

many of the noble and higher qualities that distinguish them,—and indirectly the whole tone of their character. Their religious sentiment, their hearty loyalty, their general information and intelligence, their industry and genius, their loyal hearts, and generous hands, are all more or less connected with the early training of the Parish School.

I am happy to say that this noble Institution has hitherto resisted the current of innovation, which has set in so strongly in modern times—that wild and reckless spirit of change, that would overturn all old things, simply because they are old—that envious spirit of sectarianism, that would remove every thing that stands in the way of its selfish aims. There has existed in every age, a class of restless agitators, who, in their own estimation, are wiser than their Fathers, and see nothing right, but the creations of their own brain, or what tends to advance their own schemes. That class is numerous at present, and on pretence of setting the Parish schools on a broader and more liberal foundation, they would wrest them from the inspection and superintendence of the Church. Either the good sense, or grateful feelings of the people, generally, have prevented the sacrilegious innovations of these would be reformers, and fortunately, they can find no fault of sufficient magnitude, to give even the colour of an excuse for revolutionary movement. For while the experience of nearly three hundred years has tested the value of these schools, without fear of contradiction, we affirm they are in a state of as great, if not greater efficiency, than they have ever been. We do not mean, that throughout the length and breadth of the land, they are raised to as high a degree of proficiency, as they can be carried. Great improvements have recently been made, not only in the mode of communicating elementary knowledge, but in vast additions to the stock of knowledge to be communicated. In these improvements the Scottish educational system has shared. They may not have yet reached the more remote Parishes, yet gradually, and at a proper time they will win their way, till the most distant fibre shall feel the inspiring influence. It is the business of general education to keep pace with the march of improvement, not to precede it. It would serve little purpose to initiate the distant Highlander in his misty glens and among his cloud capped mountains, in the abstruse sciences. He has got—through the Parish School—knowledge which he prizes far above that—the knowledge of the Son