

17
AN ADDRESS

ON

EDUCATION IN IRELAND

TO THE

ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS, AND CLERGY

Of the Church of Ireland,

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING AN EXAMINATION OF THE "PRINCIPLE" INVOLVED,
AND REMARKS ON SOME PLANS SUGGESTED
FOR REMOVING THE DIFFICULTIES HITHERTO EXISTING IN THE WAY
OF THE CHURCH SCHOOLS BEING PLACED UNDER THE
NATIONAL BOARD:

BY

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SOMETIME

INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

UNDER THE

CHURCH EDUCATION SOCIETY FOR IRELAND, &c. &c.

LONDON:

RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE.

DUBLIN: HODGES, SMITH, & Co.

JANUARY 2, 1860.

Price Sixpence.

PREFACE.

I KNOW I have written warmly in some parts of this publication. It may be I have snapped asunder ties of agreement with some whom I regard with affection and respect. And it has been felt by a few, that "after leaving the Church of Ireland," I ought to be silent as regards her action in such a matter. Most of those who think so may, I hope, be led to look kindly upon the expression I have given to my thoughts, when they reflect that, although I have spent my ministry in England, receiving every where kindness and success, and although my family is of English origin, yet for two generations, extending over a period of more than one hundred years, my parents succeeded each other in the vicarage of one of the largest union of parishes in the west of Ireland, my father speaking the Irish language from his infancy to his grave. So that I trust I may seem justified as a brother, on revisiting my native branch of our united Church, in dropping some words which tell with feeling, how it grieveth me to see her in danger of losing her rightful position in the momentous work of educating the poor.

2nd January, 1860.

PREFACE TO THE ADDRESS

WHEN ISSUED CONFIDENTIALLY.

THE accompanying Address was originally put in type with a view to its insertion in the Public Press; but the subject seems hardly suited for Newspaper discussion at the present moment; I therefore put it forth more privately, under encouragement from some valued friends, who are impressed with a feeling of its importance, and who have kindly intimated their appreciation of the manner and spirit in which it is written.

This mode of publication is expensive. I shall rejoice if some who approve the course I am pursuing will contribute to assist in a subsequent wider circulation amongst the Laity; and I invite expressions of opinion which may reveal the true state of your mind on the question involved.

J. G.

3, Waterloo-place, S.W., London,
14th December, 1859.

EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

*To the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy of the Church
of Ireland.*

MY LORDS AND REVEREND BRETHREN,

I FULLY hope I may not be considered as acting with presumption, when I express to you a few thoughts which appear to me of intense importance at the present moment. No reflecting man can take an impartial survey of the present position of matters in Ireland, respecting the vital question of Education, and not feel moved with a deep feeling of the grave consequences which must flow from the course the Church of Ireland may pursue within the next few months; and I declare to you, I venture to touch this great question with lively feelings of the solemn responsibility I incur by doing so.

But I conceive few men could be more suitably circumstanced for addressing you at this crisis than myself; and in order to give my words such weight in your estimation as they may deserve, I will briefly state some points in my history which seem to fit me for being able to form sound opinions in this matter. Brought up in youth amongst clergymen of acknowledged piety and Christian zeal, and surrounded by men from whose example and counsel my opening character could not fail to receive the best impress which your Church could be the instrument of imparting, I came out of Trinity College, Dublin, with my Divinity Tes-

timonium, and all other papers, ready for Ordination, at the age of twenty-one—two years too young for Holy Orders. Under satisfactory testimonials, and the recommendations of many friends, I had the high privilege of being elected to fill the office of Inspector of Schools under the CHURCH EDUCATION SOCIETY for Ireland, at a time when, as I was informed, there were seventy-four candidates for the appointment. For two years I filled the office of one of the Society's Inspectors; examining into the schools of eastern and southern counties, as well as penetrating the mountains of Connemara and districts of the West, so that I had ample opportunities for holding most intimate communications with Clergy and supporters of Scriptural Schools in every variety of position. My Ordination in 1845 terminated my connexion with the Society, and I was led to devote myself to the ministry in England. Since then I have been privileged to pass through scenes of incessant activity, ministering in large rural parishes, and also amongst masses of people in London and other places of dense population, carrying with me every where the fruits of my educational experience, and taking no small practical share in the vast work which has been so wonderfully progressing in England of late years, until under patronage of high order I have been called to the vicarage of an important and populous parish.

With such a preparation, which I trust will commend itself to you as calculated to enable me to look judiciously into such a matter, I have had occasion to revisit several parts of Ireland during the last four months, under circumstances which have placed me in close and direct intercourse with a very large number of the Clergy and Laity of your Church. I have received impressions of a vivid character, and, after careful consideration, I am brought to the conclusion that no feelings of delicacy would justify my shrinking from addressing to you a few earnest words, which I trust will be received in the spirit of brotherly affection and regard, by which I am sincerely actuated.

The faithful stand which was made by the Church of

Ireland for the principle of the free use of the Holy Scriptures in education, has commanded as well as deserved the respect and admiration of the whole kingdom, even of those who have thought it would be more expedient to accept and make the best of the pecuniary assistance provided by the State; and the serious sacrifices made by the Clergy and Laity, have told of the deep piety which your Church possesses, and of the sincerity of the motives by which they have been guided. I have no doubt that impartial history will bear testimony to this.

When originally established, there were features in the National System of Education which demanded the careful consideration of the Church of Ireland; and its introduction was also accompanied by a measure which gave the friends of Scriptural Education a severe shock; I refer to the withdrawal of the grant previously made by the Government to the schools of the "Kildare Place Society." Look calmly back to the first years of the National Board. There was a prevailing opinion that the direct teaching of Holy Scripture was decidedly discouraged by the Government of the day, because of their taking away the Kildare Place grant. I well remember the alarm that measure caused as to the expected intentions of the Government, and how seriously men reflected upon their solemn duties in the matter; and I also remember how sorrowfully, and yet how firmly, earnest, loyal men resolved that they could take no part in a system of education which held forth as its leading rule the use of a "Book of Extracts," which was considered a "mutilation of the Holy Scriptures." The aversion to introduce such a book, immediately after the withdrawal of the previous grant, caused a universal feeling of repugnance to the National Board. This feeling was strengthened by an expectation that the Board would interfere with the appointment of teachers, so as to assume a large control in that matter: and it was strongly felt that with the design, as it appeared at the time, of putting the Holy Scriptures in the background, the Board would probably cover the

country with a class of teachers, who would only be in earnest in such branches as did not affect religion. Added to all this, there was the belief that the Clergy were required to submit to assist the Roman Catholic priests in withholding the Word of God from some of the children attending school.

The resolution formed of acting independently of the Government aid, under the causes, which I believe I have correctly, though briefly stated, was firmly and liberally supported by the Irish Church for several years. In 1844 the CHURCH EDUCATION SOCIETY had a considerable staff of Inspectors, continually and zealously employed, and a large number of schools were efficiently supported all over the country. The condition of these schools was at that period encouraging. They were superior to those under the National Board, mainly because the men who superintended them were hearty and sincere in their wishes to educate the children who attended. A considerable proportion of the pupils were Roman Catholics; and I am able to state, from careful investigation, that the best answering in Holy Scripture was found in children of that persuasion, when compared with other children of similar age and standing in the schools. This feature was strongly marked in the East, South, and West, where I inspected; and I believe it resulted from the fact that such subjects, being forbidden fruit at home, as the mind of the child opened into vigour and intelligence, were eagerly grasped, and led to a greater proficiency than could be found in the mind, which met in the religious teaching in school a repetition of what was placed before it in the course of conversation with the parents at home. Whether I am right in this explanation of the cause or not, the remarkable circumstance I hold to be indisputable, that the Roman Catholic pupils were better answerers in religion than their companions under similar circumstances.

No language could convey an adequate idea of the contrast which the state of Ireland now presents to my mind

after an absence of fourteen years : the awful famine, with its attending consequences of a large decrease in the poorest class of the population ; the Encumbered Estates Court, with its severe remedy, and its wonderful effects in introducing and liberating capital throughout the country ; the introduction of railroads, and the partial effects of education, have, with other causes, introduced a revolution into the physical condition of Ireland. Not only are the results of a better directed industry already largely manifested, but the very aspect of the population is improved ; local prejudices have been greatly broken through by increased means of communication ; a more independent spirit is evident amongst the people, since a better system of wages has increased their comforts, and a desire for information upon various subjects may now be found in every direction. I cannot doubt that five years of active intelligent education would place the regeneration of Ireland on a foundation which no selfish interests could check or hinder.

In the midst of so general an improvement, one subject, which ought to be leading the way, is lamentably behind-hand, I refer to the education which is under the superintendence of the Church. All over the country there are clergymen of deep learning, earnest spirit, and warm piety and zeal ; but in the great paramount work of vigorous education they seem almost spell-bound. With a wonderful self-denial they maintain schools, in very many instances chiefly at their own cost ; the Laity are, in many places, changed, and originally liberal contributions have either fallen off altogether, or become seriously reduced. The wide-spread nature of the difficulties felt in keeping open the Church Schools is weighing as a heavy burden upon Clergy who have succeeded brethren who first made the protest against the withdrawal of Scriptural Education. I believe those who reside in the few leading cities have no knowledge or conception of the true state of the case ; it is felt considerably in towns of the second and third rate of

size and position, but in rural districts it is melancholy in the extreme. I could tell you of places in which I formerly knew of valuable schools, in which the seminaries now connected with the Church have neither teachers nor ordinary school requisites capable of imparting the merest rudiments of instruction; and a general feeling is fast growing up that in the situations of clerks, and various positions in life where superiority of education secures employment, *the young people of the Church are thrown into a disadvantage*, and cannot compete with their neighbours of similar position and fortune in life. I believe firmly that if such a state of matters continues a little longer, the necessities of their position will draw away and force the children of the Church into the schools of other religious denominations, and bring about a loss of usefulness, from which all the learning, piety, and zeal of the Church will not be sufficient to raise her for years to come.

What then is the possible remedy? The Church requires means to supply her schools with teachers and school requisites, which will enable her to retain her own poor in a suitable position in life, and which will commend her schools to all families around them.

While Ireland has been improving, I perceive the National Board have been in some measure altering, and to a great extent explaining, their practice and rules. All necessity to use the "Book of Extracts" has been entirely removed; even in appearance; and in Scriptural instruction the Bible is free to be employed without any change or "mutilation." Hundreds of schools in England, and the best authorities on education, bear strong testimony, not only to the unobjectionable character, but to the excellence of the books supplied by the Board for every branch of secular instruction: the facility of teaching with the "Spelling-book Superseded," the English Grammar, Geography, and various stages of reading books, is only to be felt with delight by those who have practice in the work. I can speak feelingly on this point, having not

only superintended large schools in which they are used, but having had the privilege, and great advantage, under election by the "Coopers' Company" in London, of filling the office of Chaplain and Master of "Stroode's Charities" in Egham, where I taught single-handed a large school of 100 boys, and I can state without reserve, from full practical knowledge, that nothing can be more admirable than the books of the Irish National Board for secular instruction. But the great feature to be remarked, is that it is now placed beyond a doubt that *the patron of every school may select and appoint his own teacher*, without any interference or control on the part of the Board, so that every Church School in Ireland might be placed under the National Board, and retain the existing teachers, or change them at pleasure in cases of inefficiency. Surely this advantage cannot be overrated, as it removes all feeling that you would be patronizing schools in which the children might be under teachers with no heart in the work of religion. Again, there cannot now be the least fear that Inspectors under the Board would be sent to your schools, calculated to interfere in any way with plans for religious instruction; and what can any system of education effect without regular efficient inspection? and of what value can inspection be, if no means exist for carrying out such improvements as may be suggested? A school without inspection is sure to become a lifeless form; and inspection without means of improvement must be a mockery.

So far, then, union with the National Board would now respect your appointment of teachers, allow you to use the entire "unmutilated" Scriptures, supply you with salaries, and an unrivalled quality of secular books and apparatus, besides giving life and vigour to your schools, by an impartial and skilful inspection.

I am aware, however, that in a single point, you should forego what no doubt is of great importance. In case a child of a Roman Catholic should apply for instruction, your

teacher's duty would be to notify to the parent or guardian a rule, that if objected to, such a child would be allowed to receive secular instruction, and be at liberty not to study the Scriptures in school. You might, with full propriety, proceed with the education of the child without distinction, until such objection might be made. Is there a child under your instruction now whose parents would make any such objection? I fully believe not one in a hundred would; so that you are withholding all the advantages to be gained from Government aid from the whole of your Church children, under a vague idea that some parent might make such an objection. Is it wise or right to allow a doubtful possibility of the kind to be the cause of so grievous an injury to the children of the Church?

I would, however, look at this point in another way. If I had the superintendence of a school, where the great body of the children were receiving regular Scriptural Education, and on the notification of the rule in question an objection was made, surely I would still have the child in a Religious atmosphere. A teacher, with his heart in the cause, would take all proper opportunity for directing the mind to heavenly subjects, and companionship with children well stored in their own minds with Scriptural truths, could not fail to inculcate them in such a case; nay, more, the very making the objection would open the door for me to pay special visits to the parent. I would have good opportunities for sitting down and reasoning in a friendly spirit over such an objection. I might open out the Divine truths in the midst of the family, and who can tell the good results which might flow from such an objection? Of this I am persuaded, when a youth brought up under such a prohibition would come to years of intelligence, and find himself able to read and understand matters for himself, no influence could prevent his reading the Book of which he had often heard, yea! and reading it with avidity too.

And now may I notice a part of the subject of vast im-

portance, remembering the single point which now separates the Church Schools from Government aid; would it be desirable to introduce the English system, and give to each religious community separate grants? or, in other words, to extend Government aid to all schools, leaving the religious teaching entirely uncontrolled. I believe no thoughtful man, who knows both countries, can look at such a wish as involving, if carried out, any thing less than the suicide of your Church in the matter. The leading feature of the English plan has been giving grants in aid of local contributions. The Church has in England gained a high and advanced position by meeting the proposal in time, and raising her schools in every direction; but when the schools are not under the Church, still they warmly uphold the study of the Scriptures, the number of Roman Catholic Schools being a mere fraction of the whole; but how would it be in Ireland? At this moment every where the schools are already in the hands of the Roman Catholics; and to give them the power of teaching such religious books as they might choose, would throw an immense power into the scale of their interests, whereas it would require some years to establish Church Schools at all able to compete with them. This would surely place the Church in a fatal disadvantage in the work of education; and still it must be felt universally that the Government can never give a grant in aid of Church Schools on rules which can be withheld from other religious communities.

Moreover, even if it was thought right, would the Government have the power of granting a privilege to the Church Schools which would open the door for similar unlimited control by patrons in the schools supported by the State, and under Roman Catholic superintendence? I am strongly persuaded serious difficulties would meet them in such a course. The feeling of reserving a power of objection on the part of parents and guardians to have their children instructed in the Scriptures by any specific teacher, is a

feeling which would commend itself to a great majority of those who have the voting of such grants. This does not call in question the propriety of the wish on the part of the Church to carry out fully her mission of teaching the Holy Scriptures to all who come under her care: but it becomes a serious difficulty *when the Church asks for and requires* grants for education from the public funds. I believe it must be vain to expect this difficulty to be removed, and if the Church ever receives Government aid, it must be either under a separate system, which would be deplorable, or under a rule reserving the power to make such an objection for the parent; upon whose scruples, however, the patron of a school, where an objection might be made, would have every right to use persuasion and explanation to remove them. I cannot but think such an intercourse, held in an affectionate spirit, would be most beneficial.

Some may think the statements of the Roman Catholic authorities, that they will withdraw from the National Board if a separate grant is not made, and that they will not allow Government Inspection, even in secular matters, may become grounds on which the Government may relax the rule referred to in the case of Church Schools. I believe such statements are not made in any sincerity. I can, myself, now point to places in which the Roman Catholics have withdrawn from the National Board; but invariably where such is the case, they either have other schools under one of their own Religious Orders, or there is no other school into which the children can be received; and I can point to other places where they have no such special endowment, and where they firmly adhere to the grant from the Board; indeed, more than this, I can refer to a parish in which, *since the celebrated manifesto, they have applied to the Board for a grant to open a new school.* This does not exhibit a sincere intention to withdraw from the Board; and, of course, if they continue to receive grants, and apply for aid in new cases, the schools continue under

inspection. Sound judgment will look upon such threats as intended to draw from the Government fresh concessions calculated to give greater facilities for teaching their peculiar History of England, and other specially Roman Catholic books under the sanction and endowment of the State.

Such being the state of matters, what course should the Church of Ireland pursue at this trying crisis? Considering the difficulties and disadvantages education under the Church is now experiencing; considering the great and liberal advantages the Government aid would afford—above all, considering the severe pressure which is brought upon the Government by the Roman Catholic threats of desertion and abandonment, what should be done? Is it wise or right to continue rigidly to draw the cord of separation on the one remaining point, when no reasonable prospect exists of its possibly being granted? or would it be wise and right at this juncture to come forward in a body and give that support to the Government which would at once throw life into their schools, and give fit scope for their talents and energy in educating their own people at least, and all others as far as they could?

When at Solferino one Emperor changed his tactics or position, the other would be unwise not to do the same, although in some point or other it might oblige him to do somewhat which he did not altogether like or approve. So now is the Church's best and greatest, perhaps her ONLY opportunity.

And oh! what results would follow from a hearty self-denying adhesion to the Government aid at such a time as this! How nobly would your Church stand forth before the nation when Parliament assembles! What healings of brotherly differences would take place in every diocese! What new courage and strength would it give your poorer brethren! Yea, what a body of independent Roman Catholic Laymen would it range on your side! May you have wisdom suited to this hour, and may you have no reason to

regret the few words I have felt it my duty to address to you.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Reverend Brethren,

Your ever faithful servant,

JOHN GARRETT,

Vicar of St. Paul, near Penzance.

3, Waterloo-place, S.W., London,
1st December, 1859.

P.S.—It strikes me a practical suggestion may be considered valuable. Would it not be well to have meetings held in various districts throughout Ireland, at which delegates might be empowered to attend an aggregate meeting in Dublin before the end of January, to express the true opinions of the Church? I am persuaded, if this, and further available materials for reflection and information, could be impartially considered, a wise and sound resolution would proceed from the whole body of the Church of Ireland before Parliament assembles. In any such movement the voice of the Laity should be heard and felt.

Is there any good reason why the Church of Ireland, remembering her ancient, native, and hereditary position in the country, should not meet and tell the Government and the British nation, that, while valuing full Civil and Religious Liberty, she is ready to yield a point, which many of her members have held dear, in order to raise a powerful standard against the dictation of the Ultramontane party in the Foreign Community of Rome.

J. G.

APPENDIX.

THE reception given to the foregoing Address has been full of encouragement, and more than justifies my proceeding to lay it before the public generally. In doing so some remarks and expressions of opinion may be added, calculated to strengthen the position I have taken up. More than TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED copies have been circulated, one to each clergyman in Ireland, and twenty copies to the leading newspapers in London and Dublin. The result I feel to be highly satisfactory, giving me stronger grounds for believing the premises laid down were correct, and the conclusion drawn from them judicious and sound. It was published at length in the north of Ireland; and in the *Dublin Daily Express* of last week two able articles appeared, drawing the same practical conclusion from the present circumstances surrounding the question, while in no case whatever has an unfavourable criticism come to my notice. Thus I sincerely hope no injury has been occasioned by the anxious course I pursued. At the same time, my cordial thanks are due to a large number of brethren of every shade of opinion, and from every part of Ireland, for most valuable communications; among them I only received *five* letters in any degree regretting the publication of my Address. Four of them rather angrily question the propriety of *my* taking such a course, but make no suggestion of any plan to meet the difficulties which have been felt in the matter. The

fifth letter is from a friend, whose every word deserves to be carefully considered, and for whose opinion I entertain the deepest respect. His remonstrance, however, is more an explanation that the opposition to the National Board has been necessary as a matter of *Religious principle*, and a complaint that some of my statements referred to points already known, than a questioning of the correctness and soundness of what I advanced. Nothing contained in those five letters could lead me to alter or withhold from the public any part of the Address.

On the other hand, both by letters and in conversations, the warmest acknowledgments that I am right have reached me from men in every direction, whose character and history fortify their communications with the greatest value and highest importance, showing plainly that a chord has been touched which vibrates to the very heart of the Church of Ireland, and removing all the hesitation with which I might write when feeling myself comparatively alone. Not only have those who availed themselves of the Government aid, assured me of the safety with which Clergymen may adopt it, under the National System as it has now been developed, but practical zealous men, who have hitherto felt it right to work on without it, have given me such information, and expressed themselves so strongly in approbation of the views I laid before them, that I have no doubt the time is come when the judgment of the great body of the Clergy is in favour of connecting the Church Schools with the National Board. There still remain some difficulties, however, which I believe may be entirely removed; and in the earnest hope of contributing to so great and good a result, I will here endeavour to open out the subject still more, and to supply such considerations as the communications with which I have been favoured appear to me to render desirable, trusting the same friendly indulgence may be continued towards me.

Foremost in letters of weight and importance is the following communication from a clergyman, who for a quarter

of a century has faithfully advanced the cause of Scriptural Education.

“MY DEAR MR. GARRETT,

“I was duly favoured with yours of the 16th, and also your letter enclosed, which I had previously seen and read, with interest, in the public papers. I at once recognized in it a good deal which had formed the subject of your conversation and mine, when we talked over various matters here, with some additional points noted, which are of moment in the great question at present pending concerning Education. It is but honest to state that in your *premises* there is very much (as appears to me) undeniable. But whether or not you would gain many adherents in your conclusion remains to be seen. One great disaster to be seriously avoided, in any proposed settlement of the question, would be the breaking up of the powerful, and I trust I may add principled, party which has so long stood together on the Church Education platform. I trust we may be enabled to avoid this. But it is also (to me at least) plain, that should the alternative be offered us, either of helping to maintain in its existence the National Board, as also to endeavour to improve and amend it, or else to look out for a *separate* grant, thereby giving indirect aid to the Ultramontane party, I should certainly prefer the former. I think we are further agreed, that we ought to seek for a settlement of this vexed question on any terms which do not involve a giving up of *principle*. There certainly seems a *growing* disposition *here*, among both Clergy and Laity, to seek such a settlement.”

No doubt it is of the utmost importance that the adherence should be as unanimous as possible. The strength it would give to the Church, and the support it would give to the Government, must largely depend upon the degree of union observed in the movement; and it is because I heartily believe a sacrifice of “*principle*” would not be involved, that the hope presses upon me that the Church in a body may promptly be led to adhere to the Board. What is the *principle* involved? Surely it must be possible to look straight at a matter of so vital an importance. I believe I was able rightly to open out the only point now separating the Church Schools from Government aid: it is NOT *the uniting to withhold Scriptural instruction from any class of children*; but it is *consenting to allow the secular advantages of the schools to be enjoyed by such individual children as*

have parents or guardians who put in an objection to their learning Holy Scripture in school. The principle of every Church School would be essentially the free use of the Scriptures ; but in order to assist the Government, in affording all the education to the children which their parents are willing they should receive at the school, a rule should be observed of not forcing such children to read the Bible. What does this amount to, but leaving the study of Holy Scripture a voluntary matter with the people? Rejecting the advantages of Government aid, because such a rule is required, is nothing less than visiting the Church children with grievous injury and loss, and refusing other children any assistance in their education ; simply because, as a condition entitling to public funds, the State reserves an option for the parent as to whether the child shall learn Scripture or not. This was not the principle on which the Church took up her stand against the National System. A far greater principle was clearly enunciated in the address to Sir Robert Peel, signed by nearly 2000 clergymen, in 1842 : it said, " We would respectfully state our deliberate and firm conviction, that in a land blessed with a revelation from the Almighty, no system for the education of the people can be right, which shall not have for its object the communication of the great truths thus revealed, and which shall not adopt efficient means to ensure that object for those receiving instruction from the State." This was a principle indeed plain and distinct, and worthy of the Church to urge upon the State ; worthy to have every possible influence put forward in order to constrain the Government to adopt and carry it out ; but, whether rightly or wrongly, it stands before the nation now as a principle which no statesman could enforce. It has been rejected by the country at large as a principle not only impracticable, but contrary to the individual liberty in Religion, which forms the essence of the adopted laws of the realm. Is the Church in the present day to deny education in the fullest manner to her own people, and as fully as they will accept it to others, because the principle she advocated

eighteen years ago, and which she is at liberty still to consider right and to recommend, has not been adopted? Can the Church hope to impress her *principle* on the nation by standing aloof, ignoring her proper position in the education of the poor, and leaving to others the onus and the privilege of teaching the people? I think not. Looking at the state of matters from an independent position, and with a good knowledge of both periods, I do not hesitate to say, the *principle* which was contended for, and which was worth contending for, is irrevocably gone; in good theory it still may exist in the wishes of ardent Christians, but, as a practical object, it cannot be obtained.

And more than this, the *principle* on which opposition arose to the National System has not only thus been rejected by the State, but it has also been abandoned by the chief men who most firmly and enduringly adhered to it. Never were words uttered which needed more careful consideration now than those which fell from Lord Clancarty in the House of Lords on the 5th of August last. The position filled by his Lordship, during the whole period of the controversy, entitled him to speak with full authority; he said, "When I have argued in favour of assimilating the plan of education in Ireland to that in operation in England, the only objection that the friends of the National System urged against it is, that it would throw the education of the people wholly into the hands of the priests. I think such a view of the case extremely illiberal. Provided the people are free to avail themselves of whatever schools they prefer, I see no reason why the Roman Catholic Clergy should not be invited and encouraged to co-operate in the work of National Education, as well as the Clergy of other religious denominations; and, unless found to be inconsistent with the general interests of the country, the development of Roman Catholic Education should be perfectly free." I am unable to see in this language any thing less than an unqualified abandonment of the *principle* so long

contended for; to accept aid from the State on the plan here advocated would be a revulsion of every feeling which animated those who, in the days of real *principle*, "stood together on the Church Education platform." And his Lordship is not alone in abandoning the *principle* really involved. On every side the opinion is strongly expressed by those who still remain separated from the Board, that "the right plan for settling the difficulty would be for the Government to take cognizance only of Secular Education," leaving every Religious denomination to teach Scripture or not as patrons might choose. This would effectually overthrow every appearance of clinging to the *principle* on which the Church took her stand; and, in the present state of the matter, it would introduce an amount of direct endowment for Roman Catholic Education fivefold greater than what Maynooth receives. For my own part, I cannot conceive a nearer approach to the *principle* so earnestly desired than the privileges which union with the Board would now bestow, enabling the Church to give a vigorous Secular Education to all pupils who would attend her schools, and a full knowledge of Holy Scripture to every pupil whose parent did not object; recognizing her declaration of *principle* that her schools continue to be Scriptural Schools, and only asking her to be equally liberal with the Presbyterians and Wesleyans in respecting a right, which I would myself hold sacred in the case of my own child, that the parent should have a voice in directing whether his child should, or should not, be taught Scripture in the only school within his reach. Thus far it appears evident three conclusions must arise from examining the *principle* involved:—

1. The true and real *principle* which animated the Church in her stand against the National System has been decidedly rejected by the State, and entirely abandoned by Lord Clancarty and others.

2. The National System, as now developed, would aid the

Church in applying her *principle* freely to her own children, and not only offering but recommending it to all others.

3. Straining the point which now separates Church Schools from Government aid, is involving those who do so in a practical denial to the poor of a sacred parental right, and is asking the State to assist in a coercive interference between the parent and the child, contrary to the very spirit of toleration which our Church upholds. If we protest against the Roman Catholic priest interfering between the parent and the child on the one side, what right have we to ask Government to assist us in refusing to listen *to the parent's wishes on the other?*

No feature has been more prevalent during the discussions which have taken place, than the lightness of some reasons which many earnest men have allowed to prevent their union with the Board. A remarkable instance of this is disclosed by the following letter, which has appeared in the *Dublin Daily Express*, since the leading articles to which I have before alluded:—

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY EXPRESS.

“Sir,—I have read with deep interest your leading article of the 26th instant on the education question. With its main features I entirely agree, and if it be as you state, that the FREE use of the Bible for all willing pupils is conceded by the Board, there is nothing more that Protestants can desire. *Is this the case?* I apprehend not. There is the use, but not the *free* use, under the present rules. The patron is required to be active in excluding the Bible from the schools during the hours of united instruction, by the rule I subjoin, whose operation is to constitute the patron or teacher a shutter out of the Scriptures from the school for the greater part of the day. Besides, no pupil, however willing, can remain for Scriptural instruction against the express wish of the parents. However, this latter point I would not press. Let all the activity of refusing to permit the child to remain for instruction in the Scriptures rest on the shoulders of the parent, and let the rule, as below, be expunged, leaving the patron at liberty in this respect, and I feel the *vexata questio* would soon be set at rest. You intimate that *mutual concessions* should be made. Let this be granted on the part of the Board, and we may then yield the requirement that *every* child in our schools shall daily

read the Scriptures, admitting the right of the parent to decide whether he will accept our proffered aid to impart instruction therein or not.

“ I am, Sir,

“ A SCHOOL PATRON.

“ December 27, 1859.

“ RULE.—Part i., sec. iv., paragraph 6.—‘ When the secular instruction precedes the religious instruction in any National School, there shall be a sufficient interval between the announcement and the commencement of the religious instruction; and whether the religious or the secular instruction shall have priority in any National School, *the books used for the instruction first in order shall be carefully laid aside at its termination, in the press, or other place appropriated for keeping the school books.*’ ”

Here it is gravely asserted that the rule of the Board constitutes the patron “ *a shutter out of the Scriptures from the school for the greater part of the day.* ” Now it is evident to me, that if the *secular* books are *the first in order*, this rule, according to the view of “ A School Patron,” will in truth enable him to be “ a shutter out of *all* SECULAR study for the greater part of the day,” for it is the patron who has authority to lay down a *time table*; and if he puts secular books “ first in order,” the rule of the Board calls upon him to constitute his school *purely and strictly religious*, as it requires nothing more than putting the books first used “ *carefully into the press, or other place appropriated for keeping the school books.* ” The entire impartiality of the Board, as to which class of books shall be “ carefully laid aside,” is manifest at a glance. No wonder if the large body of nobility and laity, who united with the Clergy of twenty years ago in contending for a great principle affecting the position of religion in the nation at large, are found in the present day to receive appeals for contributions in what appears to such “ school patrons ” as this a silent coldness. To put forward such a reason for assisting in all the injury separation is producing, must appear to them not only frivolous, but vexatious. For what is the

true nature of this rule? Simply to prescribe that the *secular* and *religious* books shall not be mixed up at the same moment in the hands of the pupils. Where is the teacher who has witnessed the opening out of a child's mind under his instruction, who would not hail such a regulation as the most powerful means for enabling him to inculcate that respect and proper feeling of reverence with which all pupils should be led to approach religious instruction? Can it be expected that a young mind will enter reverently into worship, private or public, which in school is not taught to make any practical distinction between the learning of *arithmetic* and the study of HOLY SCRIPTURE? Let scenes of the two modes of education be realized to the mind. I have experienced both. Enter one school at any time of the day, and you will find monitors running backwards and forwards, carrying to the different classes bundles of books, and handing round indiscriminately spelling books, parables, table books, miracles, grammars, New Testaments, Bibles, and geography, all alike torn and soiled, all falling at times on the ground, and equally associated in the pupil's mind with the "*drudgery*" of school. Enter the other school at one time, and you will see actively going on the use of slates, pens, ink, and all the appliances for secular instruction. Come again a little later, and, all such varied materials having been "carefully laid aside," you may see every class using the Holy Scriptures, and books of religion, with an evident appreciation of the change. Is this constituting the patron "a shutter out of the Scriptures from the school for the greater part of the day?" If it is, I for one must rejoice that the authorities put so wholesome a barrier in the way of what, I doubt not, the religious feeling and good sense of the nation must consider nothing less than a DESECRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

From all the communications I have received, it appears evident the only real difficulty felt by the great majority of the existing Clergy to an immediate union with the National Board is of a purely *practical* nature. It is well brought

out by the following letter, which I select from several strong expressions of the same idea :—

“ I have been much struck with your letter on ‘ Education in Ireland,’ and quite agree with you that the Irish Church must now take some step in advance, or for ever give up all idea of educating the people of Ireland.

“ I was a curate in the Queen’s County when you were an Inspector of the Church Education Schools, and can bear testimony to the facts observed by you, that the Roman Catholic children attending our schools (I had an average of forty Roman Catholic to six Protestant children) were in general better answerers in Scripture than the children of the Church.

“ Your letter has, however, one defect, which I look on as fatal to your scheme. You do not seem to be aware that we may all be willing to join the National Board, and yet that in many a parish we may be obliged to continue without assistance from the Board. This would arise from the rule which requires an *average attendance* of, I think, thirty, to entitle the master to his salary, or the school to requisites and inspection. Now, in hundreds of parishes of the west, south, east, and central parts of Ireland, the children of the Church of a rank to attend the school do not amount to a sufficient number. And even supposing that at certain times of the year some Roman Catholic children did attend, yet their absence could easily be enforced by the priests for a period sufficiently long to close the school.

“ Were this rule rescinded I for one would join the system to-morrow.”

This reveals an unanswerable reason for continued separation on the part of Church Schools all over the country districts, especially in Roman Catholic neighbourhoods ; it also deserves most serious attention, coming from the Vicar of a parish who has devoted himself with practical zeal to the work of education. I can fully enter into its force. The step of uniting his school with the Board must itself be a serious matter with every patron of a Church School ; but to do so with the dread before him that, by an exercise of spiritual tyranny, it would lie in the power of an adversary to destroy his school, on a simply practical point, presents an insuperable difficulty so long as a rule is maintained fixing a *rigid average number* as necessary to the reception and continuance of Government aid. My former experience convinced me that if a school is well taught, the parents will send their children notwithstanding the re-

monstrances of the priests; it was so when the Church Schools were good and efficient, much more would it be so if the parent, in reasoning with the priest, could justify his sending his child by pointing to a rule which gave him the power of objecting to Scriptural instruction being given in school. It should be remembered that the Government are not recognizing the voice of the priest or the clergyman in the matter, their principle is to reserve an option for the *parent*; and every one generally acquainted with Ireland now must feel, that the people are fast growing into a state of mind which will no longer yield a blind obedience to any teacher, but will assert for the parent the right to get his child educated in such a school as he may most approve. Let a patron but steadily supply a good Church School with Government advantages, and respecting the objections of such parents as think it right to interfere, and in a short time it will be out of the power of any one to keep the children from school.

The difficulty of a *rigid average attendance* being *necessary*, is however an effectual bar against a vast number of Church Schools being now placed under Government aid. Surely this may easily be obviated. The Chief Secretary has declared that, while adhering to the present National System, that is, while withholding public funds from schools in which the objections made by parents would not be respected, the Government are prepared to make such practical alterations, as may render the rules by which grants are made suitable to the present requirements of the country. What is this but an invitation that representations of such a difficulty as I have referred to should be made to the Government? No doubt, if the point is brought properly before the authorities, the rigid rule may be rescinded, and some general power reserved for the Board specially to consider cases of very small attendance, in order to protect the public funds from being uselessly expended. Will the Church of Ireland leave the meeting of this invitation to all other Religious denominations, and refuse her part in adapt-

ing the practical rules to the wants of the country? See the magnitude of the injury of thus standing aloof; the largest body of pious working clergymen are denying themselves, and the influential laymen who act with them, all access to the Government on the greatest question affecting the country. If "Middle Schools" are to be recommended, if the question of "Endowed Schools" is to be discussed, the voice of the Church can only be felt through deputations of a few brethren who approach the Government alone, rather than leave the Church entirely silent. Not so the Roman Catholics, who meet in solemn synod, and boldly in a mass send forth an Ultramontane dictation, which shocks the feelings of many even of their own communion, and which must draw forth large additional concessions, if the Government are not promptly strengthened by the cordial adhesion of the Church's influence. Not so either the Presbyterians, whose General Assembly has long shown that union with the National Board involves no danger to giving Scriptural education to all children whose parents are willing they should receive it at their hands. Not so, still further, the Wesleyans, whose United Conference, after full discussions, has come to the resolution to connect their schools at once with the Board. Will the Church of Ireland allow this valuable opportunity to pass over for taking her right position of strength and usefulness beside the Government of the country in educating the people? Will she speak only with the voices of isolated members in this great question, in which all other denominations are taking each one its united and firm stand? If so, the wisest of her children cannot foresee or estimate the "heavy blow" and fatal discouragement which the course now taken may bring upon her, probably before ten years more shall have passed away.

But before closing these remarks, I desire to bring out another "plan for meeting the difficulty" which has been recently put forth, and which evidently has received considerable attention in circles of great influence. I have no doubt the idea that it might be adopted has for some years kept

many Churchmen from thinking seriously of joining the Board. It has appeared in a pamphlet by "FIAT JUSTITIA,"—Dublin: Hodges, Smith, and Co., 1859. On the same day which brought my Address to the Clergy of Ireland, a review of this pamphlet appeared in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*, strongly approving of the recommendations it contains. The essential part of the plan suggested is contained in the following extracts:—

"First, then, let there be no change whatever made in the rules that affect the *model* or *training*, or what are called the *vested* schools of the National Board.

"Secondly, if the patrons, Protestant or Romanist, of the *non-vested* schools, or of others that may hereafter be similarly connected with the Board, should claim the right of unrestricted power with regard to Religious instruction, let them still be entitled to *inspection*, *books*, and *other requisites*, and *access* to the *training* and *model* schools; but, instead of *salaries*, as at present, let them receive only *small capitation allowances* for those children that may be recommended for such, by the Board's Inspector, as having shown at his examination a suitable amount of proficiency in *secular* knowledge.

"Thirdly, instead of the present cumbrous and fluctuating Board, let there be three permanent paid Commissioners; all to be laymen, and chosen for their intelligence, their acquaintance with the subject of education, and their fitness for the office in other essential points."

Here is, FIRST, an unqualified approbation of the rules which govern those schools where the *principle* and practice of the National Board is most distinctly exhibited. No public institution could obtain a stronger testimony to the value of its vital position than follows from the words, "let there be no change whatever made in the rules that affect the *model* or *training*, or what are called the *vested* schools, of the National Board." The very fountain of what the National System is doing in the country, and capable of doing on a much more extended scale, is witnessed in the

schools thus cordially approved of; and the essential *principle* of the system is sanctioned without reserve.

But, **SECONDLY**, some assistance is asked for towards schools whose patrons "should claim the right of unrestricted power with regard to Religious instruction;" the assistance, so far as payment of teachers is concerned, to be limited to "*small capitation allowances*" on such a number of children as the Board's Inspector would from time to time report to have "shown a suitable amount of proficiency in *secular* knowledge." This amount of assistance might perhaps be of some small benefit in central cities, where wealthy congregations support good schools, but in the small towns, and all over the country districts, it would be valueless if granted. I will give a few instances:—there is before me a sermon in MS., kindly sent to me by a brother clergyman in the South, whose excellent spirit is well seen through the touching appeal he has made for contributions in support of Church Schools. His argument is founded on the practical difficulty of the rigid average attendance required by an existing rule of the Board, which has been noticed above. His manner of putting his appeal is earnest, and at the same time gentle. I can scarcely conceive a sermon better calculated to draw out sympathy and liberal support; but on the back are entered the following three collections, made in different churches:—No. 1, 2*l.*; No. 2, 15*s.* 6*d.*; No. 3, 3*l.* 10*s.* 2½*d.* Of what avail would it be to offer schools supported by such collections as these the prospect of "*small capitation allowances*," so soon as a Government Inspector should find in them some scholars "showing a suitable proficiency in *secular* knowledge?" Again, in a parish in the North, the master of the Church School is a man who gains part of his livelihood by small farming to assist a salary of less than 10*l.*; while the master of a Presbyterian School in his neighbourhood is a man who has gained his certificate, and enjoys a salary approaching 70*l.* per annum. How could a promise of "*small capitation allowances*" at some future period render such a school efficient? Or let a town

near the centre of Ireland be thought upon ; there are buildings, but literally nothing else deserving the name of school appliances : and one of the most active and devoted clergymen in Ireland is "heart-broken" to see all the children scattered from him, and falling under the education of a body of Nuns, who welcome the Inspector of the National Board, a Protestant gentleman who bears strong testimony to the excellence of their schools. The clergyman, if he was patron, would rejoice to have schools under the Board, but to offer him a distant prospect of "*small capitation allowances*," without salaries to strengthen him in engaging teachers able to prepare children for inspection, would be to him no better than a painful mockery. Such cases could be multiplied so as to startle the minds of those, who, in leading positions themselves, and without efficient means of information from the provinces, have no adequate appreciation of the imminent danger there is of incalculable injury resulting from a prolonged separation from Government aid. But it will sufficiently appear, from what I have stated, that the "safe plan" proposed by "FIAT JUSTITIA," after abandoning still further the *principle* contended for by the Church, and after fully recognizing the excellence of the working of the National System, would give the Church Schools a mere appearance of benefit utterly valueless where assistance is required.

But it is right to remark upon this proposal in another way. It may be considered probable, from the notes which are given, that some leading statesmen have at times been led to look favourably upon it. It cannot be doubted, when thinking of adopting such a plan, and engrafting upon the National System two offshoots to embrace both extremes, they had an impression that such "*small capitation allowances*" would effect some considerable benefit, and be claimed by a goodly number of efficient schools. Let it be supposed this boon was obtained, and an efficient and impartial Inspector was deputed by the authorities to examine

the schools whose patrons claimed "unrestricted power over Religious instruction," how would he find the case? On the one side, a host of "Christian Brother," "Redemptorist," "Convent," and every class of strict Roman Catholic Schools would appear before him in activity and life, supplied as they have been with funds from abroad, (for the spread of Roman Catholic agents, and the rise of their expensive buildings all over Ireland, has been amazing during the last fourteen years,) and he would report a large number of the youth, who were drinking in the most Ultramontane tenets in politics and Religion, as fit pupils to entitle their teachers to Government allowances; while on the other side, after he left a few of the schools connected with wealthy congregations, he would find such Church Schools as, in point of teachers and requisites, would call upon him for a report, that the expense of a second tour would be a useless outlay, as he could not expect to find pupils brought to a suitable state of proficiency; unless, indeed, at the same time of granting the alteration, the authorities would lower the standard of knowledge, required in such schools, to a scale quite below that which would prevail in all other schools throughout the United Kingdom, which have any connexion with Government aid. The practical end of such an arrangement would quickly be, to attach a new and large State endowment to the most bigoted classes of Roman Catholic Schools, and confer very little, if any, advantage on schools connected with the Church. No hesitation need be felt in stating a strong opinion, that to abstain from a hearty union with the Board, in vain expectation of an inefficient and heterogeneous scheme like this, is willingly to throw away a pressing opportunity for doing a vast benefit to the Church and people, under a manifest and painful delusion.

The THIRD recommendation, as to three Lay Commissioners superseding the existing Board, is a point purely practical. To my mind it could not well be adopted without extraordinary confusion; and I am unable to comprehend

how the appointment of three Commissioners could be securely arranged, so as to guarantee their impartiality in appointing Inspectors, and conducting all the other parts of so large a power of administration. Surely Laymen have their Religious predilections as well as Ministers. From what denominations should the charter lay down a rule for their selection? High Churchmen, Low Churchmen, Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and other Protestants, together with Liberal Roman Catholics, Jesuit Roman Catholics, and other numerous orders of Ultramontane Roman Catholics, would each and all have their faithful laymen willing and anxious to fill an office with so considerable an amount of influence. How should it be fixed to make selections of three individuals to administer a great national institution, embracing a large power in spending hundreds of thousands of pounds? No doubt, to ensure impartiality, laymen should be sought for who had no heart or earnestness in any form of Religion whatever. Could a supply of *such* men be found sufficiently educated in the present day, when the minds of all men are daily stretching more and more into religious subjects? And if they could be found, is it a wholesome proposal to make, that the heads of a great source of education must be men whose souls are asleep as to Religious matters? From any point of view in which it can be considered, the plan suggested by "FIAT JUSTITIA" appears to my mind fraught with danger and confusion.

Such being the state of the question, what is the really safe course? With the admitted efficiency and great practical value of the system established and approved of by the Government; with a *principle* at work which is fair and equal to all Religious ministers, essentially founded on the freedom and protection of a sacred parental right; with arrogant demands put forward by a priesthood whose foreign and un-English sympathies are boldly proclaimed; with a grievous want of better education for the poor people of the

Church; and with so great a desire for information and independence at large amongst those hitherto led by superstition; what should be done? It is a solemn question. The answer is plain; its sound should be distinct all over the land, from every pious Christian and every loyal subject—*The time is come which calls on every man of sound principle and true wisdom, immediately and thankfully to* “JOIN THE NATIONAL BOARD.”

THE END.