

dencies of sin. Many others, no doubt, have suggested themselves to the minds of men, but all except this, hitherto tried, have in the end miserably failed. Philosophers have speculated about the evil, legislators have legislated about it, and philanthropists have laboured to arrest it, earnestly, perseveringly, and disinterestedly; and what have been the results? They may have been able to mitigate some of its symptoms, they may have met some of its more obvious features, but they have never been able to go to the root of the disease. The strong hand of the law may confine the mischief within certain bounds, it may extend security to life and property, while all the time the grand source of the evil remains untouched. Some have pretended that it might be met by the spread of science and philosophy. They must have read the page of the world's history to but little purpose, who can imagine, for a moment, that these are at all adequate to the emergency of the case. Why, for thousands of years science and philosophy were allowed a fair trial; for thousands of years they endeavoured to grapple with the monster of sin, but the giant proved stronger far than they. In spite of all their efforts, the whole head remained just as sick as before, and the whole heart just as faint as before, and the whole body just as completely covered with wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, as before. Some have expected great things in our day, by a diffusion of what, I suppose, we must call a taste for the fine arts, to be effected by means of museums, and picture-galleries, and crystal palaces; and in order that they may have justice done them, they are to be opened forthwith, of all days of the week, on the Lord's day. We are told that they will be effectual rivals to the gin palace; they are more likely to be formidable rivals to the house of God. The real object aimed at, and hardly sought to be denied, is to make the Sabbath in Britain what it already is in most nations on the continent, a day of mere frivolous amusement—to make Hyde Park on that day another Champs Elysées. The remedy to which we are now adverting, has also been tried, and the result has been unmitigated failure. We know what Athens of old was, we know to what rare excellence her artists attained, so that the productions of those days are still the wonder and admiration of these; we know how almost universal amongst her citizens was a taste for all this beautiful in art and literature. But what, at the same time, was her spiritual condition, we learn from the apostle Paul; and the simple incident which he has recorded of the altar erected to the unknown god, speaks volumes on the subject. And what was her moral state, her own satirists, and poets, and historians, have recorded, and it would hardly be possible to draw a picture in blacker colours than those which they have laid so thickly on their canvas. But this experiment is going on at the present day, and with the like results. It is a striking fact, shewing how

little effect the mere cultivation of the intellectual or imaginative faculties can have in checking moral depravity, that those very cities of continental Europe where the most has been done for the people in this way, where museums and galleries in abundance are open to all ranks alike, are a by-word and a reproach, as containing the most dissolute and corrupt population. We might point to Munich, where the government has put forth all its power, and grudged no expense in its attempts thus to elevate the tastes of the inhabitants,—well, the capital of Bavaria enjoys the miserable reputation throughout Germany, of being, perhaps, the most demoralised city north of the Alps. The great remedy now in highest repute with the wise men of the world, is education. The cry has been raised, that if we could only succeed in educating the masses of the community, in place of the disorderly and degraded beings we now behold, we should have quiet, peaceful, subjects; decent, orderly, citizens; good members of society, in every relation of life. Let us only educate, and we shall give them habits of honesty, industry, and self-reliance, feelings of independence, which would make them scorn to rely upon others for their daily bread. Let us only educate the masses, and our poor-houses, which are now crowded, will be tenantless; and our jails, which now hardly suffice, will be without occupants. Such is the cry re-echoed frequently by those who have never thought very seriously about the subject, but who have found it a convenient cry to serve a party purpose. Now I have great faith in the power of education to elevate the masses; but it must be an education conducted by Christian teachers, and deeply imbued with a Christian spirit. It must be such an education as Lois of old gave to her daughter Eunice, and as Eunice in her turn gave to her son Timothy—an education, the recipients of which are even from childhood taught to know the holy Scriptures, and the result of which is the unfeigned faith of the Gospel. Unless it be of this character, it will fail to accomplish what is required of it. We may teach men many things, we may communicate to them a knowledge of many subjects, but unless we teach them to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and “whom to know is life eternal,”—unless we communicate to them that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation—unless we impress upon their minds that “fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom”—we have no warrant to expect that they will live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. Give them education imbued with the spirit of infidelity or indifference, give them a merely secular education, and it will often be found that they have only been rendered more ripe for evil, more turbulent and depraved. And here still let us appeal to facts. We are often called upon to look to Prussia as an example of a well-educated country, we are often taunted with our inferiority to her in this respect. There, edu-

cation is compulsory; the law of the land takes every child born in the country under its protection, and tells the parent that, whether willing or unwilling, he must send it to school; nay more, that whether willing or unwilling he must allow it to remain there a certain number of years, until, in the eye of the law, it has learned enough. Now, the effect of this has been to place Prussia, as a country, very high in the educational scale, but does she occupy a corresponding place in the moral scale? Is there a single man amongst us who has ever visited that country who would wish to see his native land, in its moral and religious aspects, what Prussia now is? Why, an article which appeared in the *North British Review*, about three years ago, and evidently written by one who knew that country, while glancing at Prussia from this point of view, describes Stettin, one of its cities, as “sunk to the most deplorable depth of Pagan, and worse than Pagan, immorality.” We cannot here give the facts upon which the writer founds this terrible sentence, but we may advert to one of his statements in regard to church-attendance. It is only seven per cent. of the population. These facts surely proclaim, in a voice not to be misunderstood, how little is to be expected of any education not deeply imbued with a religious spirit as a purifying and preserving salt. Make education the handmaid of religion, make it the means of imprinting upon the youthful mind the knowledge of Christ, and of infusing into the youthful heart the love of Christ, and then, and then only, will it be found to be one of the most effectual agents for arresting the progress of corruption, and of diffusing that righteousness which alone truly “exalteth a nation.” Every other method must fail which does not distinctly recognise the great truth stated in our text, that Christians are the “salt of the earth;” that it is by their means alone the world can be preserved from the debasing influence of sin, and the whole community impregnated with the purifying and healthful spirit of the Gospel. It is a high honour indeed which is thus done to believers, but at the same time a solemn trust has been confided to them, and a weighty responsibility laid upon them. And let no one think that he cannot share in this honour—that he has no part in this trust—that no portion of this responsibility rests upon him because his lot in life is a humble one, and his station an obscure one. There is no earnest Christian, however little exalted may be his sphere, and however narrow may be his means, who may not do something to season the manners of those around him with the wholesome doctrines of the Gospel, and by example or precept, by remonstrance or warning, by entreaty or by prayer, to check the prevailing corruption. Let him be nothing more than an humble workman, earning from day to day his daily bread by the labour of his hands and in the sweat of his brow—yet what a beneficent influence may he exert in the midst of the