

deavour to apply the best remedy to the evil. He (Mr. Henley) would agree to inquire into that, for it was a most important subject, and one of great difficulty. The other point was of still greater consequence. They all knew—take this town for example, with its vast population—that an immense number of children never went to school, and never went to work. These were the most destitute part of the juvenile population, and they required the attention of the House in the first instance. No inquiry had yet been able to find out the cause of a fact which everybody knew and everybody lamented. The object of the right hon. baronet and also of the noble lord (J. Russell) was to get a rate for education. It was due to the noble lord (J. Russell), whose efforts in the cause every one must appreciate, to say that in every one of his motions upon the subject, whether by bill or resolution, he had always adopted the principle of at least requiring the Bible to be read in schools. The schoolmaster ought to be an earnest man, who would omit no opportunity of enforcing and illustrating the principles and doctrines which he taught. If children lied, and children did lie; if they stole, and children would steal; if they were crabbed and ill-natured one towards another, they ought to be told that they should not do these things, because the first two were against the commands of their God, and to be kindly, affectionate, and forbearing one to another, to do unto others as they would be done by, was the command of their Saviour. (Hear.) These were things which might occur in a school every hour and every minute, and you could not enforce what you taught without putting this moral teaching on its proper foundation, without bringing then and there before the children the great truths of the Bible.

Lord J. RUSSELL.—I have, however, been so often disappointed in expectations that this House, and people generally, would agree to proposals for the promotion of education that, although disappointed, I am not surprised at the opposition which has been raised. When a proposal was made by lord Brougham, who has always been active and zealous in the cause of education, to inquire into the charitable trusts, there was an immense quantity of political opposition, and every sort of imputation was cast upon him as if he was going to rob those trusts of their property. Again, when in 1839, I, in concert with Lord Lansdowne, proposed the scheme of the Committee of Council, we were met with the greatest opposition in this House, and the first grant was only carried, after a long debate, by a majority of two. I now find the hon. gentleman who spoke with much ability at the commencement of this discussion founding himself upon the minutes of Council, declaring how excellent that system is, and begging us not to disturb its progress, but to rely upon its efficacy. It is a consolation to those who make advances in the face of much opposition to find many years afterwards that what was at first denounced as perilous and injurious becomes very soon an established part of our system, which it is reckoned the duty of every true Conservative to support and maintain. (Hear, hear.) Again, the minutes of 1846, when first promulgated, met with great opposition throughout the country, and petitions in great numbers were presented against them. (Hear, hear.) The last change which I had the pleasure of making in conjunction with my right hon. friend the member for Oxford University, (Mr. Gladstone) then Chancellor of the Exchequer—viz., that which established capitation grants—was not so much opposed, but it has not hitherto been carried to the extent that is necessary in order to promote generally the cause of education. (Hear, hear.) Let me remark, as the foundation of the motion of the right hon. baronet, that some gentlemen have entirely mistaken the present system. They seem to suppose that the inspectors are persons who inspect the whole education of the country. The Vice-President of the Committee of Council has told you that there are about 570,000 children receiving education in these schools, while, according to the report of Mr. Horace Man, which is the latest we have on the subject, but which is at the same time very general, there are 2,000,000 of persons between 5 and 15 receiving education at school. But, besides that, Mr. Mann states that the are about 1,000,000 who are at work and who do not go to school. He makes another allowance for a certain number of children who are out picking pockets and thieving in the streets, and who, he says, cannot be expected to attend school while thus engaged. (A laugh.) Again, he reckons a number who are neither at work or at school; making altogether somewhere about 4,000,000 children, of whom, as far as the reports of the inspectors are concerned, we know nothing. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman who spoke last objects, as it seems to me somewhat inconsistently, to the proposed inquiry. He said in the latter part of his speech that children are apt to lie and steal, and that they should be taught not to lie or steal because it is contrary to the commands of God. I quite agree with him, but why? If that is to be taught to the children who attend school, is it not to be taught to those who are running about the streets and who do not go to school? (Hear.) Is it an advantage or is it not, that the children of this country should receive a religious, a moral, and a secular education? I believe it is an advantage. Some gentlemen deny that it is advantage. With regard to them there is an end of the question, and I cannot dispute it. There are 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 children in want of education. The present system extends

to only 570,000. Why is it restricted to that number? The answer is easy. It was proposed to assist by grants the means of those who were willing to build schools and carry them on, but who could not themselves provide all the resources necessary for that purpose. The hope was that the establishment of these schools would lead by example to the establishment of others, and that thus the system might spread. It was very much in the nature of an experiment, and it remained to be seen whether that extension of education took place rapidly and generally, or whether it was a slow and partial process. The system has been now in operation for about 18 years, and I must say that, though with regard to those children who are under education it has been very successful, it has not spread so rapidly or so extensively as could have been wished. Let me ask, then, what is to be done? You are not making any very great progress, because, I believe, if any one will look at the amount and increase of the grants, and then look at the increase of the number of children, he will find that at least the 70,000 who have been added recently to the list of scholars are receiving grants from the State to a much larger proportionate amount in money than the 500,000 who first received the benefits of the system. (Hear, hear.) If that is the case, I think it is deserving of inquiry how the system can be beneficially extended. I can conceive many ways in which it might be beneficially extended. For example, I believe that in many cases the clergy of the established church, as well as the ministers of dissenting denominations, would be willing with their congregations to contribute to a certain amount, not, perhaps, complying with all the conditions of the Committee of Privy Council, but yet making better schools than now exist. Would not that be a desirable object? (Hear, hear.) I believe we have greatly improved the quality of education, but we ought not to lose sight of quantity, and if we find in certain districts educations making no progress, is it not desirable to examine whether, by restricted grants and less stringent conditions, we may not be able to extend the present system? (Hear, hear.) A bishop of the established church has told me that he thinks much might be done, and he pointed out to me that there were whole districts in his diocese in which there were no schools of any value whatever. (Hear, hear.) I have heard others who have great practical experience say that while in their own places there were schools very well conducted, that the grants of the Privy Council were not only sufficient but were munificent, you might go for 10 or 12 miles from their parishes and not find a single locality in which a valuable school existed. You cannot at present inquire into these facts; your inspectors cannot tell you anything about them. Is it not worth while then to have an investigation which shall inform you as to the actual state of things? (Hear, hear.) The right hon. Mr. Henley has truly said that in any plan of education which I have proposed I have always insisted upon at least a knowledge of the Bible being communicated to the children. I think it would be a very great misfortune if, in order to smooth over difficulties and put an end to jarring among different sectaries, any system of secular education were established by which religion should not be made the foundation of the instruction to be imparted in the schools. (Hear, hear.) I cannot but think that mere secular education would be regarded in this country in no other light than as being adverse to the Bible. (Hear, hear.) The people of England may, however, in my opinion, without adopting any such scheme, or indeed any very general scheme, be induced to extend that system of education which is already in force. It is said that the appointment of a commission would be productive of considerable expense. I may, however, remark that, as we have been told this evening 600,000*l.* are annually spent for educational purposes, we may very legitimately endeavour, by means of the labour of the proposed commission, to ascertain whether that sum might not be so managed as to go further than it now does in the extension of education in this country. (Hear, hear.) I am, then, of opinion that if this motion be carried a very considerable object will be effected. It binds us to no particular system of education, while it lays the groundwork of future improvement. We possess in this country the inestimable advantage which the people enjoy in being at liberty to read at their schools the great works of our English authors. They are brought up in habits of liberty suitable to our constitution. No compulsory action could produce anything like the advantages which result from that freedom, and I for one cannot give my assent to any scheme which would tend to deprive them of its happy influence. (Cheers.)

Sir J. PAKINGTON, with the leave of the House, then withdrew his original motion, and proposed another in the following terms:—"That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, that she will be graciously pleased to issue a commission to inquire into the present state of popular education in England, and to consider and report what measures, if any, are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction in all classes of the community."

The House divided, when there were—Ayes, 110

Noes, 49

Majority for the motion, 61