally true of every good gift of heaven. Through the depravity of men's hearts, blessings are turned into curses; and the privileges which were intended by their beneficent author to promote the happiness of his creatures, are abused as instruments of unrighteousness. Education is itself a blessing, and a security to a people for the enjoyment of distinguished advantages. Without it, men can neither know their rights nor their duties, nor be acquainted with the best way of securing the one, or of discharging the other. Untaught and ignorant, the young become the easy prey of their own evil propensities, or of those who are initiated in the ways of vice. Without knowledge, the people are the ready victims of oppression, or rebel against lawful authority, and lend themselves to be the tools of unprincipled demagogues. They are disqualified for discharging either social or political duties. Without the restraints which mental and moral discipline furnishes, they cannot guard against the evils which beset them; and, readily drawn into wicked courses to avoid outward trials, or to gratify natural propensities, they draw down the bolts of Divine vengeance upon the community, as the righteous award of its wickedness. Would civil rulers avert these calamities, would they secure the high ends of their office, they are bound to make the general education of the people an object of their highest concern, and, to promote it fully, the nation should bring the appliances of a wise, firm, and steady legislation.

*2. A right education furnishes an eminent means for keeping the truth.*

The truth can neither be known nor appreciated, nor rightly maintained by individuals or communities, where education is neglected. Naturally all are in darkness; and instead of valuing and embracing the truth when it is presented, men despise and oppose it. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the

world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." With all the confession of ignorance that may sometimes be made, and the desire for natural knowledge which individuals may evince, the fact is undeniable, that men discover no desire after those truths which concern their higher destinies; and when these are propounded in their commanding and universal authority, they become objects of positive dislike and aversion. Education should aim to remove this grand impediment; and by presenting truth in its native loveliness and authority, to obtain for it ready reception and subjection. And if nations in their national capacity are under paramount obligations to keep the truth, it is obvious that, only by means of a proper and general education can the duty be adequately performed. The uneducated cannot know fully the intrinsic excellence of the truth, and when assailed, they are unprovided with weapons for its maintenance and defence. In a world which owns subjection to him who is styled "the god of this world," the truth must be in a state of incessant warfare with evil principles. These are frequently put forward, not only with energy, but with all the contrivance and subtlety that the wisdom which is from beneath can devise. If we would stand in the conflict, and if, grasping the sacred banner, we would carry it forward to victory, we must employ the weapons which human knowledge supplies, as well as those which are peculiarly of the armoury of God. Nations can never expect the empire of truth to be extended throughout their territories, nor its sovereignty acknowledged by others, nor its benign administration and countless blessings perpetuated to future generations, if the masses of the people are left in ignorance, and either no provision, or one that is inadequate, is made for the instruction of the young. It has been remarked, that when God is about to advance powerfully his own cause, He raises up eminent instruments for this purpose. In addition to their extraordinary commission and miraculous powers, the most successful of the first heralds of the cross were persons endued with eminent natural talents, and with human learning. The leading reformers, in various countries, were qualified to meet the most powerful and skilled of their adversaries, and, from the battlements of Zion, to turn against them their own

artillery, and in the sanctuary of God they hung up consecrated trophies of human genius and learning.

To set a proper value on the truth, to maintain and diffuse it, are duties which cannot be performed by the ignorant and uneducated. Although public opinion is not the basis of government, yet is it a powerful controlling principle; and it exercises a mighty influence, either for good or evil, in the business of legislation. When knowledge among the mass of the people is deficient or perverted, public sentiment cannot possibly sustain rulers in devising or carrying out measures of righteous administration. A nation keeps the truth, we have shewn, by submitting to its authority, and by upholding and diffusing it by laws and national resources; and, besides, to enjoy the blessings which the truth confers, and to have the banner of truth as the nation's glory, the people of all classes must be trained to appreciate its benefits, and to live under its power. This is the proper design of education. If the young are untaught, even granting that rulers are convinced of the importance of truth, they are unable to carry into execution proper measures for its advancement. They are unsustained in their efforts; and legislation, without a degree of public intelligence, and purified public sentiment, must disappoint its object, and be unproductive, to any great extent, of valuable results. Ignorance in any quarter can never be friendly to truth. It is not a simple negation of the light; but entrenched as it is in the moral depravity of the heart, it operates with a power and intensity, proportioned to its extent and continuance, in direct opposition to the truth, and for its utter subversion. A foundation for national righteousness, must be laid in a right and general training of those who are to be the future citizens or rulers of the nation. In all ages, when nations or their rulers have been concerned about the maintenance of truth, they have acknowledged the importance of education, and have readily availed themselves of its aid. When Jehovah constituted Israel of old the depository of his truth, and a pillar of light to surrounding nations, he gave them minute and particular directions about the instruction of the rising generation. The testimony in Jacob, and the law appointed in Israel, were given under a special command, that the fathers should make them

known to the children,—“ that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children. ” \* Together with the support of the truth, the instruction of the rising generation was strictly enjoined, as an indispensable means of accomplishing the desired object. “ These words, ” said Jehovah, “ which I command thee this day, shall be in thine 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. ” † Throughout the history of the Jewish commonwealth, provision was made for the nation keeping the truth, by careful attention to the instruction of the young. To parental training were added the schools of the prophets : the Levites were the authorized teachers of youth ; and the education of the young formed a regular part of the instruction of the Synagogue. In periods of reformation, as under Jehoshaphat and Ezra, the value of education, as a means of recovering truth, when it had been to a great extent lost, and of reviving genuine religion, was acknowledged. Such an arrangement, as it displayed the wisdom of heaven, so it presents important instruction to all future generations. Destitute of knowledge, an individual can neither value the truth, nor maintain it ; and communities, whether civil or ecclesiastical, will only continue to keep the truth so long as they make due provision for the education of those who are within their pale. A period of declension in the Church has been generally characterized by neglect of the instruction of the young ; and this neglect spread to any considerable extent, and continuing for any length of time, has prepared the way for the abandonment of principles formerly professed, and for the introduction of serious error. Nations that have been blessed with the light have never long retained it, when the education of the people has been neglected. The invidious enemies of truth have been ever ready to avail themselves of popular ignorance to effect their pernicious designs. Let the young be left uneducated,—let their training be based on a wrong principle, or placed in the hands of the erroneous and designing,

\* Psalm lxxviii. 5, 6.

† Deut. vi. 6, 7.



and fatal results will inevitably follow ;—the community will be prepared to yield up any principle, however valuable, and the nation will readily be led away from the maintenance of truth, to the support of destructive error.

3. *To be a real blessing, Education must be Scriptural.*

It is generally conceded, at present, that the means of education should be increased, so as to be within the reach of all classes of the community. The time was, even within the memory of the present generation, when this sentiment was keenly disputed ; and among the interested advocates of the Papacy, not a few were found who, true to the maxim that “ Ignorance is the mother of devotion,” pleaded that general education was unfit for the mass of the people. Now, however, this plea is abandoned. Whatever may be the principles or practice of those who keep the people enthralled in the shackles of superstition, they, as well as others, are compelled to appear favourable to the extension of education among all classes. The grand question,—that which has been styled, the Question of questions, is now the propriety of Scriptural education. Philosophers that acknowledge not God in his works, and refuse the clear light of his word,—statesmen of this world, and professed friends of education, while they plead for the general diffusion of useful knowledge, seek to disjoin the instruction of the young, in things literary and moral, from their education in the Scriptures of truth, and repudiate altogether the use of the Sacred Oracles in the schools. The pleas advanced in support of this theory are various, as the motives of its abettors are different. The Bible, forsooth, is too sacred to be profaned by daily use in the seminaries of youth ; it is above the capacities of children ; its introduction would engender sectarian pride and animosity ; instruction in religion is the business of the authorized teachers of the sanctuary, and in it the schoolmaster may not interfere :—these are a specimen of the deceptive principles by which the attempt is made to exclude the Word of God from the education of the rising generation. However plausible may be the arguments of those who adopt them, the grounds of the opposition to scriptural education may be reduced to two : — the denial of the truth or authority of the Bible, or a latitudinarian charity which would abolish the eternal distinction between truth and error, and which regards both as entitled to equal favour and support.

By a *Scriptural Education*, we understand that which assigns Divine Revelation its appropriate place in directing, controlling, and purifying education in all its departments. It comprises direct instruction in the great truths of the Bible. It regards the Word of God as the only sure and lasting basis of all instruction in morality and religion; and it supplies motives and sanctions, from this sacred repository, for the guidance of all parts of education. It considers the voice of God, speaking in his Word, as entitled to be heard and obeyed in the whole matter of mental and moral culture: and it aims to spread the purifying and ennobling influence of the light of heaven throughout the halls of learning, from the primary schools of the poor to the highest seminary of the land. For such an education we plead, as a real and substantial blessing to any country where it is adopted; and any system which is in opposition to it, we regard as unworthy of the support of a Christian nation. The reasons that establish our position are easily stated; and taken in connexion with the doctrine of revelation on the subject, they are unanswerable. It might suffice to allege, on this article, that a scriptural education is expressly and repeatedly enjoined in the word of God, and is always proposed as itself a blessing, and the fountain and spring of innumerable blessings to a people. Abraham, who may be regarded as at once a proper emblem of the parental relation, a federal head of the ecclesiastical constitution, and as “the father of many nations,” receives this memorable commendation,—“For I know him,” says God, “that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”\* That which God had spoken in promise to the father of the faithful, included blessings temporal and spiritual; and refers to national prosperity and happiness; for it was declared,—“in thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.” The promise is accomplished to families, and churches, and nations, in the way of obedience. Parents, ecclesiastical officers, and civil rulers, are to employ their authority, and the means with which they are entrusted, in commanding those who are under their control “to keep the way of the Lord,” as the grand method of obtaining an

\* Genesis xviii. 19.

interest in the promised blessings. In Deuteronomy xi. 18—21, Israel are commanded to instruct their children in the knowledge of Divine things, and special blessings are guaranteed to a faithful discharge of the duty,—“ Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates. That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.” Again it is enjoined, “ Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life ; but teach them thy sons and thy sons’ sons.”\* The command too is equally obligatory upon communities, as upon individuals,—“ Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”† There is nothing whatever in the nature of these commands to confine their application to the Israelitish people. The duties which they enjoin are moral, and as such are obligatory under every change of dispensation; and the benefits that result from obedience are of lasting advantage to individuals, and families, and nations. Accordingly, in the New Testament similar directions are renewed, approved examples are presented, and gracious promises are appended, to enforce the great duty of educating the young, and to encourage in its performance. The Saviour’s tender concern for the young was evinced in his command to the disciples,—“ Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven.” One Evangelist declares that Jesus was “ *much displeased* ” with his disciples when they would have hindered parents from bringing their offspring to him; and the declaration expresses his disapproval still of all concerned in the training of children who would interfere with their early acquaintance with the Redeemer. Through the knowledge of the Scriptures alone, the young can come to Christ, and his command implies that they

\* Deut. iv. 9.

† Prov. xii. 12.

should be early instructed in the Sacred Oracles. The commendation of the youthful Timothy is, that “from a child” he “knew the Scriptures,”\* and the inestimable value of such an early acquaintance with inspired truth, is declared when the Scriptures are said to “be able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Parents are solemnly commanded to “bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”† It is needless to multiply references. The whole testimony of Sacred Scripture inculcates the necessity and importance of education being conducted on the basis of inspired truth. It recognises direct instruction, in the words of eternal life, as the first great duty, which all who are concerned in the business of education owe to the rising generation; and it regards that course of training as alone suitable for immortal and accountable beings, which makes them acquainted with their relation to God, places before them the commanding authority of the Divine law, and informs them of a way in which they may escape from the wrath to come.

In the Scriptures alone are contained those truths which are most interesting for man to know, stated and illustrated in a manner adapted to the capacities of the young, and fitted to exert a powerful and salutary influence upon their heart and conduct. Emanating from the source of all wisdom and knowledge, the Bible informs us of the grandest and most important truths, with which, above all others, the young should possess an early acquaintance; and by tracing effects to their proper causes, and conveying information in the most attractive manner, the Bible is admirably fitted to promote intellectual developement. From this source, we have the only authentic account of the creation of the heavens and the earth, an account which natural discoveries have never in a single instance invalidated, but ever tended more powerfully to confirm and establish. To the Bible we are indebted for all our knowledge of the introduction of natural and moral evil into the world, and for a clear revelation of the Divine law, and its sanctions. Herein we are informed of the birth of the world,—the origin and early character of its inhabitants,—the deluge,—the dispersion of the human race,—the origin of language and civil

\* 2 Tim. iii. 14.

† Ephes. vi. 4.

government,—the institution and extent of sacrifices,—and the hopes and prospects of man for eternity. Here, too, is developed the wondrous scheme of God's condescension and love in redemption,—that which “angels desire to look into,” and which is destined to be the song and science of eternity. The vastness and variety of the subjects contained in the Sacred Volume, stamp it with supreme importance. It deserves attention, as having for its author the Father of lights, and as containing, emphatically, the truth, without any admixture of error; and it claims our love as being the only means of discovering the way of life and immortality; Grand and noble in its subjects,—sublime and beautiful in its doctrines,—simple, eloquent and attractive in its language, it is fitted to make an impression on the minds of the young, which can be effected by nothing else; and its instructions are adapted to persons in every relation,—to the wants and circumstances of all classes of the community. It exhibits the interests of time in connexion with the concerns of eternity, and assigning the latter their paramount position, it provides for the efficient maintenance of the former. The duties of the parent and child,—of master and servant,—of rulers and ruled,—the rights and duties of citizens, and the only ground of national prosperity, are taught in the Scriptures, with a clearness and fulness that are unequalled in any other volume that was ever penned:—

“The Bible,” it has been well observed, is “a book of ‘useful knowledge.’—The information it conveys, is adapted to the wants and circumstances of all classes of the community. Without an acquaintance with this book, the duties of a citizen cannot properly be fulfilled. Acknowledged by the nation to be a book of the highest authority, and appealed to, as it is in all our courts of justice, no man can justifiably take an oath who is ignorant of the book on which he swears. Sound *political knowledge*, in like manner, can never be obtained by a man who is ignorant of the Scriptures, for ‘the Bible furnishes the only permanent basis for a just government. It is the only book of universal authority which contains the charter of the subject's rights; which prescribes the limits of the ruler's power; which dares to give law to the legislator, and denounces penalties against the sovereigns of the earth. It presents a King, who is above all kings; and a law which is paramount to every other law. It appoints a tribunal of appeal, to which the highest magistrate may be summoned, where power cannot overawe right, nor fraud pervert justice; and where the unjust judgment of the oppressor will be brought upon his own head. It is the safeguard of freedom. ‘The records of modern times do not present us with a single country blessed with free institutions, on whose permanence and happy influence we



can now rely, in which the influence of the Bible is not exerted. In proportion as that has been wanting, the spirit of despotism has maintained its sway, and ignorance and apathy and slavery have been the portion of the people."\*

One peculiar and eminently excellent characteristic of the instruction of the Bible is, that it produces moral purity. Correcting the erroneous opinions of the young, and guarding them against the malign influences wherewith they are surrounded, it ever holds up before them the enormous evil and dreadful consequences of sin, and exhibits to them the surpassing beauty and certain happiness of a course of holy obedience. While it teaches children to love God, and to reverence and obey him, by motives of the highest kind, it is of equal efficacy to inculcate relative duties, to correct every fault of the young, and to check and eradicate the rank productions of nature. It furnishes no nutriment to pride, selfishness, anger, revenge, or any of the wicked desires of the heart. And being in direct opposition to every thing corrupt and sinful, it is eminently fitted to be the guide of teachers, and a directory for youth. This is, indeed, the exclusive honour of the Bible, in its influence upon mankind in every relation. Illuminating man's moral and intellectual darkness, dissipating the shades of deep-seated ignorance and superstition, and dispelling the clouds of a false philosophy, it tends to banish crime from the countries where its light has been diffused, and to introduce virtue and happiness. It is the only book which has had power from God to change the character of nations,—the book which “abolished the bloody rites of Diana, threw down the polluted temples of Venus, terminated for ever the barbarous spectacles of Rome, and destroyed the blood-stained altars of the Druids.” In late years, it has achieved what philosophy and political wisdom could never accomplish,—the emancipation of large portions of the human family from slavery, superstition, and cruel idolatry; and before it every system of darkness and oppression, in every part of the world, is destined yet to fall. Thus excellent and valuable as is the Bible, even when viewed irrespective of its grand office as a revelation of mercy, may we not infer that, instead of being shut out from places of instruction, or its admission conceded as a matter of favour, it should be better understood, and more constantly and thoroughly studied than any book what-

ever? Indeed, nothing valuable and important in education, when considered in its full extent, can be properly obtained but through the aid of the Scriptures of truth. It alone affords infallible direction concerning the cultivation of man's higher nature; it exhibits the rule of duty, and presents even to the minds of children the all-seeing eye and incontrollable authority of Jehovah. It furnishes effectual means for forming proper mental and moral habits, and it supplies a preparation for eternity. Subservient to these high purposes, which are fundamental to all right education, why is the instruction of God's Word rejected, and its authority contemned? Where else can we find so much true beauty, sublimity, and diversified and valuable information? Where is there else such a standard of taste,—where a work fitted to exert such an influence in moulding the character, and regulating the conduct? Nothing, we are persuaded, but the opposition of the natural heart to God and his truth, can account for the rejection of the Bible from the guidance of popular education. Men love darkness rather than light, and refuse to come to the light, because their deeds are evil. Connected as they are with man's imperishable nature, and with his prospects for eternity, the truths of revelation are deserving of early and universal acceptance, and compared with them all other truths are but of secondary importance. The *decisions* of the Scripture on every subject on which it speaks, are final and unalterable. Whether it erects a tribunal for judging of human conduct, warns of the evil of sin, inculcates the love of God and man, or displays the nature and rewards of holy obedience, it enforces its precepts with commanding and irresistible authority. By the most affecting motives, it constrains to the submission which it enjoins, and like as it is said of the method by which its glorious Author rescues sinners from degradation and misery, it draws with cords of love and bands of a man.

The Bible has thus, from the express and repeated commands of God,—from its own intrinsic and unrivalled excellence,—from its adaptation to man's wants and circumstances, and from its purifying and constraining influence, the highest of all claims to be taken as the foundation and direction of all education. As men of all classes absolutely need its lessons, so the Bible should have

free course in the schools of youth; and its commanding authority should be acknowledged from the humblest seminary to the most learned university. Owing to the reigning depravity of the human heart, education is fitted to become a powerful instrument of evil, if it is not purified and directed by the Holy Scriptures. What did education without the Bible for France? It produced widespread and withering infidelity, and led to national perfidy and crime, to an extent hitherto unknown in the history of nations. And to take an illustration still nearer ourselves, education among the poor in the South of Ireland, where the Scriptures are excluded, has only served to prepare a people the better for the deeds of the demagogue and the incendiary, and to reduce society almost to complete disorganization. Contrast with the degraded condition of this portion of the population of this country, that of the people of the Northern Province, and the difference is almost that between unsubdued barbarity and civilization. Inquire we the reason of this marked distinction, and we feel constrained to ascribe it, above all other modifying causes, to the want or the enjoyment of a scriptural education. Our Protestant fathers, when in poverty, or cherishing the truth amidst trial and persecution, maintained an unyielding regard to the Scriptures as the foundation of law, and the basis of all education. The heritage which they transmitted to us, at the expense of suffering and blood, has continued to yield countless blessings to their posterity; and while other parts of the land are involved in darkness, or polluted with crime, the Northern Province stands forth conspicuous, as a striking illustration of the advantage of a Scriptural Education.

*4. Multiplied blessings result to a people from a right Education.*

With the command which enjoins the proper training of the young, is connected the Divine assurance—"When he is old, he will not depart from it." This promise is susceptible of the most extensive application. Whether instruction is strictly communicated by parents,—or dispensed by a separate class of teachers,—or offered to its future citizens by the State, we are warranted from this sacred precept to maintain, that from a right education may be expected lasting beneficial results. The way in which the young ought to go, is the way of God's commandments,—the path

of truth and holiness. The guardians of education are responsible for conducting them to this way, and the promise is fraught with abundant encouragement. The blessing is guaranteed to faithful Scriptural efforts. Under such training, many shall be rescued from ignorance and ruin, their steps shall be guided into the way of peace, and notwithstanding temptations and trials, even to old age they shall cleave to the paths of integrity and virtue. How sweet and consoling the assurance—how incalculable the benefits that result from a well-directed education! Parents become the instruments of leading their children to God; they train them to the way of holy obedience; and, even in the present life, precious fruits of this early cultivation are oftentimes reaped by themselves and others. God virtually addresses every parent as Pharaoh's daughter did the mother of Moses—"Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."\* A faithful performance of the duty often brings with it to parents in this life a rich reward. Filial respect, early piety, and extensive usefulness, are the "wages," of their labour. The fruit sometimes appears when they are laid in the grave; and throughout eternity, they share the unspeakable joy of being fellow-partakers with their children of the glory of heaven. While the church continues on earth, there will be reason to bless God for the piety and faithfulness of the mothers of Moses, and Samuel and Timothy, and of others whose names are in the book of life. Take a single instance—one of those in which a child is placed under a right course of moral and intellectual cultivation. A pious parent consecrates him to God, places him under a system of education based on the Scriptures—labours to bring him under the influence of an example conformed to the spirit of the Gospel, and follows every effort for his improvement with fervent prayer to God, with whom alone is the blessing. We are encouraged to hope that these labours shall not be in vain in the Lord. The object of parental tenderness and solicitude advances to manhood—gives early indication of a change of heart, and trained to usefulness, becomes a blessing to the world. He may become a herald of the cross, and the instrument of the conversion of many. He may carry the glad tidings of salvation to heathen lands, and like Brainerd, or Swartz, or Martyn, be the

\* Exodus, ii. 9.

means of changing a moral wilderness into a garden of delights ; whatever station he may occupy, he may exert an influence for good on the social, moral and intellectual condition of thousands, which only eternity can fully declare. A distinguished Missionary once said—" We are small men, but must make our influence felt to the other side of the Atlantic before we die."

These happy effects may be reaped by nations as well as by individuals. Parents and Christian teachers are the direct and immediate recipients of the fruits of judicious and faithful training of the young,—but to communities too, civil and ecclesiastical, countless advantages accrue. Nations prepare for themselves future blessings, by establishing a proper system of scriptural education, and by giving a right direction to youthful studies. The seed sown by the wisdom and liberality of the State, yields a rich and plentiful harvest. Those who are afterwards to guide the machine of government are trained in the way of integrity and virtue. Subjects acquire habits and principles of industry, self-government and obedience ; and under such a system, the blessings that flow from the approval of heaven upon a people, are extensively enjoyed.

We might present numerous examples from the history of nations, of the happy effects that have resulted from a right system of National Education. There is one that we regard as peculiarly appropriate, and that deserves to be frequently contrasted with the instances in which civil rulers have criminally neglected the education of the people, or disregarded the claims of the Scriptures in devising plans for the instruction of the young. Our fathers in Scotland assigned a prominent place in their faithful contendings to the education of youth. Amidst their troubles, and in days of jeopardy and trial, they contended earnestly that ignorance should be banished from the land, as the fruitful parent of superstition, and poverty, and crime. Next to the establishment of a Church pure in doctrine and discipline, and as subsidiary to the Church's office of diffusing the light of divine truth throughout the land, they sought that the means of education should be within the reach of all, and that the child of the peasant and the peer should equally reap the benefits of a thorough scriptural education. Hence in their reforming assemblies, whether of



the Church or the State, we find frequent enactments, characterized by remarkable wisdom and judgment, on the subject of education. Hence the Parochial schools, which have long been the glory and blessing of the Scottish people ; and hence the sedulous care evinced in committing the inspection of all seminaries of learning to the authorized Courts of the Lord's house. We deny not that the system has, through corruption in the Church and the State, been chargeable with perversion and abuse ; but had the pious intentions of those who devised it been properly carried out, we can conceive of almost no institution that is calculated to confer higher or more numerous blessings upon a community. And even with all its defects, the Scottish system of Scriptural Education has been productive of countless benefits to the Scottish people. Its fruits are witnessed in their intelligence, industry, piety and morality. Under its benign influence, they have become frugal, persevering and trustworthy ; a national character has been formed, which has commanded for them deserved respect throughout the nations ; and above all, numerous examples of intelligent and decided piety have been nourished up in Scotland, from generation to generation. Such are the advantages of a right education. Let nations be sensible that the germ of their future prosperity lies here ;—and availing themselves of the means that the authority of God, and the experience of the past unite in commending, they should establish and support such a system of education as may purify, elevate and bless the rising generation.

Lastly, *The neglect of a proper Education entails upon nations manifold evils.*

The evils of popular ignorance have been already in part declared. To the individual they oppose an effectual obstacle to mental or moral advancement,—they arm him with the power of inflicting mischief on others, or deliver him over the victim of superstition, poverty and oppression. Nations, too, have a fearful interest involved in the education of the people. Divine providence has placed numerous blessings before them, but none of these can be properly secured or perpetuated without a right course of training the rising generation. The youth uncultivated, or taught on a wrong principle, manhood will be vicious and unhappy, and

age neglected and miserable. Youthful ignorance is uniformly connected with juvenile delinquency, and lays a sure foundation for moral degradation in mature age. The sin of overlooking the early education of the people, or of educating them improperly, is the reproach, as it must ultimately be the ruin of a nation. Already in the annals of nations has such neglect or perversion been productive of consequences incalculably mischievous. Look at England, with all its opulence and power,—not only in the large cities, but throughout the rural districts, the education of the people has been grievously neglected, and the consequences have been lamentable. The want of instruction has been accompanied by a readiness to embrace any opinions, however absurd or baneful. Discontent and insubordination have prevailed to such an extent of late, that a distinguished personage,\* well acquainted with the state of the community, recently declared that “society was almost reduced to a state of disorganization.” That the neglect of education, and especially of scriptural instruction, has had a principal hand in procuring these evils, cannot for a moment be doubted by any who know the state of the community, in relation to intellectual and moral culture. Notwithstanding the noble establishments of learning of which England boasts, the princely endowments with which some institutions are sustained, and the pre-eminence which her educated sons maintain in literature and science, the mass of the people are, to an incredible extent, untaught; and even, when they are brought under means of instruction, there is little imparted that deserves the name of a proper intellectual or moral training. Need we wonder that a people thus neglected, and left the prey to disordered passions and evil influences, should become the ready instruments of inflicting deserved chastisement upon the nation? Well might a Judge on the bench, in some of the late trials for insurrection in England, † declare that the want of religious instruction had been a principal source of the evil, and that it was only by supplying a speedy and effectual remedy for the neglect, that evils still more extensive and disastrous could be prevented. Instances are numerous in other countries of the same fatal consequences, flowing from the same

\* Lord Brougham.

† At the Monmouth Assizes, on the trial of the Chartists at Newport.

cause. This it is that has held the peasantry of the South and West of Ireland, from age to age, in bitter bondage, and has served to render them treacherous, cruel and revengeful. The policy of Rome has always been to keep her votaries in ignorance, or if compelled to offer education, by a pressure which cannot be resisted, to withhold that which is really important and valuable, and to pervert it for interested and mischievous purposes. Hence, in the South of Ireland, the educated, who are only taught the knowledge of dead languages, or of abstract science, become the leaders of insubordination, while the mass of the people, wholly uninstructed, are prepared instruments of violence and crime. Property is wantonly destroyed, murder is openly perpetrated, hired assassins readily offering themselves to slay the innocent, while the authority of law is contemned, and the hands of justice are completely shackled through the prevalence of intimidation. Almost every country in Europe, and especially those from which scriptural light has been forcibly excluded, afford examples of the incalculable evils that result from neglected or perverted education. Italy, Spain, and Austria, the strongholds of Popery in the Continent, are to this day destitute of all right means of general education ; ignorance prevails throughout these countries to an incredible extent ; and the inhabitants are in consequence immersed in superstition and idolatry. The mass of the population of France is untaught, or educated only in a method that excludes the Scriptures, and panders to the natural pride and selfishness of the human heart ; and hence the people are besotted with infidelity, hardened in crime, and reckless of life. It is owing to the ignorance of the people of Popish countries, arising from the neglect of a right education, that *infidelity* has in modern times so greatly increased. Popery has cherished ignorance, absurdity, and dread of investigation. Men of mind, and literature, and science, have first confounded Popery with genuine Christianity, and then turned away from it with abhorrence, justly concluding, that that system cannot be from God which is hostile to the knowledge of his works, or to the fullest cultivation of man's moral and intellectual nature. The common people have become sceptical, or been rendered the ready prey of those who say in their hearts there is no God, or who, disbelieving the revelation

from heaven, give themselves over to work all unrighteousness with greediness. The same causes operate to a fearful extent under the corrupted forms of Protestantism. Wherever true Protestant principle, which is just scriptural truth, is forsaken, there is a return to the errors of Popery, dear to the depraved tendencies of the heart, and there is always found a large measure of the spirit of Antichrist. And where to such a defection is joined the neglect of popular education on a right basis, by the rulers of the nation, infidelity, secret or avowed, unmasked or insidious, will prevail; and immorality and crime may be expected to increase. It were easy to trace *Socialism* and *Chartism* in England, multiplied Sabbath desecration, and a spreading infidelity of various kinds in these countries, with a relaxed sense of moral obligation, the increase of crime, and distresses, that are the consequences of forsaking God, to these sources;—but on these topics it is needless to enlarge. Nations, in their associated capacity, rest under high obligations to receive the truth, and communicate it, by imparting suitable instructions to every portion of the community. Retributive vengeance follows the neglect of the duty. A people left in ignorance by their rulers, or delivered up to the influence of error, grow up the avengers of national sins. What has been appositely termed a *moral incendiarism*, first overspreads the face of society; and this speedily breaks forth in vice and crime and misery. The Moral Governor of the universe has a controversy with the nations that refuse the means which He has devised for their improvement and happiness; and he pours out the vials of his indignation upon them, for their neglect and rebellion against him. Thus, whether we look to the legitimate ends of national legislation, or regard it as a means of keeping the truth,—or consider the claims of scriptural education,—or the blessings that result from proper instruction,—or the manifold evils consequent upon its neglect, National Education appears to be an eminent means of securing to a nation the righteousness that exalts it, and the truth which is its defence and glory.

We proceed, in the last place,

IV. *To consider the Character of the present National System of Education, and the Duty of Christians in relation to it.*

While we rejoice that in recent days the means of instruction

and the benefits of education are more extensively diffused than formerly; while it is matter of thanksgiving that men in power have been brought to acknowledge that the education of the people is a proper object of national polity, and that it cannot be neglected without danger to the State, it is to be deeply regretted that modern schemes of National Education are such as cannot command the approval or support of those who regard the Divine Word as the only perfect and infallible rule of faith and practice, and who have learned to bow implicitly to its decisions.

Some ten or twenty years ago, a plan of education for the inferior classes in England was brought forward, in which no effectual provision was made for the instruction of the young in the Sacred Scriptures, while state-support was proposed, without distinction, to the teachers of error, equally as to those whose instructions were based on revealed truth. Owing to the decided opposition of many of the enlightened and influential friends of education, wherewith the measure was met, for a length of time all legislative consideration of the subject went into abeyance. Within the last three years the matter has been taken up anew; and a system of popular education for England has been partially adopted as a Government measure, and is supported by an appropriation out of the national funds. It is sufficient to observe respecting this measure, that its leading advocates,—those who introduced it, and are concerned with its management,—avowed their design to separate altogether secular from religious instruction, and to banish the Scriptures entirely from the ordinary course of instruction in the schools; and although of late they have been compelled to make some concessions, still it is pervaded by an irreligious and unscriptural spirit. It professedly recognises no particular form of religious belief, and regards with equal favour the truths of Protestantism and the errors of Popery,—orthodox doctrine and Socinian heresy,—and in fact Christianity and insidious or avowed Infidelity. The schoolmaster is confined to secular education, while instruction in religion is left to the clergyman, but without any effectual provision for its being imparted; and an extensive control is vested in the hands of inspectors appointed by Government, and of a Public Board, likewise connected with the State, and consisting of persons who hold very different and opposing views on



the subject of religion.\* We wait not to offer any remarks on this system. Although far from feeling uninterested in any measure that affects so vitally the moral character and welfare of England, we are more nearly concerned with the system of education which has been recently adopted in our own country, and which has been dignified with the name of National. Our objections to it will in some degree apply likewise to the New National Plan of Education for England, as their grand outlines are the same. Weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, both will be found wanting. We fear both systems have involved the State in criminality deeper than mere neglect; instead of promoting truth and righteousness, their manifest tendency is to facilitate the progress of error, and to relax the bonds of moral obligation.

To understand properly the nature of the New National System of Irish Education, it is necessary to present a brief sketch of its origin and character. For a length of time, the extent of the ignorance, and consequent misery, of the great mass of the population of Ireland, had been felt and deplored; and voluntary efforts were made by benevolent individuals, and associations were formed for the purpose of educating the Irish poor. One of these societies,—the *Kildare Place*,—having extended its operations throughout every province in Ireland, and having generally enjoyed the countenance of all classes, was taken under the patronage of the Government, and for a time received an annual grant out of the national treasury. A fundamental rule of this institution was, that the Scriptures, without note or comment, should be daily read in the schools, by all who were capable of reading them, while the formularies of different religious sects should be excluded. This system,

\* Last year the national grant of money for the New English System of Education, was carried by a majority of only *two* in the House of Commons. The Lords remonstrated against it to the Queen, and were met with insult. This season, the English Archbishops have come to an agreement with the Government, in relation to the New Plan of education, and there is reason to fear that it will now be permanently established. The amount of the concessions made to the Prelates is, that Inspectors shall not be appointed or continued without their approval; and that in some cases the Catechism of the Church of England may be used in Schools. With the excellent Editor of the *London Record*, we regret that such an agreement has been entered into; and we regard it, as a surrender to an evil expediency of a great Protestant principle, and as the admission of a measure of National Legislation, which abrogates the distinction between truth and error, and gives extensive State encouragement to the propagation of systems, false and pernicious.

though not unexceptionable, was generally liked as a good plan of united education, and being to a considerable extent scriptural, it was held to be such as a Protestant State should offer to its subjects. At length the Romish Priesthood, and popular leaders who favoured their designs, perceived that knowledge and scriptural information were spreading among the poor, and considering their craft in danger, they set themselves determinedly to oppose all attempts to diffuse education, on a proper principle, among an ignorant and enslaved people. The increase of political privileges gave strength to this opposition; and, unhappily, the government, succumbing to the policy of Antichrist, withdrew their aid from a scriptural system of education, and soon after introduced the present system. A Commission of Education Inquiry presented a report to Government, in 1828, and in 1831, a Bill was introduced to Parliament, embodying the principles on which it was proposed in future to regulate grants of public money, for the purpose of popular education. As if conscious that the projected measure could not obtain the concurrence of Protestant legislators or people, the Bill was not attempted to be passed into law, but its provisions were generally adopted, and a Board of Commissioners was appointed to carry them into effect, by establishing schools, and by applying the funds that were granted for the support of a system of combined national education.

The outlines of this system are easily sketched. The great design was to give to the people a *united* education, — one, of which persons of all classes might avail themselves, with the fullest liberty of conscience, and from which, as a matter of course, every thing peculiar in a creed or religious profession should be excluded. The indiscriminate use of the Scriptures in the schools was declared to be a “*vital defect*,” and it was openly avowed, that this evil must be remedied, to meet the wishes and prejudices of Popish Bishops and demagogues.\* The principle was made fundamental, that the literary and moral parts of education should be separated from the religious. To establish combined literary and separate religious education, the schools were to be kept open four or five days in the week, for moral and literary instruction

\* See Letter of the Right Honourable J. P. Stanley, now Lord Stanley, to the Duke of Leinster.

only, and the remaining one or two days were allowed for such religious education as might be imparted, or approved of by the respective clergy of the parents of the children. During the period of literary education, the Bible was to be entirely excluded from the schools; and as the system makes no specific provision for religious instruction, nor, as it stands, can it indeed make any, this amounts to an entire prohibition. Extracts from the Scriptures might be used; but these are in a new version, more nearly conformed, in some instances, to the Romish than to the authorized Protestant translation, and from them, as a matter of course, would be excluded every thing against which a Socinian or Romanist might object. The School-houses were to be allowed to various teachers of religion, and of consequence to Popish priests, who were to be "*permitted and encouraged* to give religious instruction, either before or after ordinary school hours." It was even ordained, at first, that a Register should be kept in the school of the attendance of the children on their respective places of worship on Sabbath, whether these were the Romish Chapels, or Socinian or Arian meeting-houses; but this was afterwards withdrawn. The Commissioners were to be invested with an entire control over all books used in the schools, whether in the literary or separate religious instruction, and of course over the Bible itself. The books to be employed by the children in the religious instruction, were to be licensed by the particular Commissioner of the same denomination as the children; and the teachers were "liable to be fined, suspended, or removed, when the Board should deem it necessary." The Board which was invested with this absolute and irresponsible power, was originally composed of the Romish and Protestant Archbishops of Dublin,—a Presbyterian clergyman,—a Socinian and Episcopalian layman, with a *liberal* nobleman as President. Applications for aid to schools were to be made through a Protestant and Roman Catholic clergyman conjointly, a clergyman of one of these denominations, and a certain number of laymen of the other, or by laymen of both denominations. And by a recent regulation, teachers, before receiving a *permanent* appointment to the schools in connexion with the Board, must attend the Model School in Dublin, where, on entering, they are required to take an oath, or make a declaration,

of *allegiance* before one of the Commissioners.\* These are the principal outlines of the system. Whatever modifications it has received, its grand features remain unaltered; recent changes affect not its spirit and leading design; and hence the public functionaries who are intimately conversant with its character and management, state, in unequivocal terms, that the principles of the system are held fast, and that the intention of Government is to work them out fully, and extend their operation.

These principles have been said to be twofold,—1. A united education; and, 2, Non-compulsion in religious instruction. Without waiting to shew that the object of a united education has not been realised, and is not likely to be realised under the National System, and that it opens a way for compulsion in error, as it arms the priest with an instrument by which he may hold his slaves in hopeless darkness, we may observe that it is capable of being viewed under a simpler aspect still. Its principle is just one,—**THE AUTHORITATIVE EXCLUSION OF THE BIBLE FROM THE SCHOOLS DURING SCHOOL HOURS.** This is its leading characteristic,—the root and fountain of the evil,—that which must ever, among consistent Christians, lead to its condemnation. This baneful principle pervades every part of the system, and affects all its arrangements. The holy Word of God is laid under the ban of an utter exclusion; and melancholy to state, it is the only book that is thus denied admittance to the schools! Extracts may be used, but these are not the Scriptures. The moral and literary instruction is separated from the religious, lest the culture of the understanding and the heart should suffer from contact with the Word of God. A marked distinction is drawn between the time of giving literary education and religious, either in the same day, or on a separate day of the week, and in the case of Roman Catholics, the religious instruction of the children is delivered over wholly to the priesthood, or their devoted agents; that is, to those who will, on system, withhold entirely the instruction which alone is able to make wise unto salvation. The chief ground of contention between those who would hold the population of Ireland in the spiritual thralldom that has long oppressed them, and those who by the diffusion of truth would relieve their misery, is the Bible;—and by a most

mistaken and infatuated policy, the Government has lent its aid to the enemies of truth, by pronouncing the mandate of its exclusion from the schools. On the simplest view of the measure, it may be demanded,—Does the object avowed,—that of a united education for a divided people,—warrant such a prohibition of the Sacred Scriptures? Can any fancied advantage, however great, justify such *an abandonment* of the paramount duty of the State? Can any expediency, however pressing, warrant the suicidal act of a Government daring to legislate in opposition to the law and the light of heaven, and to give away the charter of all its privileges? In the present state of Ireland, the establishment of a system of united national education may be easily shewn to be impracticable.\* There can be no desirable and lasting union in education more than in morals or religion, but on the basis of truth and righteousness. A united education cannot be reached, but by a compromise of truth, or by a scheme of comprehension in which truth and error are made matters of indifference, and in which truth is sacrificed or held in abeyance, to make way for the wider diffusion of falsehood. United education in such a case is far from desirable: if obtained, the purchase is too costly, the sacrifice is too great for Christian men ever to be parties to the agreement. God usually writes disappointment and confusion upon all such worldly schemes; and the opposition of leading ecclesiastics of Rome, and the open demands of others to have the national funds for education applied for the direct inculcation of Popery, as well as the increase of religious rancour, and sectarian partisanship, proclaim that a united education on such terms is only fraught with the elements of greater division, and of deeper and more extensive mischief.† However plausible, too, may be the

\* Dr. M'Hale, the Popish Archbishop of Tuam, has openly denounced the New National System, because it admits Protestant Inspectors to visit the Schools under his ghostly control, and secures to Protestant Commissioners an interference with the Schools frequented by Roman Catholic Children! The proposal of the other Romish Prelates to the Lord Lieutenant to have the entire control of the National Schools in their dioceses entrusted to them, shows that nothing short of complete ascendancy and irresponsible power will satisfy the abettors of Antichrist.

† The best proof of this is that the Commissioners of the New System themselves have been compelled to abandon the principle, even while they still profess to abide by it, by allowing the errors of Popery to be openly taught in many of the Schools in the South and West, and latterly granting to the Presbyterians in the North, who can connect themselves with such a system, and receive money from such hands, the use of the Assembly's Catechism.



plea in favour of the New System, that it is opposed *to compulsion* in religious instruction, it is unavailing and deceptive. Experience proves, that before the Legislature withdrew its aid from a scriptural system, and patronised the present system, the Roman Catholic peasantry willingly sent their children to scriptural schools, and in many places they still send them.\* A Christian government, in taking the Bible as the foundation of the education that is entitled to national support, is justly chargeable with no compulsion. It places the means within the reach of all; but, unlike some of the *liberal* schemes of education of our day, it compels none to use them.† It offers the Scriptures as the best boon of heaven, which are not the exclusive property of any one sect of Christians, and which all acknowledge to be inspired, to all; as it cannot do less, and maintain the character of a righteous nation keeping the truth, but it uses no force to constrain even the ignorant, the erroneous, or the immoral, to receive the gift. If after this they refuse the light, and rebel against it, their condemnation is just,—the Government is acquitted of its duty, and the national character and honour are preserved untarnished. The abettors of error are left at full liberty to establish and support systems of their own; but a Christian administration cannot aid them in their schemes without selling their birthright, and proving treacherous alike to God and to man. All that the boasted *non-compulsion* of the New System has effected is to take away the means of instruction in the truth from a miserable people, who, if left to them-

\* In the last year in which the Kildare Place Society received a public grant from Government, upwards of 132,000 children were in attendance in its Schools, of whom more than one half were Roman Catholics;—and this after repeated, and in some cases, violent attempts had been made by the Romish Priesthood to have them removed. There are large numbers of the children of the Roman Catholics still attending the Schools of the Kildare Place, London Hibernian, and Sabbath School Societies,—and these are all Scriptural Schools. These facts show, that, notwithstanding the efforts of the Romish Clergy, and the inducements presented by the National Schools, the Roman Catholic people themselves have no insuperable objections to a system of education of which the Scriptures form an essential part. How fearful the crime of sanctioning a measure which deprives of the word of life, the children of a people in such circumstances!

† In the New English System, it has been proposed to make attendance of the Children of the poor at the National Schools *compulsory*. What an exemplification is this of the liberty of conscience which the monopolists of liberty would grant to Christian men, who, on principle, object decidedly to any plan of education which is not based on every part on the Infallible word!

selves, are willing to embrace them, and to deliver them over, bound and shackled, to the tender mercies of those whose system throughout has been compulsory and oppressive.

In stating these objections to the New National System of Irish Education, which, we should think, must appear insuperable to a simple-minded Christian, walking by the unerring guidance of God's Word, we might observe, in general, that it manifestly tends to *destroy*, instead of *promote*, *the approved national character* spoken of in the text. National righteousness cannot be attained to, without the knowledge, and love, and practice of the Word of life. To deprive any portion of the rising generation of access to the fountain of truth, is a grievous instance of national injustice and provocation; and to be participant in the crime of taking away that which can alone effectually dry up the springs of evil in the heart, and mould the character to holiness and virtue, is the sure way of turning men from the paths of righteousness and peace. Nor can the truth be kept, when the standard is given away, and when the Legislature sanctions equally the teaching of ruinous error, as the inculcation of the Gospel of life. Christian men and patriots,—lovers of the Bible,—lovers of their country,—must deprecate the ungodly schemes of national education that have been recently adopted for England and this country;—they must lament the grievous national defection which they display, and fear for the disastrous consequences. They are ominous of bitter fruits for the future. Leave them to uncontrolled operation,—let them be generally acquiesced in throughout the land, and speedily must the nation be characterised as one that has utterly forsaken the way of righteousness, and has undervalued and made merchandise of the truth. The remains of upright and holy principle, that have descended in the constitution or legislation of the State, from times when scriptural truth and national purity were more valued, must ere long disappear: upon all the character and policy of Britain, will be inscribed “Ichabod,—the glory is departed;” and the fatal consequences may be anticipated that flow from a nation changing its gods, or from a kingdom refusing to serve Messiah, and arraying itself in opposition to his cause.

That you may see more fully the character of the new national

system of education, and may be prepared to judge of its claims, we shall state briefly a few of its prominent, though dark and melancholy features. We have no desire to exaggerate. We can readily admit that various members of the Government, who have sanctioned the measure, were actuated by a sincere desire to dispel the ignorance and relieve the misery of Ireland, and that Christian men of various names have been led into connexion with the system, who would utterly repudiate the idea of surrendering the Scriptures, and of lending knowing and active support to the schemes of Antichrist. But believing, as we do, that the rulers of the land have in this instance, under a sad delusion, been guilty of a fearful sin, and that Christian men are not innocent in countenancing what God disapproves, we present a view of the system, that, in an hour of temptation which has come upon nations and churches, you may see plainly the evils to be avoided, and may be encouraged to go forward displaying a faithful and unfurled banner for the truth.

1. *It is an unscriptural system.*

The Scriptures state clearly the nature of a right education, and supply the materials for its establishment. Addressing rulers as such, they require them to adopt their prescriptions, as the basis and directory of legislation. They hold out not the slightest warrant to separate *moral* from *religious* education, nor afford any countenance to the idea, that any proper system of morals can be taught, except as connected with the revealed law of heaven, the grand rule of moral obedience. The unalterable claim of the Bible, wherever it comes, is that it should be taken as a universal rule of faith and practice; and it has, besides, claims of a peculiar kind to be employed as the subject of daily study by the young. The fundamental principle of the New System amounts to an utter exclusion of the Bible from the schools, there being evidence even that the Extracts are not used in schools that are under direct Popish control; and thus to effect a fancied and delusive union, the immense and dreadful sacrifice is made of denying to the rising generation the uncontrolled use of that Book, which is able to make them wise unto salvation. Is this a compromise to which the friends of the Bible should for a moment consent? Excluding the Scriptures from the schools, teaching morality independently

of their subduing and purifying influence, is like shutting out the light of heaven, or erecting a house upon the sand, where, without a solid foundation, destruction alone must reward the pains of the builder. It is giving the enemy allowance to sow his tares, while nothing is done to pre-occupy the soil of the youthful heart with the good seed. It is impiety of the worst kind,—rebellion which the Scriptures pointedly and powerfully denounce, to legislate to the disregard or exclusion of the Statute-book of heaven. And surely men who love the Bible should never rest satisfied with a mere permission to use the Scriptures in some of the schools. God's word needs no such favour from presumptuous mortals. It claims universal submission on its own intrinsic evidence and authority ; and whether men relish it or not, a fearful wo must overtake those who would hinder its free course, as well as those who would add to, or diminish from the words that are written in the Volume of Revelation.

2. *It is unprotestant.*

We use the term Protestant in no party acceptance. Our loudest and most decided protest shall ever be raised against all merely nominal or political Protestantism. From lengthened observation, we are persuaded, that mere political Protestants will never be found steadfastly to maintain the truth when their worldly interests require its sacrifice. But in its proper application, the designation is excellent and honourable. The word *Protestant* was first applied to the noble-minded reformers in Germany, when, in 1529, perilling all that men hold dear on earth, they stood forth a united and determined band, to protest against the abominations of Rome. Rightly understood, Protestant truth is no sectarian inheritance. It is the religion of primitive Christianity, disengaged from the perversions of the Man of Sin that had tarnished its beauty, and extinguished its soul-informing spirit. It is as old as the first revelation of the Divine will,—pure as a stream from the fountain of truth, and destined fully to triumph, when Babylon the Great shall be cast like a millstone into the depth of the sea. The Bible, as said the judicious Chillingworth, is the religion of Protestants,—the Bible read, understood, and applied. The right of all to possess and read the Word of God, was the grand point of contest between the Reformers and the advocates of Rome ; and never can

the plea be withdrawn, without a surrender of Protestant principle, and incalculable injury to the Protestant cause. The arrogant claim of the Romish Church is, that the Bible derives its authority from her, and withholding the key of knowledge from the people, she declares the Scriptures unfit to be indiscriminately read ; and as if conscious that her system is plainly condemned in the Word of Inspiration, she denies the use of it to the illiterate, and even to the learned permits it only under certain restrictions. The New System of Education was introduced by pronouncing that a “ *vital defect* ” which is a corner-stone of Protestantism. It opposes a powerful barrier to the indiscriminate use of the Word of God by the rising generation. Succumbing to intimidation, and yielding to the prejudice of those who hate the light, the Government virtually declares that the Scriptures are an improper book to be generally read by the young, and, in effect, deprives them of the only means which many of them possess of becoming acquainted with their contents. Embrace the system as some nominal Protestants may, palliate its evils, or plead for its adoption, there can be no question, that from the Protestant reformers it would have met with nothing but decided reprobation. As in its pervading principle, and every feature, it is adverse to the great articles of the Reformation, and is operating most unfavourably to their advancement, the spirit of genuine Protestantism will spurn alliance with it, as a system evil in its nature, and subversive of the immutable principles of truth and righteousness.

### 3. *It is Antichristian and Infidel.*

The New System was introduced professedly as a sacrifice to the prejudices or errors of the Popish Priesthood ; its fundamental principle, by which the Scriptures are excluded from the schools, is essentially Popish ; the arguments by which this fearful usurpation is supported, are borrowed from the armoury of Jesuits ; and in its operation it has powerfully tended to rivet the chains of darkness upon the Roman Catholic community, and to perpetuate the dominion of Antichrist. A large majority of the applications for aid to the schools have come from Romish priests,—a great majority of the teachers are Roman Catholics,—many of the school-houses are built in juxta-position with the chapels ; in not a few of the schools, Popish books of devotion are used even in the school-



hours, and that without reprimand, even when the fact is known to the Commissioners, and in some the mass is openly celebrated.\* Who endorse the great mass of applications for schools? Who interfere with Protestant schools, and forcibly remove Roman Catholic children even from the National schools, when they are under Protestant management? Whose nominees are the teachers in a vast majority of the schools? and who, in consequence, reap the principal benefit of the funds of the nation, that are lavished in supporting the New System of Education? The answer to all these inquiries is the same: it is the priesthood of Rome,—men who well know to make the most of every concession to perpetuate spiritual thralldom, and to spread the poison of error and superstition. Need it be wondered at that in the “*Christian Directory*,” published under the patronage of the Romish Archbishops of Ireland, the success of the new educational system should be mentioned as a circumstance propitious to the cause of Popery, and that Roman Catholic leaders should give it their strenuous support? It is, in truth, a suitable and mighty instrument for the advancement of their dark designs. The policy of the priesthood of Rome has been to get the education of the young completely under their control, when they are unable any longer to retain their vassals in the chains of ignorance and darkness. In the Papal states, in Italy, popular education is almost exclusively in the hands of the priesthood;—in France, the *Frères Ignorantins*, a monastic order, devote themselves to the instruction of the people, and only give such an education as is befitting the purposes of an idolatrous church; and in other countries where Papal influence prevails, the *Sisters of Charity*, and the “*Brothers of Christian Instruction*,” are assiduous in initiating the rising generation into the mysteries of Babylon, the mother of harlots, to the exclusion of the light of Divine truth. The New System of Irish Education supplies a powerful auxiliary in the same cause of delusion and spiritual despotism. It delivers over the education of the Roman Catholic population exclusively to the Romish priesthood, or to those who are the ready instruments of their will. It adopts a Popish principle as fundamental, even in the education of Protestants; and it

\* See letters of J. C. Colquhoun, Esq., M.P., to the Rev. James Carlile, on the New System of Irish Education, and speeches of the Recorder of Dublin, in the House of Commons, and of the Bishop of Exeter in the House of Lords.

subjects the whole management to a large preponderance of Popish control.\* The system is, throughout, imbued with antichristian leaven. No wonder that the interested sons of the Papacy should be loud in its praise; no wonder they should be found its readiest advocates and most active supporters. It has greatly strengthened the hands of the Man of Sin, and its establishment presents the prospect of a long continuance of his gloomy dominion in this unhappy country.

The system is *Infidel* as well as Antichristian. One of the most singular signs of our times is the combination of evil systems, that appeared opposed to each other, to bear down the truth. Popery and Infidelity join hands in the political strife to oppose Protestant principle; and the largest concessions to Antichrist, in matters of government or education, are made by those who are indifferent to the claims of revelation, or hostile to its purifying truths. The new plan of education, to produce a favourite unity, regards different systems of religious belief as equally entitled to national support. Supplanting the Bible, it offers, instead of the perfect word of life, misnamed Extracts, the tendency of which is to shake the common faith in the inspiration and supreme authority of the Scriptures, and it proposes, by separating the moral and literary education from the religious, to build up a system of morality independent of God's revealed law. It is needless to remark that these are regulations essentially infidel, and the more insidious and dangerous, that they are brought in to poison the fountains of learning, and to remove the young from the only secure foundation of morality and religion. The allowance of a scriptural catechism in some of the schools connected with the National Board, recently conceded, does not alter the case; since it only opens a wider door for the claims of Romanists or Socinians, of having the formularies of their God-dishonouring

\* The cases of the National School at Ballyholey, near Raphoe, in which the Rev. W. D. Killen, on the information of the Popish Priest, was compelled by the Commissioners to refund the whole sum advanced for the erection of the National School-house, to prevent a suit in Chancery, which they threatened, for the simple crime of allowing Roman Catholic children to be present at the hour of scriptural instruction; and of the National schools in Armagh, in which the Popish children are collected from the neighbourhood of the National school, which is under Protestant management, to that which is under exclusive Popish control, although at considerable inconvenience, exhibit the working of the system, and show that the aim of the Romish Priesthood is to secure an absolute influence in the direction of National Education.

and soul-ruining systems likewise publicly taught. In this case, the boasted object of united education is sacrificed to the favourite maxim of corrupt governments, in patronising different and opposing systems of religion, that all are politically good and worthy of support. The policy which deals equal favour to error as to truth, and which prostitutes state-endowments to support and propagate the doctrines of devils, while, with niggardly liberality it yields at the same time some countenance for the teaching of truth, is essentially infidel; and plead for it as the hireling and time-serving may, it receives not the shadow of countenance from the Word of Inspiration. It is the contrivance of a mere worldly and sinful expediency, resorted to for the purpose of effecting what has ever been a favourite aim of rulers and governments, that are devoid of a scriptural character,—the rendering of religion a mere engine of State-policy. Like the policy of ancient Rome in enrolling the gods of the conquered countries in the national pantheon, the directors of the new system of education, by giving up the Bible as a standard, offer equal countenance to error as to truth; and exemplifying the spirit of insidious modern infidelity, under the specious pretext of healing the wounds of a divided people, and of securing a great public benefit, open the door for the rapid and extensive spread of heartless scepticism and debasing superstition.

4. *It is a despotic and tyrannical system.*

The Board of Commissioners is composed of materials that afford no ground of confidence for a right system of national education. Its members may be men of talent and benevolence; they may even honestly desire to dispel the deep ignorance that broods over the population of Ireland; they may conscientiously devote their energies to the task—but their avowed principles are such as to unfit them wholly for the management of a proper scheme of scriptural education. And then the power secured to them is so extensive as to be dangerous, even in purer hands. They have the disposal of the School-houses, and the absolute power of appointing and dismissing the Teachers in certain cases; and, worst of all, they are secured “the entire control over all school-books, whether for literary or religious instruction.” One of the fundamental regulations of the system states, that “*the*

*Bible, whether in the Authorised or Douay version,"* is among the books of separate religious instruction. Thus the Board has the power of legislation on the Word of God itself! Not content with excluding it entirely in school-hours, it may interfere with its use by the Protestant minister, even in communicating religious instruction; it may direct when it is to be employed, or what portions of it are fit to become themes of instruction; and it may prohibit its employment entirely. Is not this a despotism of the worst kind,—a tyranny that ought not for a moment to be tolerated? We do not affirm that the Board contemplate the full exercise of the prerogative with which the system has invested them. But the power is too extensive to be entrusted to any man, or body of men. None may bar the free and unimpeded course of God's Word, without rushing on the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler. Even the possibility of men legislating on its right to universal reception, is to be regarded with suspicion and abhorrence; and the powers with which the Board are in this instance invested, are to be resisted as despotic and blasphemous. Leaving the Bible out of question, is it right or safe to grant to the Commissioners the "entire control" over all other books that may be used in religious instruction? The persons whom the system contemplate as generally communicating separate religious instruction, are the ministers of the Gospel. Is it to be tolerated that they shall be dictated to and controlled in instructing the rising generation by Popish and Prelatical dignitaries,—by the Socinian or the Infidel? This were Erastianism in its worst form; this is a yoke which neither we nor our fathers could bear. Against all such despotic power, under the mask of liberality, invading the sacred precincts of the ministerial functions, or of youthful training, we should enter our decided protest. Let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free; and remembering what our fathers suffered from the hands of Erastian authority, let us resist the beginning of the evil, and accepting no modification or compromise, let us ever plead that God's Word should be free as the light of heaven, and that the ambassadors of Christ should be unfettered by the commandments of men, in exercising even the least function of their sacred office.

· Lastly,—*It is based on deception, and it is fraught with ominous consequences.*

Pretending that the friends of scriptural education belie the framers and advocates of the New System, when they charge them with excluding the Bible, they refer to the “Extracts” prepared by the Board, as containing the truths of Sacred Scripture. This is a mere delusion. The Extracts mutilate the Word of God,—are in a version that is in some places unintelligible, and to please erroneous parties, leave out those parts of revelation, that bring prominently forward the great truths of the Gospel of gratuitous salvation. Should such books be taken by Protestant parents to supplant the Word of life? The indignant inquiry of the Saviour aptly reproves those who arrogantly introduce such a substitute,—“What man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?”\* Besides, it has been proved, on evidence unquestioned, that the Extracts are received in Popish schools, but not used. The Scriptures are authoritatively shut out, and the Extracts present nothing that can supply the fearful privation; and even if they did, they are, in a great measure, a sealed book to ignorant and deluded Romanists. The regulation of allowing one or two days in the week for religious instruction, is likewise fallacious. The Popish priesthood may be able to avail themselves of the permission to instruct the young of their flocks in the schools, but to Protestant or Presbyterian ministers, who are called to minister to a scattered people, and engaged in multifarious duties, the permission is nugatory,—the work is impracticable. Again, the returns of the Commissioners to the Government are deceptive. Numerous applications are represented as having been made by Protestant and Presbyterian clergymen; whereas the number of such applications is very few, and the same persons frequently endorse a large number of them.† The darling maxim of Rome—that “the end justifies the means,” seems indeed to have been adopted in the management of the system, and by highly coloured statement, misrepresentation, and largesses of public money, it has hitherto

\* Matthew vii. 9, 10.

† This statement has reference to the condition of the Board and the National Schools, before the accession of the Synod of Ulster.



progressed. Its fruits have been wormwood and gall; or, like the “apples of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah,” they have been fair and attractive in promise, but illusory and pernicious in possession. Since its introduction, the New System of education has engendered and increased religious strife. Even the children in the schools, who formerly knew nothing of party distinctions, have been arrayed against each other. Protestant children, when few, have been taunted by their companions, and subjected to a species of persecution. The children of *four or five millions* of the population of Ireland have been prohibited all access to the Word of life, and have been delivered over wholesale, by the State, to the exclusive guidance of the enemies of scriptural truth. Others have succumbed to intimidation, or, bowing down to the idol of interest or expediency, have been glad to creep in under the wings of Popery. The system once fully established, we can only look forward, as the melancholy prospect of our country, to a gradual but sure decay of the knowledge of the truth, and disregard of scriptural principle, while the delusions of Antichrist will be rapidly and extensively spread, and a long reign of Papal darkness, if not of Popish ascendancy, will oppress the land.

Our remaining space will only admit of noticing very briefly the *duties* of those who love the Bible, and who desire to promote national righteousness and truth, in relation to this system. Considering the nation as under paramount obligation to maintain truth and righteousness, and a scriptural system of education as an eminent means for promoting these ends, may we not say that it is your primary duty,

1. *To plead for a free, complete Scriptural Education, not for yourselves alone, but for all.*

This is the system of which heaven approves, which the Bible warrants, and which alone a Christian government should offer to its subjects. This it is that can effectually establish a throne in righteousness, and, under the sacred banner of truth, conduct a nation through succeeding generations to prosperity. Every system from which instruction in the Scriptures is excluded, is the reproach, as it must ultimately prove the ruin of a Christian State. Scriptural education is real, substantial and lasting *justice to Ireland*; for let the holy Word of God have free course among her

people, and the chains of oppression will speedily be broken, the despotism of the priest and the demagogue will be terminated, and the people, informed of their rights, and prepared to maintain them, on the principles and in the spirit of the Bible, will become contented, prosperous, and happy, despite of every opposing element. The best patriots are those who promote a thorough scriptural education, and who refuse to compromise the principle for any worldly consideration. For this you should earnestly contend, as excellent in itself, a precious article of the faith that was once delivered to the saints, and a valuable part of the blood-bought inheritance transmitted to you by fathers of deathless memory. You should plead for scriptural education, with a bold and determined opposition against every thing that would oppose or undermine it. This is the spirit of genuine Protestantism. As the name imports, it is a pleading for truth, with a protest against error, and especially against the countless delusions and abominations of the Man of Sin. If we are faithfully to maintain and carry forward the Protestant cause, in the spirit of the Reformers, our loudest and most decided protest will always be against Antichrist, and against all that goes to support his cause and advance his interests. We urge you affectionately to this solemn duty, from the consideration that the times are perilous to the cause of truth and righteousness. The enemy has "come in like a flood." The great Red Dragon, the spirit of evil that animates the Antichristian system, cast out of the "heaven" of political and ecclesiastical power at the Reformation, has come down to the earth, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. By popular measures,—proclaiming the sovereignty of the people's will,—declaiming for popular rights,—influencing the press, and polluting the fountains of knowledge, he is seeking to accomplish his dark designs. There is danger, at such a season, of being tempted to a criminal silence, or of being carried away by the plausible policy of those who help forward the interests of Antichrist. The favour, equally as the fear, of man bringeth a snare. A gift blinds the eyes, and perverts the judgment of the wise. When a government, forsaking the way of righteousness, yields its power to the beast, or adopts infidel maxims of legislation, it is dangerous to receive emoluments from its hands, which are professedly not given to

support the truth rather than error, but as a mere measure of State-policy. In the days of trial that are yet future, the slaughter of the witnesses will be effected partly through the voice of a faithful testimony becoming more and more indistinct, until it ceases to be publicly heard throughout the extent of Christendom. We should stand in fear, lest this melancholy catastrophe should speedily be exemplified in our own country. The present times are characterised by innovation and change; and ancient and valuable institutions are threatened with dissolution, by the spirit of restless insubordination, that equally spurns the restraints of human law, and the authority of God speaking in his Word. If we have witnessed the voice of a public protest against a system which authoritatively excludes the Bible from the schools becoming less distinct, or if recent connexions with the Board lead to apprehend such a defection, it behoves us to stand on our watch-tower; and descrying the approaching danger, to lift up our cry for despised truth, and utter our solemn and emphatic protestation against every invasion of Messiah's royal prerogatives, against every unhallowed interference with the Word of God, the ark of the nation's safety.

Secondly,—We exhort you to *stand aloof from all systems that do not offer homage to the Redeemer, and that recognise not the supreme authority of his Word.*

The command of heaven is explicit,—“*Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread*” \* Israel is “in safety” when he dwells “alone,” and is not numbered with the nations. Connexion with immoral systems is always ensnaring, and is generally fraught with evil consequences. It contaminates the church, and as the prophet beheld in vision, it draws down the stars of heaven to the earth. Christians should openly proclaim the truth, and witness decidedly in its behalf; but they are not at liberty to lend their support to systems of which God disapproves, or to aught that is clearly condemned in his Word. They owe undivided allegiance to their ex-

\* Isaiah viii. 12, 13.

alted Master, whom, by their calling and profession, they are bound in all things to honour. We must never do evil that good may come; nor are we at liberty, from any present advantages to ourselves, or even to the cause which we advocate, to compromise truth, and lend our influence to uphold the continuance of error. In a separate state, the witnesses for Christ will do good,—united with evil systems, their distinctive character is lost, and their influence for good greatly impaired. Here union is weakness,—open and manly separation is strength and safety. Supported by a government that has made an unholy expediency the rule of administration, and that has lavished the national treasure for the propagation of error and idolatry, the New National System of Education seems destined to prevail for a time; and the friends of scriptural education may calculate upon increased difficulties in maintaining their position. Yet have they nothing to fear. In the day of defection, the Lord himself will be their sanctuary and their defence. Let them beware of receiving as a boon that which no government on earth has the least right either to give or withhold,—the permission to read the Scriptures in some schools, when this tends more firmly to establish a system which, in a far greater number of instances, excludes the Bible altogether, by breaking down opposition or silencing a testimony against it. Our Divine Master has taught us that we should place the things that are his above those which are ours,—and that we should not look every one on our own things, but also on the things of others. Let us beware of partaking in other men's sins. The English Dissenters, under the Second James, nobly refused privileges which were offered to them, when these were made a stepping-stone for the introduction of Popery. In this spirit should we still act, when the presence and influence of Christian men are sought as a covert for aiding the onward movement of Antichrist. If others are unconscious of the snare,—if, even when warned, they can see no danger,—if they can reconcile it to their consciences and to their views of Christian duty to enter into the connexion, let them alone. To their own master they stand or fall. But do you, brethren, who have learned to regard the law of God as the supreme rule of legislation,—you, who are solemnly bound to contend for the nation maintaining a righteous character, and keeping

the truth,—study to keep your garments clean. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Avoid every appearance of evil,—and by standing aloof from connexions that are ensnaring, you will provide that your good be not evil spoken of. With Truth—unchangeable and immortal Truth emblazoned on your banner, go forward : and He that upheld his faithful servants in more difficult and trying times than these, will preserve you in safety, acknowledge your efforts in the maintenance of holy principle, and in due time arise and thoroughly plead his own cause.

Thirdly,—This subject loudly calls on us *to sigh and weep for all the abominations that are done in the land.*

We cannot be unconcerned about any public measure that affects the national character, the safety of the Church, or the interests of the rising generation. Our nation, once the boast of Christendom for religion and integrity, has been long retrograding in a course of degeneracy ; and, notwithstanding our light and privileges, the cry of our multiplied national sins has gone up to heaven. Chief of our transgressions are, violation of covenant with God, and departure from scriptural principle. These have lifted up the flood-gates of error and immorality, and have spread the wasting deluge. The rulers of the land have forsaken the way of righteousness, and the truth is undervalued and sold for considerations of worldly expediency. Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness and profanity abound,—the bands of authority are relaxed, and crimes unnatural and shocking are openly perpetrated,—and atheistic, infidel and antichristian principles are widely and successfully diffused. The signs of Divine judgments for national provocations are many and portentous. Among the most daring of our national transgressions, may be placed the system of education which we have exposed,—the first example this since the Revolution, of a professedly Protestant government legislating for the exclusion of the Bible, and a barefaced and acknowledged concession to the policy of the Man of sin. No nation has ever yet prospered that has forsaken the law of the Lord, or that has lent its aid to promote idolatry. God's arrows of vengeance have ever been pointed against Babylon, and all that have joined in league with Antichrist, have been made to experience the bitterness of departure from God. The history of Britain bears unequi-



vocal testimony to the truth, that periods of concession to Popery have always been marked by national judgments ; while the nation has been conducted through manifold danger and difficulty in cleaving to the path of righteousness, and steadfastly maintaining scriptural principle. Deeply deploring the short-sighted and infatuated policy by which the State has compromised the great Protestant principle of the unrestricted use of the sacred Scriptures in the education of youth, while we stand aloof from participation in the sin, let us cry mightily to God, that He may remove national transgressions, and avert deserved judgments. We offer no factious opposition to public measures. We contend for the truth on the high ground of scriptural principle, and we look not to political leaders or parties for the real and lasting regeneration of our country. Remembering the Divine prohibition, not to put our trust in princes, or in the sons of men, in whom there is no help, we should carry our cause to the mercy-seat, and entreat that the Lord himself would arise and plead it. Prayer is the Christian's principal weapon, and should be our grand resource. We may not be permitted to witness the termination of the evil ; and when we think of the enormous and progressive mischiefs that are heaped upon the rising generation by a perverted education,—when we contemplate so large a number of our hapless fellow-countrymen shut out from the light of Divine truth, and delivered over unpitied to the horrors of tyranny and superstition, the prospect for the future is forbidding in no ordinary degree. Still our assured comfort is, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Despite of man's puny contrivances, or rebellious doings, he carries forward to full accomplishment his own glorious purposes. He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of his wrath he restrains. The hearts of men in power are in the Lord's hand, and He turns them as the rivers of water, according to his pleasure. In the view of abounding evils and multiplied national sins, let us plead earnestly in behalf of the lands of our nativity. Let us give the Lord no rest till He establish and make his Zion a praise in the earth. And when the clouds appear to be collecting for a tempest of wrath, let us enter into our chambers, and hide ourselves for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast. There is safety from the strife of tongues,

—from the wrath of enemies,—from the floods of evil, at the mercy-seat. In his own appointed time to favour Zion, the Lord the Redeemer shall take to him his power and reign. Systems of wickedness shall be overthrown, and in answer to the prayers of his saints, He shall establish a universal kingdom of truth and righteousness.

Lastly,—You are exhorted and encouraged *to give yourselves unreservedly to the advancement of thorough scriptural education.*

The command of the text is obligatory on all. It is the duty of statesmen, ministers, people,—each in their separate stations to labour that the nation may be righteous and may keep the truth; and men of all ranks and conditions are bound to “open the gates,” that the nation exhibiting this illustrious character may enter in and enjoy the special blessings that flow from the Divine favour. As the right education of youth is an eminent means for accomplishing these valuable ends, is it going too far to affirm, that all ought to contribute their exertions to establish and maintain it? You should regard yourselves, brethren, as personally addressed in the words of inspiration,—“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Were it the welfare, for time and eternity, of but one immortal being that we are called to seek, this were sufficient to employ all our powers, and to engage our most strenuous exertions. Endued with faculties which, as they are properly directed or perverted, render their possessor a blessing or a curse to society, each human being shall be the source of greater happiness or misery to himself and others, than at any moment he can fully estimate. How important, then, the course of mental and moral training to which he is subjected! What a solemn responsibility rests upon all concerned, to see that the system of instruction be adapted to restrain and eradicate the native evil propensities of the heart, qualify the child for fulfilling the great end of his existence upon earth,—and prepare him for the higher destinies of his immortal nature! But when the subject of consideration embraces the education of thousands of the rising generation,—when it concerns the happiness or misery of ~~sons~~ unborn, -- when it pertains to the moral character and dearest interests of a whole nation, it rises into still higher importance, and demands a still more devoted attention. The question of

National Education comes home to every man as a personal concern, and as one of vast and overwhelming interest. Whether those who are the future hope of the Church, whether the future rulers and subjects of the nation shall be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or left amidst the dangers of youth, without the knowledge, and freed from the restraints of that Word which alone is able perfectly to guide them in life, and make them wise unto salvation,—whether learning and morality shall be taught to the young, altogether separate from religious obligations, or both shall be presented as based upon the only sure foundation, the Scriptures,—whether the national treasure shall be equally applied to uphold the truth, and to propagate dangerous error,—whether, in short, the education of the people shall be conducted on unscriptural and antichristian principles, or shall be directed by the principles of eternal and unchangeable truth,—these are topics of most momentous and all-engrossing concern, and on their solution depend interests of surpassing importance. As Christians, as patriots, as witnesses of the Lamb, you are called to plead for the proper training of the young, and to exhibit yourselves as the decided and uncompromising friends of scriptural education. The Lord Jesus has given the command, and expressed his desire, that “little children” should be brought to him,—and shortly before his ascension to glory, he left it in solemn charge, as a principal evidence of love to his name, to “*feed his lambs.*” Would we see the rising generation devoting the dew of their youth to God, we must aim to conduct their education throughout, so as to interpose no obstacle to their coming to the Saviour. We must leave no part as a matter of indifference, nor willingly subject them to any evil influence in their mental or moral cultivation. We must do every thing in our power to facilitate this most desirable result. Every consideration of the duties which we owe to posterity, to the land in which we dwell, and to the Church of Christ, impels us to a faithful discharge of the solemn obligation. Parents should, at a solemn crisis like the present, redouble their diligence in rearing their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They rest under a most onerous responsibility, as instruments deputed of God to sow the seeds of righteousness in a soil, which every natural and moral obligation calls them assidu-

ously to cultivate. By faithfully discharging their duty to their children, they will themselves enjoy a rich and abundant reward. They will benefit the Church, do good to the nation, and confer incalculable blessings upon future generations. We despair not for the cause of scriptural education, if Christian parents, under a sense of their solemn vows, and impelled by a sense of present dangers and difficulties, honestly labour to train their children in the way they should go. The young that have been dedicated to God, and that, by faithful parental precept and example, have been engaged in his service, may hereafter furnish a seed of *righteous* men, that may save the nation from destruction, or that may be instrumental in restoring national education to its proper foundation. The ministers of the sanctuary should give their willing and strenuous efforts to train the young in the ways of righteousness. They can enjoy no more honourable designation than to be styled "The Friends of youth." Through love to the Redeemer, let them bring little children to him,—in remembrance of his parting command, let them feed his lambs,—and their work shall be doubly rewarded. They will be instrumental in gathering in the jewels of Immanuel's crown, and in preparing the approved agents of a future and more extensive revival. The cause of Scriptural Education is indeed so vital and paramount,—it is so closely interwoven with the best interests of the Church, and the destinies of the nation,—it is so intimately associated with the usefulness of the young for time, and their happiness throughout eternity, that it is worthy to engage the exertions of Christians of all classes, and to enlist in its advancement their highest energies. Let me exhort you, beloved brethren, to bring to the support of this cause a prayerful, devoted spirit. When others betray a willingness to compromise valuable principle to enjoy emolument, or worldly favour, or to serve some party interest, you should hold fast your profession of a scriptural standard, as applicable to education, as well as to every other public measure,—and you should discover, by increased *liberality*, your readiness to make sacrifices for the propagation of the truth as it is in Jesus. Much of the evil that we deplore has originated in withholding more than is meet from approved schemes for the spread of the truth, and for the instruction of youth. The community have, in many cases, discovered a narrow,

contracted spirit in matters of public and engrossing interest ; and are therefore easily brought to close in with systems that are objectionable, in order to obtain a share in State-endowments which are dealt out by men indifferent or opposed to the truth. Let me entreat you to guard against this temptation ; and while you aim to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, evince by your liberality, that you account no sacrifice too great to promote the cause of a free and untrammelled scriptural education. It is ground of thankfulness, that there are still institutions in the land which secure the education of the young on scriptural principles. Let these freely command your pecuniary aid and your faithful exertions,—and the more that others connect themselves with systems in which scriptural education is compromised. Each in his own neighbourhood should labour in the work ; and acting as the salt of the earth, and as the light of the world, we should all endeavour to arrest the progress of corruption, and to diffuse a purifying radiance around us. Events in the kingdoms of men are evidently hastening to some solemn and momentous crisis. Communities, civil and ecclesiastical, are destined to be shaken to their foundation. Evil systems may for a season prevail,—and the voice of a faithful protest may be unheeded or contemned ; but our abundant comfort is, that Messiah reigns, that the sceptre of his kingdom is right, and that the cause of truth and holiness is on its march to assured and universal triumph. Depending on this glorious Leader, and allied to his cause, we labour not in vain. We may go forth weeping, while we bear precious seed ;—the truth of heaven declares that we shall “ doubtless come again rejoicing, bearing our sheaves with us.” The harvest may not be in our day ; but it will assuredly come. The seeds of truth may be scattered in a sterile soil, and like “ a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains,” may be exposed to many a rude and nipping blast. The future increase, however, is matter of cheering and indubitable certainty : “ The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon ; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.”\* As witnesses of the Lamb, and lovers of Zion, in a day of defection and trial, let us hold fast and faithfully display the stand-



ard of truth ; and marking well the bulwarks, and considering the palaces of Zion, let us “ tell it to the generation following.” Even should we not witness the fruit in our own day, we may be enabled, when we stand on the banks of the Jordan, to testify,—“ *This God is our God for ever and ever ; he will be our guide even unto death.*”\* Our desire and effort in life and death will be to realize the Church’s exalted blessing :—“ *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*”† And with our eye directed to him who is the Alpha and Omega, in whom every desire should centre, and to the advancement of whose glory every effort should be consecrated, we would adopt the Church’s vow :—“ I WILL MAKE THY NAME TO BE REMEMBERED IN ALL GENERATIONS ; THEREFORE SHALL THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE FOR EVER AND EVER. ”

\* Psalm xlviii. 13, 14.

† Psalm xlv. 16, 17.

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### ERRATA.

Page 23, line 19, for “ observed,” read, “ *obscured.*”

Page 49, at top, erase the first four or five lines, and read “ their faithful contendings,” &c.

Page 85, Note 2, for, “ on every part,” read, “ *in every part.*”—The candid reader will readily correct a few other inaccuracies, which need not be specified.

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 The substance of these Discourses was delivered to the Author’s own congregation, at a time when the subject of National Education was under extensive discussion throughout the community. They have been considerably altered and enlarged, and are now offered to the Christian public, with the humble but earnest desire, that, in the hands of the blessed Spirit, they may be acknowledged as a testimony on behalf of despised though important truths, in a day when the enemy is coming in like a flood.