

From the Tablet.

THE

EDUCATION OF THE POOR.

The time of honorable members, on Tuesday night, was, to all appearance, usefully employed in discussing the momentous question of the Education of the Poor in Great Britain. The mover of this discussion was Lord Ashley—a man who, though his party opinions are by no means hidden under a bushel—is yet shaming the factious dishonesty of both parties, by laboring with all his might on those questions which confer no party distinction, but simply earn for the labourer the applause of all good men, and the earnest benedictions of the poor. Would to God that we had more such politicians; we should not then, perhaps, have occasion to express our special satisfaction at this one being a Lord and a Tory, and finding thence a greater readiness in the old Obstructives and Dead-weight Politicians to co-operate with him, and lend their aid to his virtuous exertions.

Our readers cannot of course forget the report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the children in mines and factories; the horrible facts by them brought to light; nor the humane though imperfect and mangled enactments founded on that report, at the instance of Lord Ashley. This year the same Commission has issued another bulky report, with its gigantic appendices of evidence upon the condition of children in other departments of industry; and this year, too, true to his humane vocation, Lord Ashley hardly allows the vast blue books to become dry, before he lays some of their appalling details before the House, and calls upon a legislature that affects to style itself Christian, for its aid in filling up the terrific abyss of ignorance involved in those details.

We hardly know how to follow Lord Ashley over the ground which he trod so faithfully on Tuesday night. The reports from which he drew the materials for his speech are before us, but even the fragments which he selected are too bulky for our contracted space, and we can find room for little more than a few general results. It is impossible to imagine a picture more thoroughly "sgraceful" to Protestantism than that drawn by Lord Ashley, and confirmed by the emphatic dictum of Sir James Graham. "Altho'," said his lordship, "the country may disregard the expense entailed upon it by the increase of crime, this is not the consequence to look to; but the evil is gradually becoming wider and deeper; and I am sure that no one who has listened to my statement, and is satisfied of the truth of it, can be brought to hope, that the present state of things can be allowed to go unchecked for 20 years without leading to a general convulsion, and the overturning of the whole system of society." But mark the emphatic commentary upon this statement put forth by one of the most bigoted of modern Protestants—Sir James Graham:—"I cannot but bear in mind, that while all the other Governments of Europe, warned by the melancholy events that darkened the latter years of the last century with scenes which it would be too

painful to dwell on—warned by these sad lessons, have directed their earnest, their unceasing attention to the moral training and religious education of their people—England alone, Protestant, Christian, [?] England, has neglected this all-important duty of giving her people that training,—that education—which so intimately concerns, not only their temporal, but their eternal welfare. It may safely be asserted, that this most important subject has been neglected in this country to a greater degree than in any other civilized country."!!! There, Peter McCulloch, slanderer of the Papal States, what say you to this undeniable testimony of your poor-law friend and ally, Sir James Graham? Does not his rare honesty put you to the blush? But let us waive controversy for the present, and confine ourselves to such a meagre outline of the admitted and shocking reality as our too limited space will allow. There will be ample opportunity, and, alas! ample scope for comment hereafter. The evil is deep, horrible, and universal. We may begin where we please—for in this dreadful condition of things there is no beginning and no ending. The first town we come to furnishes as good an illustration of the horrible reality as any other that could be selected. Let us, then, take Leeds and Sheffield—premisses that we are obliged to omit, even from Lord Ashley's speech, many points of juvenile depravity that would not be fit for the perusal of a large class of our readers.

The report of the state of Leeds, for 1838, was to this effect:

"It appears that the early periods of life furnish the greatest portion of criminals. Children of seven, eight, and nine years of age are not unfrequently brought before magistrates; a very large portion under fourteen years. The parents are, it is to be feared, in many instances, the direct causes of their crime." "The spirit of lawless insubordination [says Mr Simons, the sub-commissioner] which prevails at Leeds among the children is very manifest: it is matter for painful apprehension." [Hear, hear.] Jas. Child, an inspector of Police, stated that which was well worthy the attention of the house. He said there was a great deal of drunkenness, especially among the young people. [Hear.] I have seen children very little higher than the table at these shops. There are some beer shops, where there are rooms up stairs, and the boys and girls, old people and married of both sexes, go up two by two. * * * John Stubbs, of the Police force, confirmed the above testimony. He said, "we have a deal of girls on the town under 15, and boys who live by thieving. There are half a dozen beer-shops, where none but young ones go at all. They support these houses." The Rev Mr Livesey, the minister of St Philip's, having a population of 24,000, which consisted almost exclusively of the labouring classes, said—"the moral condition of children * * * in numerous instances, is most deplorable. * * *

* * * On Sunday afternoons it is impossible to pass along the highways, &c. beyond the police boundaries, without encountering numerous groups of boys, from

12 years and upwards, gaming for copper coin * * * the boys are early initiated into habits of drinking. But the most revolting feature of juvenile depravity is early contamination from the association of the sexes. The outskirts of the town are absolutely polluted by this abomination * * * The Rev Mr Parish said,— "There are beer houses attended by youths exclusively, for the men will not have them in the same houses with themselves." Hugh Parker, Esq. a justice of the peace, remarked, "A great proportion of the working classes are ignorant and profligate. * * * the morals of their children exceedingly depraved and corrupt * * * [given, at a very early age, to petty theft, swearing, and lying; during minority, to drunkenness, debauchery, idleness, dog and prize fighting."—Whilst Mr. Rayner, the superintendent of police, remarked, that lads from 12 to 14 years of age constantly frequent beer-houses; and have, even at that age, girls with them, who often incite them to commit petty thefts * * * vices of every description at a very early age * * * great number of vagrant children prowling about the streets * * * these corrupt the working children * * * The habits of the adults confirm the children in their vices * * * the girls are many of them, loose in their conduct, and accompany the boys. * * * I remember the Chartist attack on Sheffield last winter.—I am certain that a great number of young men were among them—some as young as fifteen: they generally act as men."—All this was confirmed by Daniel Astwood, also a police officer, by Mr. George Crossland, registrar and vestry-clerk to the board of guardians; by Mr. Ashley, master of the Lancasterian school; by Mr. Knight, and by Mr. Carr, surgeon, who remarked, "There is most vice and levity and mischief in the class who are between sixteen and nineteen. You see more lads between seventeen and nineteen with dogs at their heels and other evidences of dissolute habits." Mr. James Hall and others of the working people say, the "morals of the children are tenfold worse than formerly. * * * There are beer-shops frequented by boys from nine to fifteen years old, to play for money and liquor." Charlotte Kirkman, a poor woman, aged sixty, observed, "I think morals are getting much worse, which I attribute in a great measure to the beer-shops. * * * There were no such girls in my time as there are now. When I was four and five and twenty, my mother would have knocked me down if I had spoken improperly to her. * * * many have children at 15. I think barely almost as common now, as a woman being in the family way by her husband.—Now it's thought nothing about." "The evidence [says the sub-commissioner] with very few exceptions, attests a melancholy amount of immorality among the children of the working classes in Sheffield, and especially among young persons. Within a year of the time of my visit, the town was preserved from an organized scheme to fire and plunder it, merely by the information of one man, and the consequent readiness of the troops."

To be continued.

What have the well paid Law Church been about all the while?—Editor.

THE PROTESTANT, OR NEGATIVE FAITH, REPUTED; AND THE CATHOLIC, OR AFFIRMATIVE FAITH, DEMONSTRATED FROM SCRIPTURE.

(Continued.)

XXXI.—OF TRADITION.

Protestants reject the traditions, or the oral testimony of the universal Church; and consider themselves bound to believe nothing but the written word of Scripture; and thus still, in direct contradiction to that very Scripture which they own themselves bound to believe; for in it they read the Saviour's formal declaration: "He who will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican."—Matt. 18, xvii. But say they, he bids us search the Scriptures. He did indeed bid his enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, search the Scriptures; those only of the Old Testament, for they had not those of the New to search; but, like our Protestants, they prided themselves in their knowledge of the sacred writings, without however, understanding them properly; since they recognized not him for the Messiah, whom these writings so clearly pointed out: "Search the Scriptures," says he to them, "for in them you think to have life everlasting; and these are they, which bear testimony to me."—John 5, xxxix. He did not say "in them you have life everlasting;" for it is clear, they had it not, as they remained incredulous, though they had the Scriptures; (and like our Protestants, misinterpreted them;) "but in them you think to have life everlasting;" that which the Church, with similar propriety, and for the like purpose, still addresses to her Scripture searching adversaries. Did these search the Scriptures with minds open to conviction, they would find in them that we are commanded to hold as firmly the unwritten or traditional word of God as the written or Scriptural one. "Stand fast," says St. Paul; "and hold the traditions which you have learned whether by word or by epistle." 2 Thess. 2, xiv. "Faith," says the same Apostle, "comes by the hearing;" Rom. 10, xvii, not then by the reading. For the reading, with leave for all to interpret, even the things which are hard to be understood, exposes, according to Saint Peter, "the unlearned and unstable to wrest the Scriptures to their own perdition;" 2 Pet. 3, xv. and hence he affirms that "no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation."—2 Pet. 1, xx. Our Saviour commands us to hear his lawful pastors as we would even himself. "He who hears you," says he, addressing them, "hears me," &c.—Luke 10, xvi. But to hear them is not to read; for, as we have seen above, and as Saint Paul affirms, the letter kills, if interpreted wrong; but interpreted right, as it must be by those whom Christ bids us hear, as if he himself were speaking to us, it is life. The Scripture then can never be separated from its authorized interpreters; and these are according to Scripture, the Apostles and their lawful successors, the pastors of the Church.

Numberless are the Scripture texts, which show the necessity for the maintenance of the truths revealed, of oral or traditional, as well as written testimony. But, indeed it were quite needless to cite them, for common sense alone shews us that without the oral testimony, the written cannot exist. How do we know for instance, that the Scripture is the inspired word of God? Not from the Scripture itself, but from the oral testimony of the Church. How does the Protestant know which books to include in the sacred code of Scripture; and which to exclude from it; for he rejects several which the Catholic admits? Only from the oral testimony of his sect. Or should he say from his own internal conviction; still this is not Scripture, but a distinct principle; nothing better than his own oral testimony, when outwardly expressed.

It is strange that the Protestant without ever perceiving it, is constantly so at variance with himself in his religious belief.

He says he believes nothing but what is clearly expressed in scripture; and yet he believes what is nowhere expressed in it.

1. That the Scripture contains the whole revealed word of God; or, what is the same thing, that there is no unwritten word of God.
2. That the Books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and the two Books of the Maccabees, form no portion of the written word of God: for that his shorter code of scripture is the only true one.
3. That infants may be baptized, though they have not actual faith.
4. Though seemingly against scripture, that the washing of the feet, is not a sacrament.
5. Though against the clearest texts of scripture, and the repeated prohibitory threats of God; that the Sabbath, or the seventh day of the week, is no longer to be kept holy; but the Sunday or first day of the week, in its stead.
6. That in spite of Christ's promise to the contrary, the gates of hell have prevailed against his Church.
7. That Luther was the only one capable of setting her right again. This the Lutheran believes; though he finds no mention of such a reformatory worthy in Scripture. He takes it on the oral testimony of his sect. The Calvinist, on a like authority, prefers Calvin, as a reformer of the primitive Church,—so does the Wesleyan Wesley, &c.