

GOVERNMENT EDUCATION IN IRELAND: A CHURCHMAN'S APOLOGY.

OR CLERICAL PLEDGES STATED WITH REFERENCE TO NATIONAL EDUCATION, IN A JUSTIFICATORY LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART., FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY; AND IN ANSWER TO HIS PUBLIC CENSURE, IN PARLIAMENT, OF SOME OF THE IRISH PRELATES.

BY THE RIGHT REV. RICHARD MANT, D.D. Lord Bishop of Down and Connor, and Dromore.

"I do not deny, that some of the Irish Prelates have displayed an over-forward hostility to the system of National Education."—Speech in the House of Commons, August 6th, 1844.

"HEAR THE CHURCH."—MAT. xviii. 17. Down and Connor, and Dromore House, Belfast, August 10th, 1844.

RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR,—With all due respect for the eminent and dignified position which you hold in Her Majesty's Government, I presume to crave your attention to the following remarks, which arise out of a recent occurrence, wherein you are represented to have been concerned, and which, although they have an immediate personal relation to myself, are infinitely more important in their general bearing. In the proceedings of the House of Commons, Tuesday last, the 6th of August, an honourable Member, Captain Bernal, is reported by the Dublin Evening Mail of the 9th, to have spoken thus concerning the hostility exhibited by the Clergy to the Irish National Schools: "He would give two strong instances of the feeling entertained by the higher orders of the Clergy. The Bishop of Down and Connor preached a sermon, in which he denounced the system of national education as a means of inculcating Deism and Mahomedanism. After this, what could the Clergy think of a system thus denounced?" And in answer, Sir Robert Peel is reported to have said, "I admit, and I regret the circumstance, that some of the Irish Prelates have exhibited hostility to the system of national education. I do not mean to deny anything. I do not deny that some have displayed an over-forward hostility to that system." In the words thus attributed to you, Sir, there is no mention made of the Bishop of Down and Connor, but it can hardly be, that to him no allusion was intended. And conscious as I am, that I have on various occasions exhibited hostility to the system in question, not however "an over-forward hostility," but strictly within the line, and in obedience to the requisitions of my duty, and imposed upon me by the circumstances of my position; willing also as I am to share with my brethren the blame of such hostility, I am fain to avail myself of this occasion for laying before you, Sir, and before others, my motives to the conduct which has incurred your public censure.

In the first place, however, it may be as well for me to observe, that the assertion attributed to the honourable member is not agreeable to the fact. The sermon, which he quotes, takes no notice whatever of "Deism and Mahomedanism" in connection with the Irish National Schools. However I may condemn those schools, such is not the ground which that sermon takes for their condemnation. This may suffice for the honourable member's correction and information.

I. Without further notice, then, of the parliamentary proceedings which have afforded me this opportunity of self-justification, I enter at once on the grounds on which my hostility has been founded. They are constructed of a particular argument, viewed under four or five different aspects: any one of which would suffice to obstruct, whilst all in their combination present an accumulated and insuperable obstacle to my co-operation or connexion with the Irish National Board of Education.

II. But before I enter on this detail, I would briefly remark, that the sentiments which actuate my conduct are no novelties in my mind, nor put forth merely to meet a particular occasion. During a professional life of more than forty years, they have been my rule of conduct on the subject of education. In my earlier years they prompted me to take no undecided, no backward, no inactive or slothful, though an humble part, in seconding with my feeble efforts the National Schools of England. During the latter moiety of the period, or rather during such portion of it as the Institution has been in existence, they have prompted me to discountenance and reprobate the so-called National Schools of Ireland. Alas! that such a name should be given to such an Institution! Alas! that public avowal should be thus made of an attempt to improve a nation by education, independent of sound religious instruction!

III. In proof and in exemplification of my early adoption and continued maintenance of these principles, I will take the liberty, Sir, of transcribing a passage from a charge which I delivered to the Clergy of Killaloe in 1820, the first year of my episcopate.—"The education of the poor ought in my judgment to be regarded by us as the instrument, not of political or civil, or merely moral improvement, but of religious improvement: our great and ultimate object in the furtherance of their education should be to establish our poorer brethren in the knowledge, profession, and practice of the Christian religion, 'pure and undefiled.' The more steadily we proceed upon this principle, and the more successfully we labour for the attainment of this object, the greater will be likewise the other advantages which our efforts will comprise. Such advantages are either necessarily involved in this great and ultimate object, or may be easily rendered incidental to it. If we improve our scholars in a practical knowledge of genuine Christianity, we must inevitably make them better members of society and of the state, in all their various relations: at the same time that we so improve them, we may also initiate them in useful branches of human knowledge. But it does not appear to me, that to make the poor decent, orderly, and correct in their civil and social relations, abstractedly considered,—still less does it appear to me, that to make them good writers and good arithmeticians,—is the proper rule and scope of our exertions in their education. Our business is, not indeed to neglect these advantages, all of them more or less important, and some of which, as I have already said, must, and others may, and probably will, follow; but our business mainly and above all other things is, to make them good Christians. To this consideration every other, which can be named, is secondary and subordinate." And soon after it was observed, "It behoves us, my reverend brethren, to beware, lest, in our well-intentioned efforts to improve the condition of the poor, we be inadvertently engaged in the support of projects, which, if they do not cause them to 'make shipwreck of the faith' altogether, may entangle them in dangerous delusions; and at the same time expose to hazard the true profession of the Gospel in this Kingdom, identified as it is with the security and welfare of the National Church."

Such, Sir, is the principle on which I have always acted, and on which I have admonished others to act, that education, to be of any real value, must be founded on religion, yea, on sound views of religion, and directed to its promotion. This principle I understand to be before us, and therefore I condemn and reject them. IV. More specific objections however arise out of the argument to which I just now alluded; the inconsistency, namely, of the Board and its system with the Church of England and Ireland. And in the United by God's help, of making this clear, we will now, Sir, with your permission, "Hear the Church."

1. Before I was admitted to the holy office of a Priest in the Church, the ordaining Bishop, by the Church's directions, solemnly charged me and my brother candidates in this wise:—"The Church and congregation, whom you must serve, is his (Christ's) Spouse and his Body. And if it shall happen the same Church, or any member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with yourselves the end of your ministry towards the children of God, towards the Spouse and Body of Christ: and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life."

This, Sir, is a sort of epitome of my ministerial engagement, of my "bounden duty," most solemnly enjoined upon me, in order to my admission to the priestly office, by God's Church and his appointed commissioner. It is a criterion therefore of any enterprise, which may invite my services; and they ought, I apprehend, to be given or denied, according as the enterprise may be subservient or opposed to that injunction. This criterion then I apply to the composition and conduct of the Institution before us. I perceive that it is distinguished by an utter laxity of religious principle; and by an indifference to all definite professions of faith, and forms of worship, and rules of holiness; and that thus it gives indiscriminate and promiscuous support, encouragement, and means of propagation and extension, to the opinions and practices of all sorts and conditions of men, however at variance among themselves, and however peculiarly distinguished by corrupt doctrines, or an ill-constituted and imperfect Ecclesiastical polity, or a defective, deceitful, and impure code of morals. And I then ask myself, is such an institution calculated to produce "agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ?" Is it calculated so to operate, as "not to leave place among us, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life?" Is it calculated to promote "the end of my ministry towards the children of God, towards the Spouse and Body of Christ?" Such questions as these I cannot answer in the affirmative to my satisfaction. And therefore my conscience bids me, not to associate myself or co-operate with this Institution; nay, more, not to be silent or backward on fitting occasions, in setting forth its proper character: lest it may "happen the Church or any member thereof," especially lest it may happen any of those "who are committed to my charge," to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of my negligence; in this behalf, through an influx or aggravation of the evils, the opposites of the blessings which it is my "bounden duty" to endeavour to produce, so as "never to cease my labour, my care and diligence, until I have done all that lieth in me" to produce them.

Thus, Sir, it is my object with respect to this question of education to obey the general charge which I received from the Church at my ordination, and to "beware," that, in so important a branch of professional obligation, "neither I myself offend, nor be occasion that others offend."

2. But, to speak more particularly, when I was admitted into the holy order of the Priesthood, and afterwards when I was admitted to that higher ministry, which I have now for the last twenty-four years holden, however unworthily, in the Church of God, this question was proposed to me by the Bishop in the former case, and in the latter by the Archbishop. "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? and are you determined, out of the said Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?" And in each case I made answer, "I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God's grace."

By this criterion again I have been wont, Right Honourable Sir, to try the claims of the Irish Board of National Education to my countenance and approval, to my confidence and co-operation. By this criterion also, I have been wont to deem it worthy of my censure and condemnation, of my repudiation and rejection.

It might be indeed, that if I, as an individual, chose to connect a particular school with the Board, I might by some modification or compromise of the Board's regulations, and under certain conditions and restrictions, procure permission to teach the children of such school the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures in the volume which "God has caused to be written for our learning," and which the Church declares to be the only vehicle of eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This does not suffice. I seek and claim the power of instruction in the Holy Scriptures for all "the people committed to my charge." I seek and claim it for all the people in my parish, as a parochial minister: for all the people in my Diocese, as a Bishop. For one and for all I claim, that in whatever system of education may be provided for them, I may have the privilege of giving, and they may have the privilege of receiving, the great charter of their salvation in the written Book of God.

But, taking up this topic in a larger view, I would say moreover, Sir, what I have elsewhere said, namely, in a charge to my Clergy of Down and Connor, in 1836, that this Irish system of national education, with a species aspect of neutrality, is constructed on principles of real hostility to the national, the Anglo-Irish, the true Catholic Church of this land. For, first, the volume of the Holy Bible, as a whole,—not in detached, selected, accommodated passages, but as the Holy Bible itself, is not adopted in this system for the universal instruction of its scholars, but is withheld from their hands and from their knowledge. Now a free use of the sacred volume is allowed by the Church to all; and the use of it accordingly is more or less a regulation and a practice of constant occurrence in her schools. This withholding then of the sacred volume is opposed to the Church's principle of a free use of it for general and elementary instruction; and is a concession to the Romish principle, which withholds it from general use among the members of that communion, and does not permit its use for the education of the young.

Further, the true character and rightful claims of the Holy Scriptures are not put forward or admitted in connexion with this system: but, whatever importance may be attributed to the partial lessons drawn from the sacred volume, the sacred volume itself is not recognised as the sole, unrivalled, exclusive criterion of faith: as that word of God, that written word, which suffers no collateral traditional doctrine to share in its distinctive character, and no paramount authority of an infallible interpreter to pronounce absolutely on its contents. Such a recognition, Sir, avowed or understood, of the pre-eminence authority of the Holy Scriptures, as a criterion of faith, ought to form the basis of every system of religious education: and a system, the patrons and conductors of which have not avowed, will not dare to avow, and cannot be understood to admit, such a recognition, and which accordingly carries with it a degradation of the Holy Scriptures from their legitimate station, is not deserving of the countenance of any minister of the Church.

3. But the stipulation of which I am speaking, Right Honourable Sir, as having been made by me at my ordination, both as a Priest and as a Bishop, whilst it provides for scriptural, prohibits also unscriptural instruction, as required of necessity to eternal salvation.

Now, Sir, it is universally notorious, and it will not, it cannot, be denied or disputed, that to the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed, have been added twelve other articles of the creed of a certain local or Italian Bishop: that whereas, in the Church's language, the former "ought to be thoroughly received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture," the latter are grounded on no such warrant of holy Scripture, but are constructed of human traditions, sanctioned by a human decree: that the latter, notwithstanding, no less than the former, are bound upon the belief of all Christians, by the Bishop of Rome's assumed authority; and that they are thereby pronounced necessary to salvation, and such as that without a belief of them no one can be saved. Thus they constitute an indispensable ingredient in Romish education. To these, then, by the means of education which the National Board supplies to the ministers and teachers of Romanism, it gives augmented energy, currency, and stability; so that, by an adoption or complacent recognition of that Board, a criminating conscience would convict me of acquiescing in the propriety of teaching an unscriptural, an anti-scriptural, creed, such as in the Church's judgment, acknowledged as it has been by my own express persuasion and determination, ought not to be taught.

4. I pass on to another question propounded to the candidates for priest's orders: "Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word?" To which, in the order of consecration of Bishops, this sentence is added, "and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same?" And in each case the answer is, "I will, or 'I am ready, the Lord being my helper.'"

Now the erroneous doctrines which the Church had here principally in view, were doubtless those which she has expressly condemned in her Articles of Religion: such as "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory; pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints;" the five commonly called Romish sacraments; the doctrine of transubstantiation, and "the reserving, carrying about, lifting up, and worshipping of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper;" the doctrines of the sacrifices of masses, and of the right of denial of the sacramental cup to the lay people, and of the Bishop of Rome's authority in this realm. And if to these I were to add other doctrines in a contrary tendency, I might specify such as are subservive of all rightful authority and due subordination in Christ's Church: such, again, as are subservive of a Christian ministry, and of the Christian sacraments: such, again, as consist in annulling the value of the Redeemer's sacrifice, and anathematizing the Son of God, and abolishing the personal unity and sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit of grace.

These doctrines, Sir, and other erroneous doctrines, whatever they may be,—doctrines such as "may not be concluded and proved by holy scripture,"—doctrines such as the Church disallows and repudiates, it is the engagement of her ministers, that they will be "ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away;" the parochial Clergyman from his parish, the Bishop from his Diocese; the latter being pledged withal, "both privately and openly, to call upon and encourage others to the same." If then a system of education be introduced into the land, whereby error is maintained and set forward, shall we, the Bishops and Clergy of the Church, take part with its propagators? Shall we wish and bid them God speed? Shall we even sit quietly by, and refrain from raising a warning voice to "such as are committed to our charge," lest, by the hope of some temporal good, they be seduced into spiritual evil? God forbid! In such a case as I am supposing, surely, Sir, it behoves the ministers of the Church to call upon and encourage others to the same. Whether this be the case with respect to the system of instruction now under consideration, is best known to those who are best acquainted with the number of its schools and scholars, the quality of its patrons and superintendents, and the nature of the instruction which it is the instrument of communicating. My own persuasion, that the system is mainly devoted to the dissemination and confirmation of religious error, is a powerful motive to my hostility.

5. But there is another point of view, wherein the Church instructs me to regard this question; and I will take the liberty of referring to it, in the language which I used, in 1820, to my Clergy of Killaloe: "Professionally speaking, my Reverend brethren, we bear a two-fold character: we are ministers of the pure and apostolic branch of the Church of Christ established in this Kingdom; or, to speak more correctly, we are ministers of the gospel, agreeably to the sense of our National Church. That religion we believe to be sound religion, that we believe to be genuine christianity, which is embodied in the Liturgy and Articles of our Church. To that form of our holy faith we have solemnly declared our willing and spontaneous consent, inasmuch as it is altogether, and in its several parts, 'agreeable to the word of God;' and conformably to this we have obliged ourselves, in our holy function, to 'give our faithful diligence, always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same, according to the commandments of God; so that we may teach the people committed to our care and charge, with all diligence to keep and observe the same.'" It is not then religion, according to any confused and indeterminate notion of it; it is not Christianity, according to the system of this or that individual or sect: but it is the religion of Christ, in its several departments of 'doctrines, sacraments and discipline,' and that not only 'as the Lord hath commanded,' but 'as this Church and realm hath received the same, according to the commandments of God,' which we are commissioned to 'teach the people committed to our care and charge,' to bind it upon their belief, and to interweave it into their practice. And accordingly it is the religion of Christ, thus distributed and understood, which we are required by our professional obligations to take for our guiding principle, and our ultimate object, in promoting the education of the poor."

This, then, Sir, being another of my clerical obligations, I am solicitous to observe it in all practicable cases, and so far as circumstances may permit; certainly I am not disposed to abandon it, as one for the observance of which I have ceased to be accountable to God and his Church, to whom I have solemnly promised that "I will give my faithful diligence always" to observe it, "by the help of the Lord." From the constitution and the proceedings of such an anomalous and heterogeneous board, as that of the Commissioners for Irish National Education, I cannot calculate on cordial assistance for the discharge of this responsibility, even if I were assisted to discharge it, in common and on a level with those whose efforts are directed to a different end; but, however this be, as a minister of the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, established by God's good providence in England and Ireland, I do not hold myself at liberty to surrender or compromise the Church's dignity: I do not hold myself at liberty to be instrumental in bringing the Church's authority under the cognizance and control, and submitting her teaching to the dicta-

tion of those who are opponents of her doctrines and schisms from her communion. Thus I keep aloof "from their secret," and unite not myself "to their assembly;" associating myself, on the contrary, with my brethren, the Church's ministers and lay people, who, under the auspices of the Church, are labouring to promote righteous ends by corresponding means.

6. All these, right honourable Sir, are distinct stipulations, each binding in itself, and by each of which I am bound to regulate my professional actions. But, moreover, when the candidate for the several orders of the ministry has pledged himself to God's Church for the observance of these and other stipulations, the examination is completed and closed by a solemn confirmatory prayer in his behalf. For then the ordaining Bishop thus invokes the divine blessing on the priesthood: "Almighty God, who hath given you this will to do all these things, grant also unto you strength and power to perform the same; that he may accomplish his work which he hath begun in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Or then the consecrating Archbishop thus invokes a blessing upon him whom he is about to ordain to the episcopate:—"Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hath given you a good will to do all these things, grant also unto you strength and power to perform the same; that he accomplishing in you the good work which he hath begun, you may be found perfect and irreprehensible in the latter day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

The prayer strengthens, if possible, the previous obligations; for that, which we pray for from the Author and Giver of all good, it is our part to contribute our efforts for procuring; and surely we cannot but be deemed parties to the prayer, which is thus put up in our behalf. Upon each of these occasions, Sir, I have been the subject of the appointed prayer; and thus, whether as a Priest or as a Bishop, whether in the ministrations of a parochial cure or of episcopal superintendence, I hold myself still more deeply engaged to the fulfillment of my obligations previously contracted. The purport of those obligations, in respect of the question now before us, has been already stated and needs not to be repeated. Whatever has been said concerning any one of them, is here, by the instrumentality of this most solemn prayer, brought to bear upon all with combined and concentrated force: so that the petition for God's grace, offered by the Church in my behalf, that I "may have strength and power to perform" my promises, and may thus, in these articles of ministerial duty, "be found perfect and irreprehensible in the latter day, through Jesus Christ our Lord," may be well alleged in consummation and conclusion of my argument, that an APPROVAL OF THE IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH MY STIPULATED OBLIGATION TO GOD IN HIS HOLY CHURCH.

7. Such, Right Honourable Sir, are the grounds on which I justify my opposition to the Irish National Board and System of Education. In so doing, I have refrained from various topics, which might be, as they not uncommonly are, brought into the discussion; and I have for the most part limited my vindication to the single argument, contemplated however under several aspects, of the incompatibility of my engagements to the Church with an approval of the National Board. Looking at the subject under these several aspects, suggested by my ordination and consecration vows, I remark generally, that the National Board does not admit the principle, that sound religion is the legitimate foundation and true end of education: that specifically, it tends to discourage religious union and edification, ecclesiastical order, and incorrupt morality; it restricts the knowledge, and depreciates and degrades the value of the Holy Scriptures; it patronises, disseminates, and confirms erroneous doctrines; and is an offence and an injury to pure Christianity, as professed "in this Church and realm, according to the commandments of God." As a Minister of the Church, in pursuance of my "bounden duty," and in fulfillment of my solemn stipulations, I take my stand on these grounds. On these ground I vindicate my reprobation of an institution, of which I could not approve, with which I could not co-operate, in which I could not acquiesce, without being self-accused and self-condemned of it.

VI. In making this statement, Sir, I speak my own sentiments: I have no authority to speak for others. Nevertheless I hazard an opinion, that these are in the main the sentiments of almost the entire body of the Clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland in Ireland; and I express my confident belief and trust that they are, with very few exceptions, the sentiments of the respectable body over whom it is, by Divine permission, my honour and happiness to preside; and with whom, in conjunction with many of our laity, I have recently had the satisfaction of co-operating in two acts, whereby they have formally attested their sentiments: 1, by seeking for the prosecution of Church education in their parishes, parliamentary aid, which their consciences forbid them to receive through the National Board, but to which, as Ministers of the National Church, and for the benefit of their people, specially the members of the same, they hold themselves in reason and equity entitled; and 2, by winning honour to themselves and golden opinions, not only by the efforts which they are continually making in compliance with parochial and diocesan claims, but moreover by an extraordinary exertion to second the liberality of a very Reverend and estimable dignitary of the Church, in raising a special endowment fund for promoting the invaluable enterprise of the Church Education Society for Ireland. For a diocesan contribution of £1,100 for that righteous purpose, you will pardon me, Sir, if I am fain to take this opportunity of publicly expressing my sense of obligation to the Clergy and laity of my diocese, as well as my humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God, who has given them the ability and the will. But surely, Sir, in the meantime it is passing strange, that of all the inhabitants of this portion of the United Kingdom, the only class, which is thrown upon their own unassisted resources for the education of their poor, are the members of the United Church of England and Ireland: and that the only cause of their being precluded from public assistance is their faithful attachment to the principles and injunctions of the Church. May God forgive you, Sir, this wrong!

VII. Instructed as I have been from infancy, in the duty, and trained up in the habit of honouring my governors, it is with no small pain that I find myself in a predicament of disagreement with those who are 'instructed with Her Majesty's confidence. But in a dilemma between the demands of conflicting duties, I prefer that which is the more imperative, not deeming it "right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God." Thus my course has been chosen: and having been, therefore, visited with your reprehension publicly, before the assembled Commons of Britain, I have ventured on a public vindication of my conduct, and have endeavoured in this letter to make a plain declaration of my motives: in delivering which, as I have spoken openly, frankly, undisguisedly, and unreservedly, so I trust that I have spoken also temperately and inoffensively, and not without becoming respect to my own station as well as to yours. And so, with an earnest prayer that it may please Almighty God to enlighten the eyes of our understanding, to correct us wherever we may be in error, and to guide our steps in the way of truth and righteousness, I beg leave to subscribe myself, Right Honourable Sir, your very faithful servant in Christ. R. DOWN AND CONNOR, AND DROMORE. The Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart. &c. &c. &c.

THE CHURCH A HOME FOR CHILDREN.

(From the Christian Remembrancer.)

The subjective view of Church-fellowship we think of wonderful importance in the case of children.—Indeed, we believe its full practical force can never be fully realized by any, but those who have been trained from their very childhood to live in it—to live on it, as the natural atmosphere of their spiritual life. Human hearts are not flexible enough to adapt themselves to a new home, with the fond feeling with which memory clings to the home of childhood. Full-grown imagination cannot throw such a lovely, mellow, glowing, peaceful light, as once beamed on her dwelling, around a second home. Just so no up-grown man or woman, instructed never so well in the theory of Church doctrine, can so realize the Church as the home of a self-denying discipline, as a child can. It is when the heart is tender, and the will flexible, and the affections quick, and faith implicit, that they can be so made consciously one with her, that they never will go out from her. And this alone (when it is remembered that hers are the promises) might be enough to show the great importance of early training in this and kindred truths.

But far more than this: we hold that the doctrine of Church-fellowship is absolutely and primarily necessary to a religious education: that it occupies the prominent place among all revealed doctrines, (and we shall soon show that we are not speaking on our own private judgment, or unsupported by authority), in the training of the infant mind. This we hold to be the first abstruse religious truth which a child can realize. It is, we know, (as has been remarked in one of our late numbers), extremely difficult to get children to realize spiritual truths. In one sense they are more subject to the visible and tangible than grown persons. It is all but impossible for them to lay hold on the unseen. The distant future is unreal mistiness to them. It eludes their grasp, and fades away from their eye. And so of other hidden things; they form but a fleeting image of them all. But, if there is one truth which belongs to them especially, (as the fifth commandment of the ten is theirs), it is that of which we speak—the Fellowship of the Saints, the bond of Spiritual Brotherhood. This coincides with all that we know, and have realized, of things that now are.—This speaks to their experience.

For what do children know? In the abstract nothing: not even themselves. They know themselves only relatively. They do not contemplate themselves. Good children do not think about themselves: they do their duty naturally: they are obedient, kind, affectionate, without knowing it: they act with cheerful readiness at the bidding or wish of another, without the consciousness of acting: they live in the consciousness of others. Others know them by name; they know themselves by name, only because others call them so. This is not their real notion of themselves: leave them alone and they will class themselves by the lanes of Dorsetshire. We ask, "Who are you, little girl?" the answer comes, "Please, sir, I'm John Smith's little maid." It is not the great point to her that she is, by herself, Emily, or Bessie, or Mary, individualized: she is her father's "little maid," and as such she describes herself. The conscious existence of such children is as members of a family: they know very little of themselves, and still less of the world in which they live; but they do know the mother that bare them, and in her smile they are happy; they do know the father that supports them, and in his favour they rest satisfied: their brothers and sisters they know, and double all their joys by sharing them with them; and all their little duties are instinct with the life of love from these home influences: they cannot stand alone, and treat with independent persons: they cannot make a compact: no, they are children first, and then obedient, loving, trustful: first brothers, then kind and unselfish brothers.

Such is their chosen position—chosen for them by unerring Wisdom; one every way suited, with all admirable tenderness, to their infant capacities. What can be more fearful, then, than that the very first step in spiritual knowledge should put them in a position contradictory to all the feelings which their (providential) training has fostered?—if stripped of the unnatural cruelty of a cold-hearted system of spiritual brethren, and torn with ruthless presumption from the home of their Heavenly Father, they are told of conditions of reconciliation. Thus are they constituted independent insulated individuals; and bid to make terms for themselves. Unaccustomed and unable to contemplate self, they are bid to look for the evidence of faith, i. e. if they are supposed to have it. Otherwise they are bid to believe, and they do not know what it means. It is explained: that only trusts ignorance into perplexity. How can it be otherwise, with such explanations as make faith be both every thing and nothing? Then they are told fearful things about their own wickedness (hating good things, e. g.) which they know to be false; and thus again are they led to contemplate themselves in search of this monstrous chimera. So it turns out that a good, amiable, sweet, simple-minded child's first directly religious instruction is often its first step towards moral ruin. All the heavenly instincts which constitute childhood a type of Christian perfection, are suddenly checked by the rude violence of an ungenial doctrine. They were being gradually developed under the appointed system of domestic discipline; but just when they should be exalted and purified by being exercised on higher and holier objects, they are suddenly cut across; miserably thrown back and stunted, if not wholly destroyed. If any life is left it must put forth its vigour in collateral branches only: the main shoot is industriously pruned down. Those traits of character which in every-day life imperiously claim admiration and love, are thought to be no index of latent spiritual capabilities; and teachers sigh over the thought of so much amiability and "seeming goodness" being compatible with a state of simple guilt and condemnation, when they have never once endeavoured to develop what they love and cherish, into the divine virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. If any children happily escape the stunning, deadening effect of such a system, it is because they follow (not willfully, but by higher guidance) their inward instinct for truth rather than a false outward teaching.

But let a child be first instructed in the doctrine of Church Fellowship, and not only will those evil consequences be escaped, but his natural faculties, and especially those which have already been drawn forth by domestic religion, will be harmoniously developed, and led upward from the known and familiar, to the unseen and awful realities of the spiritual world. First, let him be conscious of a new relationship, and then he may come to understand to whom he is related. Teach him that he is a child; and then, with the keen spiritual perception of love, he will set himself to learn his Father's mind and will. Teach him freely concerning "the brotherhood,"—the word will fall with no strange inharmonious sound upon his ear; the thought it clothes will come home to his heart as a familiar guest. He will fall naturally into the ways of "the household;" he will feel himself to be one of them; will claim his portion in their knowledge, faith, hope; and take his share of their duties of labour and patience. This, it seems to us, is the only order of teaching by which the mind and heart of children can be religiously developed. It is, as we have seen, the susceptibility of her suggestions, with which man is endowed, sufficiently indicates the duty of following them. But it is, moreover, the order which the

Church lays down for her teachers. She has put first the doctrines of membership and adoption, and led her learners up, through them, to the higher mysteries of the Faith. She has given a chart for the guidance of Infant Pilgrims along the heavenly road; and, if men would more humbly and quietly ask of her, there would not be so much doubt and perplexity among the diffident, nor such fearful error among the self-confident, about the first beginnings, or after course, of those committed to their care.

It cannot be an unimportant fact, that, in the second (it may be almost called the first) answer of the Catechism, children are taught to know themselves as "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven." No sooner has the infant catechumen responded to that name, which indicates him to belong to the Christian household, than he is at once led to a full declaration of his membership, its manner, its object, its end. And, what is particularly to our purpose, he is not taught the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and the Communion of Saints, abstractedly, as they are put in the creed, but relatively to himself,—"wherewith I was made a member of Christ, a child of God," &c. He is gently transplanted (if we may be allowed the expression) into a new home; or rather, he is taught that he has another Father, other Brethren, a heavenly, spiritual home; for neither is he torn away from his former home, nor is that new home, to his understanding, really new: he has grown up in it from the day of his spiritual birth, but now first the sweet consciousness of his higher relative condition flows in upon him. He has two homes; and the blessed duties, affections, energies, and hopes of the one are gently and gradually transferred to the other, there to live and grow for ever, when the endearing ties of earthly unities shall be dissolved. Those pure instincts which came from heaven, were not intended to be wholly drawn forth, wearied, exhausted, on the changing objects of a transitory world. They will be satisfied with nothing short of a heavenly end, an Object Immutable, Everlasting. But pure and heavenly they are even when exercised on (appointed) earthly objects. By the temporary discipline of domestic life, they are being trained for their ultimate and ever-enduring purpose.

Such is the order of the Church's teaching in the Catechism, and so teaching, she does but follow the example of our Lord Himself, who has taught us to begin our petitions by a recognition of relationship to "Our Father" in heaven. This holy prayer she bids her little ones first learn; to breathe that tender Name as their first offering to Him that sitteth in Heaven; then to confess their belief in Him as "the Father Almighty;" then to learn their duty to Him.

If parents and teachers would but follow this order, we believe that to convey directly religious instruction to children would not be found nearly so difficult as many persons now imagine it; but then it must be done honestly and fully. There must be no lowering down of the high and confident language of the Catechism to the faithless fears of natural persons brought up in an almost heretical system. And again, it must be no mere theory. Children are very quick in discovering any approaches to sham: they are better logicians than men give them credit for; if they see the necessary consequences of formal teaching neglected and despised, they will soon begin to think the premises are some unreal expressions, taught to them, but not true to those who know better. And this will hold, whether the inconsequence is seen in the conduct of others, or felt in the training to which they themselves are subjected: (e. g.) they are treated like irresponsible beings, (not now in a state of salvation from which they may fall by sin), or as if they were less responsible than grown persons for real exercise of will; as if (e. e.) there were any other limit to their responsibility than their more restricted knowledge, and less vivid consciousness of sense. (We use the word in the strict Butlerian sense of an "action.") Once taught that they are children, let them be led to expect that the conduct of children is required of them: and once instructed in the doctrine of "the Brotherhood," let them be taught to love it, and to rejoice in every outward symbol of the unseen Fellowship; to look upon all that binds Christians together, all that unites brother with brother, the living with the dead in Christ, as tokens of a great reality. So will their spiritual knowledge grow with their natural growth; and they shall behold the land that is very far off, not with the dim uncertainty of intellectual conjecture, but by the substantial evidence of a sacramental faith.

English Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

79, Pall Mall, Sept. 7, 1844.

During the last twelve months upwards of 100 additional parochial Associations have been formed. Of the many combined efforts which are being made in the Society's behalf in various parts of the country, few have been more systematically carried out, and have met with more success, than that of the Doncaster District. Some time since the Doncaster District Committee, in a communication to one of the secretaries, dated August 21st, he writes:—"The plan was adopted by the Clergy in March, 1844; and it affords me much pleasure to state, that out of the forty-eight places mentioned in the districts, sermons have been preached, or meetings held at forty-one; and at the other seven places, either sermons or meetings will be had in aid of the Society. In many of the parishes parochial associations are about to be formed; and so general is the wish to render further aid to the Society, that the Archbishop will shortly call together the Clergy of other parts of his archdiocese, to propose a plan similar to the one adopted by the Doncaster Committee." The following address from the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto has recently been forwarded to the Society:—"To the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

"We, the Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of Toronto, in the province of Canada, have much satisfaction in availing ourselves of the opportunity afforded by our presence at the episcopal visitation at Toronto, to present to the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. No circumstance could more forcibly remind us of this duty, than the mere fact of the assemblage of seventy-three Clergymen on this interesting occasion; for out of the number now gathered together to receive the episcopal charge, not fewer than one-half have been, or still are, indebted for their maintenance as missionaries in this colony to the generous and unwearied benevolence of your Society. Now can we advert, without lively expressions of thankfulness, to other instances of your Christian sympathy for the wants of this extensive Diocese,—in the frequent donations to Churches which have been made, and in the liberal provision which you have established for the assistance of candidates for Holy Orders in the prosecution of their studies. The Society have been the honoured instruments under a gracious Providence of sowing in these domains the good seed of the Word; and when we look to the already great and gratifying augmentation of the number of the clergy, the rapid increase of Church-attendance, and the growing spirit of devotion to those sanctifying principles of 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' which are inculcated by the National Church, we may