

upon all the rest. [Hear.] In what age or nation had it been attempted to impart the principles of self-control except by the guides and restraints of Religion? [Hear, hear.] Upon what authority was the measure to be adopted? The proposition of 1839 could not be quoted, for there provision was made for Religious teaching without the walls of schools; nor the Irish system, for there Scripture extracts were admitted. [Hear, hear.] Truly we seemed standing upon the confines of a new era. The House was discussing whether it should establish by law a system of education from which by law all Christianity was to be excluded. [Hear, hear.] Now a new burden was to be imposed for the support of a system from which the name of Christianity was to be excluded. Would that be no infliction upon the consciences of thousands—one might say millions? [Hear, hear.] A system of education for the people of a Christian country was to be instituted; by what authority, drawn from the Word of God, was His Word to be excluded? [Hear, hear.] Would the Proposers of the scheme say they preferred a Secular to a Religious education? Then let them produce their proofs of its superiority. Would they quote France—Prussia—any continental state? [Hear, hear.] Were they not telling the people of England that a Religious education was altogether unnecessary—for, had the State thought it valuable, that education it would have imparted. [Hear.] The only ground upon which the State could interfere in the matter of education was, that the people should be made good and moral citizens; how could that be achieved without the perpetual sanction of Religion? (Hear.) Were we to tear up by the roots the principles which had borne us safely through many ages, and which, however imperfectly obeyed, had made us, with all our faults, the best and freest portion of the human race? (Hear, hear.) At what time was this proposition made? The supporters of this measure were propounding schemes for the extension of the suffrage, and for the increase of individual liberty; and ought not the influences of Religion to be more than ever applied, and the principle of self-control inculcated, that the exercise of these privileges might be safe and beneficial to the nation? (Hear, hear.) He (Lord Ashley) was much struck in reading some laws passed in the French National Assembly, and the bitter experience of that nation might be a warning to us. (Hear, hear.) By the law of the 15th of March, 1850, the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Instruction Publique* was to consist of ecclesiastics and members of various religious denominations; the first provision was for "moral and religious instruction." (Hear.) A report presented to the Chamber in 1849 contained this passage—"Constrained by the evidence of danger to ask the Assembly to adopt a law of repression, we shall shortly ask one of a different character, one which shall prevent measures of rigour by founding our system of national instruction on the solid grounds of Morality and Religion." In the report of March, 1850, on the law for the "*enfants trouvés*" there was this article—"Every child confided to the public care must receive a Religious education." (Hear.) In a recent visit to Paris he (Lord Ashley) found it the universal testimony that Religion alone—the Religious habits of the people—had saved England during the time of European convulsion. Yet we were to introduce a system of education which, if not in words, at least in act, would deny the necessity of the inculcation of Religious principles. (Hear.) Nothing was more true than that Religion had saved this country, borne us through famine and disease, and carried us through long and perilous wars; and the civilized world had not seen a nobler spectacle than when our thousands and our millions assembled to acknowledge God on the days of humiliation and thanksgiving. (Hear, hear.) It was now proposed to us (and we must decide) "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." He (Lord Ashley) could only answer for himself; yet he believed he might give the answer in the name of millions in this country—"As for me

and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Much cheering.)

Lord JOHN RUSSELL said; Sir, I would be very glad if this bill, which has been introduced for the purpose of promoting education, had been such as that I could fairly have given it my support upon the second reading. In treating of this bill I will endeavour to avoid as much as possible anything that may savour of passion or of intemperate language whilst stating my objections to it. I will endeavour to make every admission that I think is fairly due to the promoters of the bill, and to the bill itself. I may say, notwithstanding some allegations that have been made, that I think there is still a lamentable want of education for the poorer classes in this country; and that it still remains a desirable object for Parliament to promote and secure the education of those people. (Hear, hear.) But, having made these admissions, it remains a very grave question whether we should declare that there should be schools established upon the principles laid down in an Act of Parliament, in which schools Secular education only should be given. (Hear.) I own I cannot but think that any education established on such a basis must be lamentably deficient. (Loud cheers.) I cannot but think that nothing but the most absolute necessity should oblige Parliament to come to such a conclusion as that they should establish by preference—that they should establish, as it were, as a matter of course, a system of education for the children of the poor of this country from which Religion should be entirely excluded. (Repeated cheers.) To establish such a principle without an absolute necessity would be a grievous falling-off in our own duty both to our Religion and to our fellow-countrymen. (Hear, hear.)

After showing the arbitrary and impracticable nature of the bill, the noble Lord proceeded.

Why, Sir, we must consider that we are dealing with a country in which many schools have been already established—schools which, however they may differ generally, all agree in one great principle, and that is, the imparting of Religious instruction to the children. (Hear, hear.) In some of those schools the children are educated in the principles of the Church of England. We have schools connected with the National Society, which require that the children shall go to church on Sunday, and learn the Bible and catechism of the Church of England. Then there are the Wesleyans, who have the Bible taught in their schools, and the Church of England catechism; but who do not insist upon the children going to church. Then we have the British and Foreign School Society, which orders the reading of the Bible, and makes it indispensable; but which does not admit the catechism or formularies of any particular denomination. We have the Roman Catholic schools, which are under the direction of their own priesthood, according to whose views and opinions many subjects of school instruction are mixed up with religion, and which are conducted according to the opinions and religious teaching of the community. Here, then, Sir, we have many differences, I will not go through the Congregationalists; but through them all, many as are their differences, runs this one great principle, that, according to the opinions and consciences of those who superintend those schools, and whose money, labour, and time are devoted to them, Religion is the grand and uniform object. (Loud cheers.) Then what was the feeling that the people expressed with reference to the measure before the House? It certainly was an adverse feeling.

He had every reason to believe that the objections entertained to the bill before the House were held with earnestness by the great mass of the people. It was a great fault of this measure, as it must be of any such measure, to seek to establish any system of education in which the pupils would not be fully informed of the great and leading truths of the Christian Religion. Moral doctrines lost nine-tenths of their force when they were

deprived of the weight of Religious injunction and enforcement—of the Divine authority, and the Divine sanction, on which eternal welfare or misery depended. (Loud cheers).

The noble Lord then entered into details concerning the arbitrary nature of the measure, the apprehensions it had excited, and the necessity which existed for fuller information on the subject of the facilities afforded for educational purposes, after which he concluded with the following energetic enunciation of his opinions—views which, we hope, will long influence the Government of England, for they recognize what we believe to be the only true basis ever found for the prosperity and the educational advancement of a people.

These apprehensions, so natural—so widely spread—belonging no less to the Church than to different classes of dissenters—these objections, so deeply rooted and so widely extending, ought to render us very cautious not to run counter to the feeling in question, and not to encounter the danger of producing the effects dreaded by those who entertain it, namely, the weakening of voluntary zeal, and the crushing of voluntary exertion. (Hear.) That we may by voluntary efforts still do much, and that we may arrive at some scheme by which education may be promoted, is what I hope. I regret that the present bill is such as I think it impossible for the House to assent to. When I say so, my general wish for the education of the people of this country is not in the least diminished in zeal or intensity; but I do wish in the words of a former sovereign of this country—that all its people may be enabled to read and benefit by the Bible—that they may read it at an early age, when they are first beginning to receive the lessons of morality and instruction—that the Scriptures should not merely be received by them as a present when they leave school, but that they should be their constant companion and guide—held in reverence and respect during their whole educational career. (Cheers.)

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

The subject of Caste with its many practical evils has recently demanded much attention on the part of missionaries who labour in Hindostan. Our readers will find a full statement on the subject, considered in its various bearings, in a communication from the Rev. Mr. Ogilvie, which appeared in the number of the *Presbyterian* for last December. Since that period, we learn from the *Home and Foreign Record of the Church of Scotland*, that a Minute on the subject has been agreed to by the Madras Missionary Conference, which illustrates the condition and usages of native society in India, and describes what is found to be a formidable hindrance to the ascendancy of the Gospel. The Minute, we may add, bears the signatures of eighteen Missionaries belonging to various branches of the Christian Church, all of whom co-operate, we believe, most cordially in the important work to which they are devoted, drawn together by similarity of aim, and united in the bonds of Christian fellowship and affection. After noticing the fact, that caste, being a distinction