

An intermediate plan has been framed by Sir James Shuttleworth, with the view of reconciling the second and third of these parties, and affording them a common ground of action. The scheme of the ex-secretary of the Committee of Council is intended solely for the northern division of the island, and is founded on the peculiar position of Scotland, and the unanimity which pervades the great body of the Scottish people respecting the mode in which the practical business of education should be conducted. An overwhelming majority of the community are convinced that an extensive reform of the parochial system of education is imperatively required, to adapt it to the altered ecclesiastical position of the country—they are of opinion that a national is preferable to a denominational system of education—they are all at one on almost all the important points of doctrine and discipline—they have the same form of Church government, the same Confession of Faith, the same Catechism, differing only respecting minor points which cannot be introduced into any scheme of instruction for children; and parochial, seasonal, subscription, and adventure, are conducted,—proves conclusively that the people of Scotland are agreed in thinking that a complete system of education must include religious as well as secular instruction, and that the religious instruction shall be given through the medium of the Bible, and the Shorter Catechism. Sir James is of opinion that when the points of agreement are so numerous and important, diversity of statement respecting minor matters ought not to form an insuperable barrier to co-operation in the establishment of a comprehensive system of national education; and he has, therefore, propounded a scheme, which he thinks the various sects and parties in Scotland may accept, without any compromise of principle. In accordance with the views of the National Education Association, he recommends that the existing religious tests, and the superintendence and control of the judicatories of the Established Church should be completely abolished, and that the election of the teachers, the choice of the branches to be taught, and the entire management of the schools should be entrusted to local boards chosen by the rate-payers, or heads of families. On the other hand, he seeks to conciliate the other parties, by proposing that the heritors—the present electors—shall retain a share in the management of the schools, and that two-thirds of the local board shall be composed of the minister and two elders, deacons, or wardens, chosen from each of the congregations in the school district, possessed of a certain number of members.

This scheme, it will be observed, provides for the entire abolition of all religious tests, on the part of the schoolmasters, and of all peculiar privileges on the part of the Established Church. It does justice to all parties, therefore, and shows favour to none. It does not prescribe, by statute, any kind of religious instruction, or insist that any public assessment shall be levied for its payment. It leaves this vexed question entirely to the local boards, who have full power to determine both the kind of religious instruction, and the manner in which it shall be imparted in the schools, to require every scholar, if they shall think fit, to pay a specified sum for the religious instruction which he may receive, and to set apart the grants of public money, in whatever way they may be given, avowedly and exclusively for the teaching of the various branches of secular learning, which are taught in the schools. The recognition of the ecclesiastical element is no doubt liable to objection; but it may be pleaded in defence of this part of the proposed measure, that character is a much better qualification for a seat on the educational board, than the mere possession of the money; and that those who have been entrusted by the various Protestant bodies of our country with the oversight of their spiritual or temporal affairs, are as a whole better fitted for the management of the public schools, than the hundred pound heritors, or the fifty pound tenants. But, waving this point, we would remind those who may object to this proposal, in the first place, that we are not responsible for the origination of the scheme, but only for its acceptance, and that it is one thing to propose a system of education as the best that we can devise, and another and very different thing to accept of a system proposed by others, as the best that we can obtain. Secondly, if the ground were entirely unoccupied it might be a fair question—whether it would be better to accept of an imperfect system of national education or to intrust the whole business of tuition to the voluntary liberality of the people; but the ground is not unoccupied; we have already two systems of education established in Scotland, both supported by public money—both open to serious objections, and yet, as experience has shown, wholly inadequate to overtake the educational wants of the community. The scheme under consideration is, therefore, not to be regarded as a proposal to establish a new system, but as a proposal to reform and extend the systems already existing. Every abatement of an existing evil is not merely a gain in itself, but a stepping-stone also to farther advances; and the measure in question, if not a perfect reform, must at least be admitted to be an immense improvement upon the present system, and as such would be cordially welcomed by the great body of the Scottish people. Thirdly, no reflecting person, acquainted with the present state of the country, can for a moment delude himself with the notion that there is any probability of our obtaining a better measure. The Established Church courts take their stand upon their prescriptive rights, and refuse to listen to any proposals of a compromise; and unless the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches can be brought to unite in expressing their willingness to accept of the proposed measure, no reform of the parochial schools can be carried, and the present system will undoubtedly be perpetuated and extended.

The hopes of the friends of things as they are, are mainly founded on our anticipated disunion, and they have very dexterously attempted to

play off the Free Churchmen and the Dissenters against each other. They sent no fewer than three deputations successively to London during the course of last session, to urge their views upon the attention of the government and the legislature; and, in pleading that the parochial schools should be maintained on their present basis, and the salaries of the increased, one of their principal arguments was founded on the alleged impossibility of propounding any measure which would satisfy both the Free Church and the Dissenters. "Leave," say they, "the parochial schools in the hands of the Established Church, and though the Free Church may grumble, their opposition will be neutralised by their acceptance of public money, to aid in the erection and maintenance of their own schools; and thus secure the active support of one religious body; and the acquiescence of a second, you may safely disregard the murmurs and opposition of the third." This plausible advice, falling in, as it did, with the reluctance which all governments feel to stir exciting questions, and their desire to save themselves trouble, was very nearly successful; and though, by the adoption of prompt and vigorous measures, on the part of the Synod's Committee on Public Questions, the danger was for the time averted, it is by no means entirely removed.

The government are now disposed to regard with favour the proposal which Sir James Shuttleworth has made for the reform and extension of the parochial schools; but if they find the prediction of the Established Church deputation verified, by the refusal of the various sects of nonconformists to abate one jot or tittle of their peculiar views and pretensions, there is every probability that they will adopt the policy so earnestly urged upon them, and content themselves with merely supplementing the present sectarian and exclusive system. If this course will be followed, we may bid farewell to all hope of an efficient and comprehensive reform in the educational institutions of the country. In the course of few years the education of Scotland will become entirely denominational and sectarian. In almost every parish throughout the Lowland districts of the country, we shall have a parochial school under the exclusive control of the Establishment, and a Free Church school under the exclusive control of the Free Church. In these circumstances, Dissenters, unless they wish to become the passive prey of both parties, and to see their children proselytised before their face, will be compelled, in self-defence, to erect a school wherever they are able to maintain a congregation. We shall thus have, in every town, and village, and rural district, rival denominational schools, under which teachers, pupils, and managers, will alike belong to the particular denomination with which the schools are respectively connected. It is scarcely possible to overestimate the evils of such a system, which must exercise a most injurious influence on all parties connected with it—the church and the nation, the teachers and the pupils; and which, as experience has fully shown, while totally incapable of supplying the educational wants of the whole community, will lay upon the church a burden which her Divine Master has laid upon her, and which she cannot take upon herself without serious injury to her own peculiar vocation,—will reduce the scanty income of the teacher, and thus lower his status in society, and deteriorate his acquirements and qualifications, and will contribute, more than all other causes combined, to aggravate the evils of our religious dissensions, to stereotype existing differences and divisions, and to perpetuate sectarian animosity and strife to our children's children.—*U. P. Mag.*

"OUR PASTOR."

A SHORT SERMON.

"The labourer is worthy of his reward."—1 TIM. v. 18.

"Our Pastor"—he who watches for our souls as one that must give account—he who studies, reads, thinks, writes, in order to meet the weekly draught upon him—he who taxes his mental, spiritual, physical being to please our fastidious tastes, that haply he may "win" some—he who duly as the Sabbath's light returns, is at his post, to instruct, exhort, reprove, comfort, strengthen, console us—he who cheers us in sickness by his tender ministrations—he who kneels by our death-beds, and commends our parting spirits unto God—he who dispenses to us at the sacramental board the pledge of pardon and acceptance—he who is present at our weddings, and—

* * * "doth impose

"The irrevocable vow, and meek prayer,
Present it to be registered in heaven!"

he who stands beside our dead to utter the words of farewell consolation—he who soothes our doubts, dissipates our fears, counsels us in every emergency—he who prays for us in secret, rejoices over our repentance, or mourns over our obstinate rejection of his message—he who, when he has done all, bears with our ingratitude, our cavilling, our neglect, and loves us in spite of it—"our faithful, devoted pastor"—O! is he not, in the deepest sense of the word, a "labourer?" Did not Christ, with the strictest propriety, call his ambassadors "labourers?"

"The labourer is worthy" of what? "His reward." What is it?—What is the pastor's highest "reward?" That, and that alone, which at first induced him to enter the ministry.

By a call that goes deeper than the ear, God speaks the word to some gifted youth. He temporizes perchance, hesitates, doubts, struggles, decides and re-decides. "The ministry," holds out to him a career of severe toil, with a meagre sustenance—a family exposed to painful an-