

ancient nations; but it may be generally stated that every enlightened dynasty encouraged the instruction of such of its youth as were destined to have any voice in the conduct of public affairs, or to occupy any responsible and independent position in society; and that the systems of instruction pursued were of as perfect a description as the existing state of knowledge could supply. The reasons which would induce a government to interest itself in the education of the young are various; as to the manner and extent of State intervention, in such education, we shall refer hereafter. In the first place it is absolutely necessary, in a well regulated State, that every man should be able to distinguish between right and wrong; that he should be made to fully comprehend the consequences, both temporal and eternal, of every bad action which he commits; and that he should learn so to act, in regard to his own affairs, that he does no injury to his neighbors. It is also essential that he should have sufficient knowledge to enable him to maintain himself and those depending on him, and to lay by enough to support himself and them in case of his sickness, and to assist in sustaining his family in case of his death, otherwise the burthen of such support must necessarily fall upon the public. Finally, it is highly desirable that he should be capable of comprehending and exercising his rights of citizenship, and his duty towards the State as a voter and possible representative of public opinion. To discharge these and other offices which we have not enumerated, we maintain that his instruction should be essentially of a religious character. We have pointed out the glaring defects in the heathen religions of the past and in philosophy. These defects may, for the sake of convenience, be classed together under one general head,—uncertainty as to the object and destiny of human life. Socrates and Plato saw in what respects the then existing philosophy and religion were defective, and it is quite certain that revelation alone could render either perfect. If, then, the wise men of long ago taught their children all the spiritual and intellectual wisdom then attainable, and, if these wise men saw that their systems were defective in the particulars to which we have adverted, should we, in any way, hinder the children of this age from using the perfect light which God has given for their use? Should we keep them in a moral cave and not suffer them to pass from out its gloom?

A system of education which does not comprise religious instruction, is not only religiously wrong and incapable of transforming a